



The Micro Gardener

'Making it Easy to Grow Good Health'

October Seasonal Gardening Tips – Subtropical Queensland

In October, we typically move into our fifth season in SE QLD. 'Sprummer' is a highly changeable period during October/November, when 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 25 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! More details in my [Subtropical Planting Guide](#).



I always have exclusion netting and shade cloth structures handy to help protect plants when needed. DIY options are easy to make with bamboo stakes, wire, polypipe and zip ties. Research studies confirm moderate shading with 30-50% shade cloth in a pale colour helps block harsh sunlight and prevent fruiting crops from suffering sunburn. Shade protection also decreases moisture loss and water stress, reducing the need to water as often. Shade cloth helps increase water use efficiency in plants and protect crops from excessive solar radiation. Covers minimise insect, bird, animal or hail damage. Shade cloth helps modify the air, plant and soil temperature, shade and humidity growing conditions. Another advantage is it helps buffer against strong drying or damaging winds. Interestingly, studies show that due to reduced stresses, crops often have higher yields and better quality.



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 ends quickly! 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 often in flower at this time, it's essential to [attract pollinators to your garden](#) or be prepared to hand pollinate. Trees and fruiting crops have a high need for moisture and nutrients at and after fruit set. 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 and peas as seeds to **harvest as young [microgreens](#)**. Ready in 7-21 days. I often sow *Broccoli di Ciccio*, a warm season variety, which I pick through to December when there is plenty of rainfall. It has a long harvest period for side shoots. During dry seasons, it's easier to stick with microgreens. Annual [Rocket](#) prefers moist soil and some shade if growing to maturity. Otherwise, allow it to flower and provide free seeds or grow perennial wild rocket instead.

It's a good time for zucchinis with enough warmth before high humidity sets in. It can be a struggle to keep powdery mildew at bay. I have had great success growing zukes vertically up stakes in well-ventilated positions out of the wind. Try swapping 'Slow Bolt' coriander for perennial Mexican Sawtooth variety to take you through summer. Or grow it in self-watering pots so it has consistent moisture. 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. Asian greens can be sown all year.

Sow [turmeric](#) and [ginger](#) this month (ideally on a root crop day during the [moon cycle](#)). Other [root crops](#) to sow include 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.

For salad greens, now is a good time to swap to heat-tolerant 'loose leaf' lettuce varieties. Try '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 early morning sun, shade onwards, and constant moisture or try perennial sorrel. Self-watering container gardens are ideal for all leafy greens and many herbs. Create a suitable microclimate and succession plant for lots of luscious leaves.

[Take cuttings and propagate plants](#) during the [new moon cycle](#) for quick root development. Who doesn't love free plants? [Revitalise and reuse your old potting mix](#) to extend its life.

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 and benefit from liquid feeding such as seaweed or diluted worm leachate.

[Grow microgreens](#) for a continuous supply of nutritious leafy greens and [seasonal vegetables](#).

Garden Tasks this Month

- Check fruit fly traps. Re-bait as necessary and decide on your [fruit fly strategies](#).
- Watch out for [aphids](#) and treat naturally. They can devour buds, new leaf growth and leaves quickly.
- Check regularly for [caterpillars](#) to [minimize their damage](#).
- Add compost to citrus and fruit trees. [Mulch well](#). Pay attention to watering to prevent water stress.
- Plant passionfruit and de-sucker bananas.
- [Save seeds](#) from winter and spring crops.
- If you haven't already, protect crops from drying winds and get storm protection and exclusion netting or shade cloth in place.



Related Articles

- 🌸 [3 Steps to Prepare Your Garden for Planting](#)
- 🌸 [6 Tips for Abundant Edible Container Gardens](#)
- 🌸 [The Benefits of Container Gardening](#)
- 🌸 [9 Strategies to Help Combat Common Edible Garden Problems](#)
- 🌸 [The Benefits of Moon Gardening – How to work with moon cycles](#)

Have fun and get planting! Enjoy this time of year and if you need one-on-one help, check out my [onsite garden consultations](#) and [live chat garden coaching](#) services to help fast track you to success.

