

Seasonal Gardening Tips for October

In October, we move into our fifth season here in SE QLD. 'Sprummer' is a highly changeable period during October/November, where we transition from spring into summer! A time when climate conditions can be very unpredictable. Based on my observations and keeping notes on patterns over 22 years, this is a time when we need to **be prepared for almost any kind of weather!** We typically have very unstable and variable conditions, often with little to no rain. We can suddenly get a heatwave or storms (often with intense heavy rain and localised flooding, gusty winds, hail or everything at once); a random cold snap; drying winds; or early humid weather. Quite confusing and challenging for gardeners and plants alike! Follow my [Subtropical Planting Guide](#).



Based on the Bureau of Meteorology's outlook, **we can expect [wetter conditions](#) than average due to La Nina**. Long periods of fine sunny warm conditions with mild nights are expected across most of QLD as humidity levels increase.

I always have shade cloth structures handy (made with bamboo stakes and zip ties) to help protect plants when needed:

- Provide shade on hot days;
- Shelter against heavy rain/storms/hail; and
- Wind protection for vulnerable leafy greens that dry out quickly and suffer stress.



Shade cloth and netting are very adaptable and can be made into portable or permanent structures to protect your crops.

Our grace period with fewer pests over spring will soon be over! Watch for aphids, bronze orange bug, citrus leaf miners, QLD fruit fly, moths/caterpillars and grasshoppers. Exclusion netting and traps are useful strategies. Hungry birds feeding young in their nests are keeping any newly hatched grasshoppers to a minimum in my garden. One problem I don't have to deal with – yet! Keeping your birds happy with clean water encourages them to provide free pest management services.

With so many fruit trees in flower now, it's essential to [attract pollinators to your garden](#) or be prepared to hand pollinate. At and after fruit set, trees and fruiting crops have a high need for moisture and nutrients. Mulberry trees can be cut back during the [new moon phase](#) to encourage new flowers and the next harvest sooner. Be quick!

A shallow bee bath provides water for pollinators and beneficial insects. An 'insectory' garden with a variety of nectar-rich flowering herbs, vegetables and perennials encourages predator insects to keep seasonal pests under control.

What to Plant Now

Sow broccoli, rocket, chard and peas as seeds but **only harvest as young [microgreens](#)**. Ready in 7-21 days. I sow *Broccoli di Ciccio*, a warm season variety, which I pick through to December. It has a long harvest period for side shoots. [Rocket](#) prefers moist soil and some shade if growing to maturity. Otherwise, allow it to flower and provide free seeds.

It's a good time for zucchinis with enough warmth before high humidity sets in. Swap 'Slow Bolt' coriander for perennial Mexican Sawtooth variety to take you through summer. Perennial summer spinach varieties like Suranim, Brazilian, Ceylon and Okinawa are coming out of hibernation and will provide spinach leaves during our hot humid weather when our winter varieties 'check out'! If you haven't planted these yet, now is an ideal time to do so.

Sow turmeric and ginger this month (ideally 6-7th and 13-14th October with the [moon cycle](#)) along with other [root crops](#) like beetroot, carrots, sweet potato, yacon and radish. Asian greens, [basil](#), [beans](#), capsicum, celery, chilli, chives, choko, cucumber or cucamelons, eggplant, kale, leeks, melons, mustard, okra, oregano, parsley, pumpkin, rosemary, sorrel, [spring onions](#), thyme, tomatoes and warrigal greens can all be planted in October. Include lots of [flowers](#) for beneficial insects.

Swap to heat-tolerant 'loose leaf' lettuce varieties like 'Salad Bowl Red' or 'Green'; 'Little Gem' and 'Parris Island' Cos; 'Royal Oakleaf' and 'Summer Harvest' that are slow to bolt. Lettuce only needs 2-3 hours of morning sun and shade from noon onwards as well as constant moisture. Self-watering container gardens are ideal for all leafy greens and many herbs. Find or create a suitable microclimate and succession plant for lots of luscious leaves.

Take cuttings during the [new moon cycle](#) and propagate for quick root development. Who doesn't love free plants?!

Summer fruiting crops are great to plant now. Make sure your fruit trees and gardens have been topped up with [compost](#) and slow-release nutrients as well as [mulch](#). Strawberries need consistent moisture to develop new runners.

Local Resources

[Green Harvest](#) have a free [Organic Gardening Resource Guide](#) you can order online.

Dave Jarrett at [The Garden Shed Nursery](#) at Palmwoods is an experienced and knowledgeable soil agronomist and sells organic fruit trees and gardening supplies including chemical-free mulch and fertilisers. Worth a visit and chat, and he can organise soil testing if needed.

If you'd like to feel more confident rather than frustrated and unprepared, or just need a helping hand with one-on-one personalised expert advice and support for your garden, consider my [live chat coaching call](#) or [onsite garden consultation service](#). I'd love to help you maximise space, provide design ideas and tailor advice to what you need. Read [what a few of my onsite clients say](#) and feedback from my [live chat clients](#).

Until next time, enjoy the harvest!

Cheers, Anne

[The Micro Gardener](#)

Garden Tasks this Month

- Check fruit fly traps. Re-bait as necessary.
- Fertilise citrus and fruit trees. Mulch well.
- Plant passionfruit and de-sucker bananas.



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