



## **Spring Gardening Guide 2016**

Spring is finally here and the freeze of winter has come to an end. Spring is a great time in the garden – the abundance of flowers, warmer and longer days, and the season for many fruiting plants and vegetables.

### **Watering and Feeding:**

With the warmer weather, soils are more prone to drying out, making it hard for newly planted trees, small shrubs and annuals to get the moisture they need to thrive. A good deep soaking through the soil with a hose or sprinkler twice a week is usually sufficient to keep your plants healthy. During hot weather, gardens with sandy soils may find a third deep watering is needed. It is also a good idea to water with Seasol once a fortnight during the growing season – studies have shown that consistent use of Seasol builds up drought hardiness and makes plants less likely to succumb to heat and moisture stress during hot weather.

Spring is also the main growth period for many plants, trees and shrubs. During this growth period, it is crucial that plants have enough nutrients to sustain health and maximise new season growth. This is

also true for plants that will be fruiting or flowering over the spring period – they also need all of the necessary nutrients. Fertilisers are the best way to ensure your plants are getting all of nutrients they need. Please ask us in store which fertiliser would best suit your plants, as there are a number of different fertilisers for different plants and uses.

### **Lawns:**

New lawns can be sown in spring – sow seed with lawn starter fertiliser on raked soil. Using a lawn aerator tool will also assist with compacted soils. It is imperative that the newly sown seed is kept moist at all times to ensure germination and survival of the seedlings into mature grass.

Spring is also a great time to rejuvenate your lawn by using a weed and feed fertiliser. This feeds your lawn and kills broad-leaf weeds at the same time.

### **Flowering Colour:**

Flowering seedlings to plant during this spring are: petunias, marigolds, alyssum, begonias, impatient, lobelia, salvia and snapdragons. There are also a huge range of perennial shrubs which become available throughout spring and beyond.

### **Vegetables and Herbs:**

As a guide, warm weather vegetables can be raised from seed in late-September (earlier if you have a glasshouse). These include tomato, pumpkin, cucumber, zucchini, capsicum, chilli, squash, and eggplant. Other seeds that can be sown are peas, beans, carrots, radishes, beetroot and corn. Seedlings of all of the above become available for planting in mid-late September.

From mid-September, we have our Chandler tomatoes available in seedling punnets. This is a variety we developed over 40 years ago

and have grown ever since. A very popular variety with our customers, it is a highly disease resistant heritage bush tomato producing tasty medium-sized fruit.

A large range of herbs can be planted throughout spring. It is also the beginning of the season for basil, which doesn't grow through our winter. We always carry a large variety of annual and perennial herbs, which are very easy to grow and more cost effective than buying bunches fresh. Herbs tolerate a variety of conditions and can be grown in small pots or containers where they are easy to harvest.

### **Weed Control and Mulching:**

Along with the warmer weather in spring, the germination of weeds in the garden also increases. It is important to control weeds in your garden as they; look undesirable, steal valuable water and nutrients from your plants and cause further seeding and spreading to other people's gardens. The most effective way to control weeds is to stop them from seeding in your garden by using mulch - mulch does not provide the correct conditions for germination of seeds. In addition to suppressing weeds, mulch also helps prevent moisture loss from your soil. This makes watering efficient, and during mild weather, decreases the frequency which your garden needs to be watered. Some mulches such as Lucerne mulch, in addition to the above, also add nitrogen to the soil which is essential for plants growth.

We stock a large range of mulches such as pine bark, sugar cane mulch, pea straw and Lucerne mulch.

### **Hot Tips for Spring:**

- Always keep an eye on soil moisture in your garden
- Check irrigation/set up automatic water systems before summer
- Planting hardy natives in spring provides food, shelter and shade for our native fauna in summer (grevillea, callistemon, banksias etc)
- Check your plants for bugs/diseases once a fortnight
- Spring is good time to repot indoor plants
- Feed your citrus
- Enjoy the warmer weather!!!