

The Gardening Year, Month by Month

A short list for each month - stick it inside a cupboard door

FOREST GIRL FARM

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Life unfolding gently under the redwoods

January

- Prune dormant fruit trees before buds swell.
- Plant bare-root roses, berries, artichokes, rhubarb.
- Start onions, peppers and eggplant indoors.
- Order seed now - good varieties sell out by February.

February

- Last call for garlic - in the ground by Feb 15.
- Start tomatoes indoors mid-month.
- Sow beets, carrots, lettuce and the last peas.
- Top-dress every bed with 2 in. of compost.

March

- Sow chard, spinach, more carrots.
- Start cucumbers, melons and zinnias indoors.
- Divide crowded perennials.
- Slug patrol - new seedlings vanish overnight otherwise.

April

- Sow summer squash, corn, sunflowers.
- Plant dahlia tubers once soil hits 60F.
- Harden off tomato starts over 7-10 days.
- Repair and test drip lines before it gets hot.

May

- Tomatoes, peppers and eggplant go out after May 1.
- Sow beans, pumpkins, winter squash.
- Mulch everything 2-3 in. deep.
- Stake and cage now, not in July.

June

- Sow beans and lettuce.
- Start winter squash indoors.
- Sow winter squash now.

July

- Last bean sowing by mid-month.
- Brussels sprouts transplanted by July 1.
- Sow carrots and parsnips for winter.
- Harvest garlic and cure it 3 weeks in shade.

August

- Plant fall broccoli and cabbage seedlings.
- Sow lettuce and spinach for fall.
- Powdery mildew season - strip the worst squash leaves.
- Keep cutting flowers or they stop making them.

September

- Sow spinach, bok choy, cilantro, calendula.
- Cover-crop any bed you're done with.
- Collect and label seed from your best plants.
- Order garlic and sweet peas now.

October

- Sow peas and sweet peas - the best crop of the year.
- Plant garlic from Oct 15 onward.
- Rake redwood duff off beds before the rains.
- Take the last dahlia cuttings mid-month.

November

- Set out onion sets.
- Mulch heavily before the rains settle in.
- Clean, sharpen and oil every tool.

December

- Plant bare-root asparagus and artichokes.
- Start broccoli, cauliflower and leeks indoors.
- Rest. Genuinely.
- Sketch next year's beds on paper while it's quiet.