

GARDEN diary

SEPTEMBER is a magic month in the garden when everything bursts into new life. Trees and shrubs are covered in fresh growth, and there's an abundance of flowers on show.

September job file

Give new plants the best start by digging blood and bone into the planting hole and by mixing in some Hortico Water Storage Crystals. These water crystals will store moisture that's then available for the plants when the weather is dry.



Planting

Flowers:

- Sow heat-hardy varieties: sunflowers, marigolds, cosmos, petunias, portulacas and zinnias.
- Grow from Grower's Pride seeds, or buy as tiny plants in seedling punnets.

Vegies

- Sow or plant warmth-loving vegies: tomatoes, beans, zucchini, cucumbers and sweet corn.
- Look for free plants that pop up in the compost heap and transplant them carefully.
- Plant basil in every spare spot.



Nurturing

Lawns

- Treat the lawn to kill off bindii, clover and other broad-leafed weeds.
- Spike lawn with a garden fork to soften and aerate the soil.
- Spread Yates Gypsum Claybreaker over lawns in heavy clay soils, and then water well.
- For curl grubs and black beetles, apply Confidor hose-on. One treatment will protect the lawn for the entire season.

Feeding

- Feed herbs with fast-acting Aquasol soluble plant food.
- September is the most important month for feeding lawns. A fast-greening fertiliser, like Hortico Lawn Food, will encourage healthy growth.



Pruning

- Once frosts have finished, prune frost damage and fertilise.
- Pinch back new growth on fuchsias and geraniums.
- Prune spring bloomers immediately after flowering.
- Cut back gardenias.

Pests & Diseases

Pests

- Yates' new Natrasoap is an organic insecticidal soap that can be used to treat a range of pests on flowering plants, fruit and vegetables.

There's no withholding period after Natrasoap's been applied, so crops can be picked, washed and eaten straight away.

- Squash aphids, or spray with pyrethrum or long-lasting Confidor.

Diseases

- Powdery mildew flourishes in spring. Prune off mildewy shoots and, if the problem persists, apply one of the newer effective fungicides such as Baycor. Hortico Rose Spray and the concentrate Rose Shield will also help to control powdery mildew.



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