

Making a planting plan

Preparing a planting plan can help you get the most out of your space and helps you identify what plants or seeds you need to buy. It also allows you to increase your harvest and prevent waste, for example, sowing too many of one thing.

Before you start your plan, you need to understand your growing space.

Take some time to see where the sun shines and how much direct sunlight you get and for how many hours. What parts of your space will be in shade or prone to getting boggy or drying out too fast. This will help you to decide what will go where.

Other factors to consider.

Make a list of what you want to grow and only grow things that you enjoy eating. Are there things that you currently buy that you could grow instead. A very important thing to think about is how much time you have for maintenance – can you grow crops that are labour-intensive, or would it be better to grow ones that need less maintenance?

There are lots of different ways you can put your planting plan down on paper. From a little hand drawn sketch to an online app that you pay a subscription.

1. A month by month plan by Huw Richards

<https://youtu.be/nkjeSIQWhZc?si=gGCg99hAkJgraec5>

You would use one of these sheets per month so you can fill in what is growing in them that month. You can also make notes at the side of what you will direct so, what you will transplant and what you need to sow now for succession.

2. The spreadsheet plan. Personally, I don't like spreadsheets, but I know a few people who use them very successfully. In order to use this method, it's helpful to have your beds numbered. You can then fill in which crops will be in the beds during which months.

The image displays two components of a planting plan. The top component is a grid with months (Feb to Dec) as columns and beds (O1 to O14, and In ground 1-3) as rows. Various crops are listed in the cells, such as 'Radish/spring onions' in O1 during Feb, 'Leeks/carrots' in O1 during Oct, and 'Garlic' in O3 during April. The bottom component is a spreadsheet with columns for months (Feb, March, April) and rows for crop types (e.g., Tomatoes, Aubergines, Cauliflower). It lists the specific planting requirements for each crop in each month.

The month by month plan showing what will be in the beds.

	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
O1			Radish/spring onions						Leeks/carrots		
O2							Turnips				
O3			Garlic				Chillis/peppers				
O4							Onions				
O5							Onions				
O6							Chicory			Perpetual spinach	
O7							Tomatoes/marigolds			Garlic	
O8			Garlic				Climbing beans/squash			Onions	
O9			Garlic				Bush beans			Onions	
O10							Aubergines			Garlic	
O11								Asparagus			
O12						Peas				Cabbage	
O13							Cauliflower/kohl rabi/cabbage/broccoli				
O14							Edible flowers (succession sown)				
In ground 1						Carrots (succession sown)					
In ground 2						Jerusalem artichokes					
In ground 3						Half parsnips/half brussels sprouts/some beetroot between sprouts					

The corresponding sheet showing what needs to be planted each month to achieve this.

	Feb	March	April
Tomatoes (indoors)		Tomatoes (indoors)	Courgettes
Aubergines (indoors)		Aubergines (indoors)	Squash
Cauliflower		Cucumbers (indoors)	Celery
Spinach (direct in poly)		Onions	Kale
Salad (direct in poly)		Celeriac	Chard
Leeks		Tomatillos (indoors)	Soft herbs
Spring onions		Beetroot (direct outdoors)	Quinies
Potatoes		Parsnips (direct outdoors)	Chicory
Chillis (indoors)		Kale	
Melons (indoors)		Broccoli	
Brussel sprouts		Cabbage	
Wildflowers		Peas (direct outdoors)	
Kohl rabi		Leeks	
Asparagus		Onions	
Radish		Courgettes	
Leeks		Summer squash	
Turnips		Cauliflower	
Swede		Kohl rabi	
		Soft herbs	

3. Online planning tool. I use the Growveg.com Garden planner which makes things really easy. The only downside is that there is a yearly subscription of £19. However, I've been given a 25% family and friends link off of the first year's subscription or you can do the first 7 days free.

<https://www.growveg.co.uk/grow-promotion?referralcode=HPOKW2F5>



One last thing to think about is that a growing plan is just a plan, it's not set in stone. Nature can be unpredictable and making adjustments and having seedlings or plants ready to fill in any spaces that may appear will help you to make the most of your growing space.

The Real Seeds company has a very good, yearly month by month sowing suggestion page. <https://www.realseeds.co.uk/Monthlysowing.html>