



the.
growing year
planner

growing schools

department for children, schools and families

M MORRISONS
LET'S GROW
Supporting local schools

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action

- **Sow** sprouting seeds, such as mung beans, to provide nutritious, crunchy bean sprouts. No compost needed, just grow them in a jar, in the dark, and rinse with cold water every day
- **Plant** fruit trees and bushes up to February
- **Harvest** leeks, winter radish and other winter vegetables



January

is the month to...

- **Plan** a new school garden, or improve an old one, by involving the whole school community. Children, teachers, parents, governors, support staff and the local community should all be involved in the design, construction and maintenance of your school garden. For advice and assistance in developing your own growing zone, contact Learning through Landscapes at www.ltl.org.uk In a limited space you could try 'square foot gardening', an American method of growing in miniature plots. For more detailed instructions on developing a vegetable garden, and square foot gardening, go to www.gardenorganic.org.uk/schools_organic_network
- **Plan** a crop rotation for your veg plot. Many pests and diseases are specific to particular families of vegetables. Moving your crops to a different area each year helps control these problems. For more details see the crop rotation factsheets on www.gardenorganic.org.uk or www.rhs.org.uk
- **Order** seeds from mail-order catalogues for maximum choice.

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■ **Collect** egg boxes to start off seedlings or to support sprouting potatoes – see next month.

recipe...

Chinese-style salad

(serves 8)

- 115g flaked almonds
- 2 tbsp sesame seeds
- 3 tbsp sesame oil
- 4 tbsp rice wine vinegar
- ½ tsp sugar
- 1 tsp soy sauce
- 2 oranges, thinly sliced and chopped
- 1 chinese cabbage, shredded
- 5 large spring onions, finely sliced
- 250g bean sprouts
- 150g brussels sprouts, shredded

Roast almonds and sesame seeds in oven at 150°C for 12 minutes. Pour oil, vinegar, sugar and soy sauce into tight-lidded small jar and shake well. Cut peel and all pith from oranges, slice thinly across segments, cut into small pieces, add juice to dressing. Mix and dress all ingredients thoroughly before serving.



wildlife watch... bird and animal tracks appear in snow or mud ■ colourful lichens brighten trees and walls ■ snowdrops appear, even through the snow



action

- **Sow outdoors** early peas, and other hardy veg such as beetroot and early carrots, once the soil starts to warm up. Leave until next month if it's too wet or too cold – or use cloches or fleece to help warm and dry the seedbed
- **Sow indoors** lettuce and broad beans
- **Plant apples** and other fruit trees and bushes
- **Harvest** leeks and other winter veg



February

is the month to...

■ **Sprout** potatoes to plant next month. Early varieties should crop before the end of summer term; maincrop varieties will not be ready until September. Buy seed potatoes, which are specially grown to be disease-free. Stand them in egg boxes so the end with most buds – the rose end - is on top, and put them on the windowsill to grow. This process is called chitting.



■ **Grow** the fastest crop of all, mustard and cress, on wet kitchen towel, for salads and sandwiches.

■ **Investigate** the introduction and use of potatoes in the UK and discover history from Walter Raleigh to World War II. The wide range of potato varieties also makes an interesting topic. Find out more on www.britishpotatoes.co.uk Don't forget that potatoes go green and poisonous in the light, so if you leave them out on display, don't cook them afterwards.

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■ **Check** the soil temperature outdoors is 5°C or more for a week before you sow. Germinating weeds are a good indicator that the soil is warming up. If you want to be more scientific, use a soil thermometer. These are metal cased, to push into the ground.

recipe...

Savoury leek pancakes (serves 8)

- 1kg leeks, sliced into short strips
- 2 large eggs
- 500ml milk
- 8 heaped tbsp plain flour
- 50g butter
- 50g cornflour
- 900ml milk
- 400g mature cheddar cheese, grated
- large pinch nutmeg
- large pinch mustard powder
- salt and pepper

Wash leeks, cleaning insides of all grit, chop, and simmer in boiling water for 10 mins, then drain. Whisk eggs, milk and plain flour into a smooth batter and fry 16 pancakes. Melt butter in a saucepan, remove from heat, gradually add cornflour and milk.

Return pan to heat and slowly bring to boil, stirring constantly. Add half cheese and all seasoning, stir till melted, then fold in leeks. Put 1 tbsp of mix into each pancake, roll up and pack in greased ovenproof dish. Cover with rest of sauce and cheese; bake at 200°C for 20-30 mins.



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wildlife watch... birds sing out to defend their territories ■ frogspawn appears in ponds ■ catkins develop on willow and hazel



action

■ **Sow outdoors** peas and other hardy vegetables. Beetroot, broad beans, peas, early carrots, salad onions, radish and salad leaves should all crop by the end of the summer term

■ **Sow indoors** leeks and other slow-growing hardy veg, tomatoes and other tender veg

■ **Plant out** lettuce, broad beans and other seedlings sown last month, once they are at least 8cm tall

■ **Protect** all young seedlings from heavy rain and frost using plastic cloches, fleece or polythene tunnels

■ **Harvest** rhubarb

■ **Plant** strawberries



March

is the month to...



■ **Get creative** by making plant labels for your plot. Refer to the Growing Schools gardening factsheets for ideas.