Helpful Gardening Guides

Refer to my laminated double-sided [Subtropical Planting Guide](#) for what to plant now, more pests to watch out for and other key tasks. The perpetual [Moon Calendar Gardening Guide](#) also provides you with exact dates to fine-tune your planting, fertilising, propagation, grafting and sowing activities for optimum abundance. [Learn more about Moon Gardening](#) and [save money when buying both guides with this Special Offer](#).

SUBTROPICAL PLANTING GUIDE
LONG SUMMER
 DECEMBER - MARCH

SOWING SUGGESTIONS

- Annuals: Basil, Beans, Broccoli, Cabbage, Cauliflower, Carrots, Celery, Chilli, Cucumber, Eggplant, Green Beans, Green Peas, Pumpkin, Radish, Spinach, Tomato, Zucchini
- Perennials: Asparagus, Broccoli, Cabbage, Cauliflower, Carrots, Celery, Chilli, Cucumber, Eggplant, Green Beans, Green Peas, Pumpkin, Radish, Spinach, Tomato, Zucchini

GARDEN TASKS

- Check for fruit fly traps. Re-bait as necessary and decide on your fruit fly strategies.
- Watch out for aphids and treat naturally. They can devour buds, new leaf growth and leaves quickly.
- Check regularly for caterpillars to minimize their damage.
- Add compost to citrus and fruit trees. Mulch well. Pay attention to watering to prevent water stress.
- Plant passionfruit and de-sucker bananas.
- Save seeds from winter and spring crops.
- If you haven't already, protect crops from drying winds and get storm protection and exclusion netting or shade cloth in place.

WATCH OUT FOR

- Fruit fly traps. Re-bait as necessary and decide on your fruit fly strategies.
- Aphids. Watch out for aphids and treat naturally. They can devour buds, new leaf growth and leaves quickly.
- Caterpillars. Check regularly for caterpillars to minimize their damage.
- Water stress. Add compost to citrus and fruit trees. Mulch well. Pay attention to watering to prevent water stress.

SHORT SPRING
 APRIL - SEPTEMBER

SOWING SUGGESTIONS

- Annuals: Basil, Beans, Broccoli, Cabbage, Cauliflower, Carrots, Celery, Chilli, Cucumber, Eggplant, Green Beans, Green Peas, Pumpkin, Radish, Spinach, Tomato, Zucchini
- Perennials: Asparagus, Broccoli, Cabbage, Cauliflower, Carrots, Celery, Chilli, Cucumber, Eggplant, Green Beans, Green Peas, Pumpkin, Radish, Spinach, Tomato, Zucchini

GARDEN TASKS

- Check for fruit fly traps. Re-bait as necessary and decide on your fruit fly strategies.
- Watch out for aphids and treat naturally. They can devour buds, new leaf growth and leaves quickly.
- Check regularly for caterpillars to minimize their damage.
- Add compost to citrus and fruit trees. Mulch well. Pay attention to watering to prevent water stress.
- Plant passionfruit and de-sucker bananas.
- Save seeds from winter and spring crops.
- If you haven't already, protect crops from drying winds and get storm protection and exclusion netting or shade cloth in place.

WATCH OUT FOR

- Fruit fly traps. Re-bait as necessary and decide on your fruit fly strategies.
- Aphids. Watch out for aphids and treat naturally. They can devour buds, new leaf growth and leaves quickly.
- Caterpillars. Check regularly for caterpillars to minimize their damage.
- Water stress. Add compost to citrus and fruit trees. Mulch well. Pay attention to watering to prevent water stress.

