

What to do in July

General Tasks

Potatoes – Watch out for blight (indoor and outdoor). The warm, humid weather are perfect condition for the fungal spores to thrive. Once blight is discovered, cut the top growth off. It may stop the disease from spreading into the tubers. You may still get a chance of saving some of the crops.

Keep your hoe handy. Little and often keep the weeds away. If you let it grow into a bit bigger, it is going to be harder to tackle.

Courgettes – Don't have to worry if some of the flowers don't set fruits initially. Soon they will start to produce. Harvest once the courgettes are big enough. Otherwise the plants will stop producing and the existing fruits will grow into marrow.

Feeding – All the fruiting crops including Tomatoes, Aubergine, Peppers and Cucumbers will need feeding now. Either do it weekly with a high potash fertiliser according to the instructions or use a very dilute liquid feed on a daily basis.

Garlic – It can be harvested once the leaves are yellow and die back. Lift the bulbs with a fork carefully without damaging the crops. Leave them out to dry if the weather is hot. It is quite easy to string the garlic.

If you want to harvest any fresh herbs now so you can use them later. Chop them up, put them in an ice cube tray and freeze it.

Watch out for the cabbage white butterflies! Protect your brassicas from hungry caterpillars. Check for any eggs on a regular basis if there is no protection. Wear gloves to hand pluck them or spray it with organic insecticide.

Squashes such as courgettes, pumpkins etc need a lot of water to help develop the swelling of the fruits and to keep the powdery mildew at bay.

If Aubergines are grown in pots, pinch the growing tips after 4 or 5 fruits have developed.

Avoid removing the growing tips of the young salad plants. This will prolong the growth of the plants. Continue to sow lettuce, mizuna and mixed leaves.

Set up the watering system in the greenhouse or polytunnel if you are going away. Bury the terracotta pots into the border soil to prevent it from getting hot. Another method is to arrange for someone to water the plants.

Start sowing seeds for the Autumn and Winter seasons.

If you require more indoor space, remove the courgette plants if the outdoor varieties are doing well.

Provide support for any plants bearing heavy crops. Insert canes to support the branches before it snaps. For example, tomatoes, sweet corns, cucumbers.

Mist the indoor plant to cool them down during hot days.

Fruits

Raspberries – Summer varieties are ready to be harvested by simply pull the fruits gently away. Pick them while they are young.

Blackcurrants – They can be harvested this month. They tends to fruit on one or two year old wood. Prune a third of the branches to ground level in order to encourage new growth.

Strawberries – Use straw to mulch the ground under the plants. This will protect them from the rain. Protect the plants from the birds, mice and squirrels with netting. Keep harvesting the fruits before slugs get them.

Gooseberries and Currants – Pick them once they are ready. Any surplus can be freeze and use them later.

| Sow Now | Plant Now | Harvest Now |
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| Chicory Endive Lettuce Kohl Rabi Peas Radish Spinach Salad Leaves Swiss Chard Perpetual Spinach Turnips | Broccoli Brussels Sprouts Winter Cabbages Winter Cauliflowers Kale Leeks | Strawberries Potatoes Leafy Salads Radish Spinach Globe Artichokes Tomatoes Broad Beans French Beans Runner Beans Beetroot Peppers Carrots Cauliflowers Courgettes Cabbages Cucumbers Kohl Rabi Marrow Peas Redcurrants Gooseberries Blackcurrants |