

December in the Garden

December is here! This year seems to have flown by, and we are once again preparing our gardens for Christmas and the hot summer months to come.

This Month's Gardening Checklist

Planting:

- Plant some pots for summer colour with **annuals** and **perennials**.
- Plant up **geraniums** and **petunias** for instant Christmas colour.
- Vegetables to sow or transplant as seedlings include: **sweet corn, rockmelon, watermelon, cucumber, squash, eggplant, asparagus pea, rosella, cauliflower, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, zucchini, leeks, radicchio carrots, fennel, tomatoes, English spinach, capsicum, chilli, celeriac, choko (plant the fruit), okra, rocket, kohlrabi, loaf, Swiss chard, beetroot, spring onions, lettuce and radish.**
- Sow a brand new herb patch with **basil, dill, borage, chamomile, chervil, coriander, tarragon, parsley, chives, rue, lavender, sage, fennel, sweet marjoram, lemon balm, oregano, summer savoury, thyme and lovage.**

Pruning & Maintenance:

- Potted plants go through a critical time in early summer as the first few hot days test the water holding capacity of the pot, the potting mix and the strength of the plant. You will need to ensure that the plant is adequately watered. Scratch the soil surface to the depth of the first knuckle. If you can feel moisture at this depth then you don't need to water. If it's dry give it a good soaking drink.
- Top up mulch levels to a depth of 75 to 100mm. If there is no bare soil in your garden you are well on the way to conserving water like a pro. Use [Baileys Moisture Mulch](#).
- Deadhead **annuals** and **roses**. This means cutting off dead flowers. It redirects growth into new growth or flowers. If you leave the flowers on the bush it tends to cost the plant energy as it sets about creating seeds.
- Clip fast growing **hedges**.
- Prune any dead stems or branches from **trees** and **shrubs**. Check the tree ties on your trees and shrubs to make sure these are not biting into the bark.
- Water repellent soil is a real issue in early summer and can be fought with a quality wetting agent such as [Baileys Grosorb Wetting Agent](#), in either granular or liquid form. This also works brilliantly for potted plants and lawns too.

Lawn Care:

- Wetting agents in a granular form can be applied to lawns to improve water retention and penetration. Use [Baileys Grosorb Wetting Agent](#) at the rate of 40gms (just under half a cupful) per square metre.
- A source of brown spots in your lawn can be sprinklers that are not covering correctly. Try the coffee cup test. Arrange a number of straight sided cups around your lawn particularly on those patches. Run your sprinklers for the usual time. Measure the amount of water caught in the cups. A variation points to partially blocked sprinklers.
- Increase the regularity of mowing as growth hits full speed. Once a week is not too often. This helps keep weeds in check too.

We will be taking a short break over the Christmas period. We wish you all a safe and happy festive season with friends and family. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.