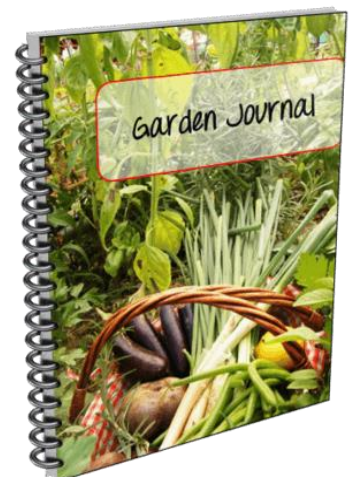
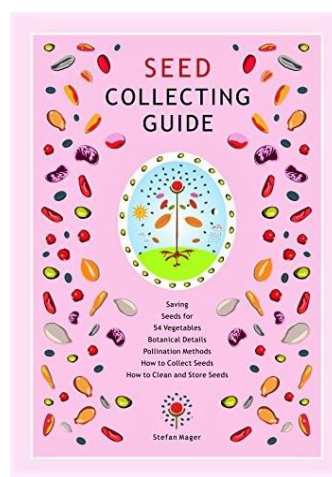
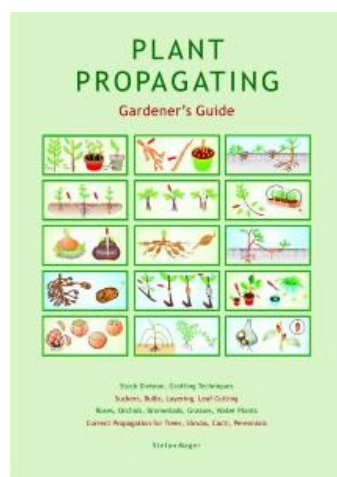
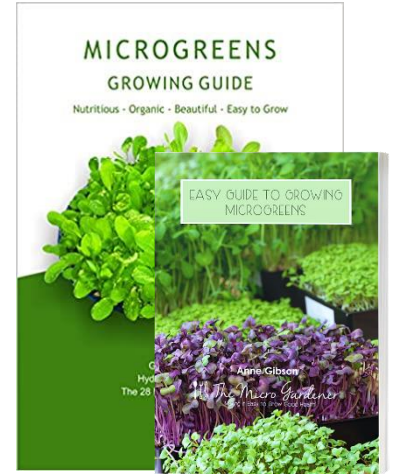
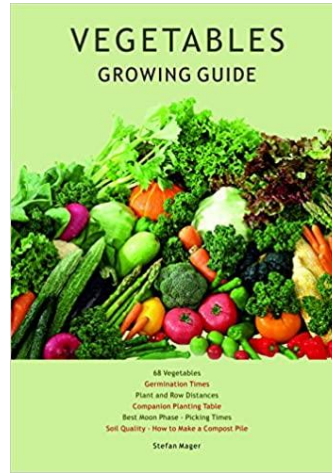
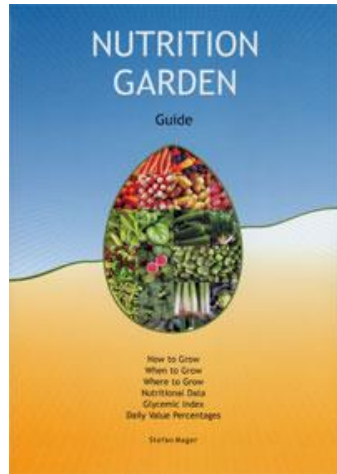
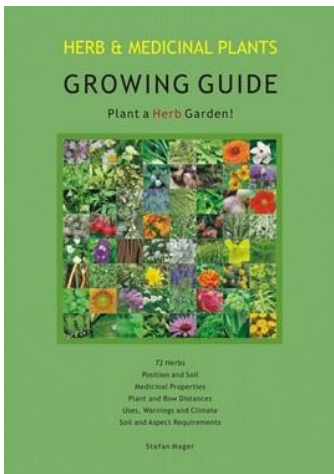
MOON CALENDAR

This circular calendar shows the moon phases and their effects on gardening. The outer ring lists the days of the month. The inner ring shows the moon phase for each day. The center contains a list of gardening activities to perform on each day.

MOON PHASES: New Moon, Waxing Crescent, First Quarter, Waxing Gibbous, Full Moon, Waning Gibbous, Last Quarter, Waning Crescent.

ACTIVITIES: Sow seeds, plant, transplant, harvest, prune, fertilize, water, mulch, etc.

I also have a variety of laminated fold-out 8 page reference guides packed with practical information to help you [collect and save seeds](#), [propagate free plants](#), [grow and eat nutrient-rich superfoods](#), [grow vegetables](#), [microgreens](#) and [herb and medicinal plants](#). Visit the [online store](#) for all products and services.



I hope you've enjoyed these tips and dig into the gardening guides and resources. May the year ahead be filled with an abundance of good health and harvests!

Kind regards,



Anne Gibson



M: 0407 777 049 | E: anne@themicrogardener.com | W: themicrogardener.com
facebook.com/TheMicroGardener | pinterest.com/microgardener | instagram.com/themicrogardener | twitter.com/Micro_Gardener