■ **Start** the main seed-sowing season. The Plot Planner (see back of calendar) has lists of what to sow when, but remember to take account of local conditions. Sow quick-growing hardy vegetables like peas, broad beans and early carrots outdoors this month, to harvest in the summer term. If the weather is very bad, or the soil too cold and wet, start them in pots or trays indoors. Slower veg like leeks and brussels sprouts, plus more tender veg like french beans, need to be started indoors. No need to buy special seed trays: instead, recycle

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used plastic food containers - just make a few drainage holes in the bottom. However, it's well worth using proper seed or multipurpose compost, rather than garden soil, as it is sterile and has the correct structure and nutrients.

■ **Mulch** any unused beds with bulky organic material, to retain moisture, suppress weeds and improve soil structure. Mulch around fruit trees and bushes too.

■ **Clear away** winter crops and add the debris to your compost heap.

recipe...

Fruit crumble

(for 8)

- 600g fresh or frozen fruit (rhubarb, blackberry & apple, blackcurrant & raspberries, damsons or plums)
- 100g granulated sugar
- 250g plain or wholemeal flour
- 100g butter
- 70g caster sugar

Pre-heat oven to 190°C. Put fruit in saucepan, add granulated sugar and a dash of water, heat gently till soft. Turn out fruit into shallow ovenproof dish, leave to cool. Sift flour into a mixing bowl, cut butter into pieces and rub into flour till mixture is like fine breadcrumbs. Stir in caster sugar, then spread over fruit. Firm down lightly and bake for 15 mins. Serve with Greek-style yoghurt, vanilla ice-cream, creme fraiche, or custard.



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wildlife watch... the first butterflies and bumblebees awake from hibernation ■ tree buds start to open ■ primroses and other early spring flowers appear



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action

■ **Sow outdoors** early vegetables like broad beans, early carrots, lettuce and radish for harvesting by the end of summer term. Mid-season crops like peas will mature in the holidays, and late crops like leeks by autumn

■ **Sow indoors** aubergines, sweet and chilli peppers, tomatoes and other tender veg. These will all need care in the holidays

■ **Plant out** lettuce and early potatoes

■ **Protect** all young plants from the risk of frost with cloches or fleece

■ **Harvest** rhubarb

April

is the month to...

■ **Watch out** for the signs of pests and diseases attacking your fruit and vegetable crops and take action quickly. Visit www.rhs.org.uk and www.gardenorganic.org.uk for advice.



■ **Encourage** beneficial predatory insects. For example, hoverfly larvae eat aphids, and you can attract the adults with nectar-rich flowers.

■ **Try using** companion plants. These can help reduce pest problems, either by deterring pests directly, by distracting them away from your plants, or by attracting predators that eat the pests. For more information see www.gardenorganic.org.uk

■ **Sow** non-hardy veg to be grown on in a greenhouse or planted outside

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next month. Use a propagator or a warm spot in the classroom to provide extra heat. Sow large seeds like pumpkins on edge in individual small pots. Sprinkle small seeds on the surface and just cover with compost. Transfer seedlings into individual pots once large enough to handle.

■ **Sow** quick-growing hardy herbs like parsley and chives. Buy shrubby herbs like thyme and sage - ideal for growing in pots, if you have no herb garden.

recipe...

Chocolate beetroot cake

- 115g plain flour
- 30g cocoa powder
- ½ tsp baking powder
- pinch of salt
- 170g caster sugar
- 240ml corn oil
- 1 tsp vanilla essence
- 3 large free-range eggs, beaten
- 9 tbsps cooked beetroot, pureed
- handful white chocolate, broken into chunks

Preheat oven to 190°C. Sift flour, cocoa powder, baking powder and salt, then mix in sugar. Add corn oil, vanilla essence, eggs, pureed beetroot and white chocolate and mix well. Pour into lightly greased and lined 18cm circular or square tray. Bake for 50mins or until skewer comes out clean.



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wildlife watch... resident birds are building nests and laying eggs ■ the first cuckoos start to call
 ■ moles extend their tunnels and produce molehills



action

- **Sow outdoors** more lettuce, radish and salad leaves, plus french and runner beans
- **Sow indoors** courgettes to start to crop by the end of term. Other tender veg eg pumpkins will need summer care
- **Plant out** seedlings sown in March and April
- **Plant indoors** greenhouse crops like indoor tomatoes
- **Protect** tender veg, including early potatoes, from late frosts
- **Harvest** early salads, gooseberries and early strawberries

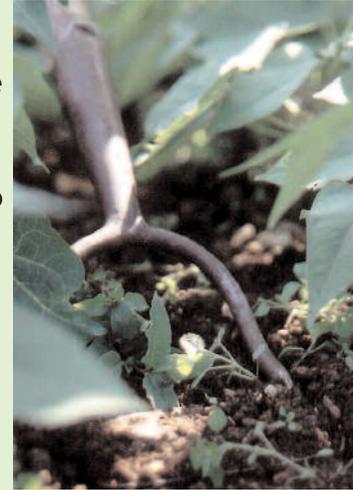
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May

is the month to...

- **Sow** non-hardy herbs such as basil.
- **Weed** round your growing crops so they do not get smothered, or lose water and nutrients. However, leave some weeds in unused areas to study, and to feed wildlife.
- **Grow** your own fertilizer, by growing comfrey. Later on, cut it down and either compost it or use it to make liquid feed. Pack leaves into a plastic container with a lid and a tap, or hole and stopper, at the base. After 2-3 weeks, drain off the liquid, and dilute 15:1 to feed your plants.
- **Water** seedlings and young plants well until they get established.
- **Make** wigwams of canes and sow runner beans or climbing french beans to grow up them. These can be decorative enough to include in flower borders, especially if you



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choose varieties with different coloured flowers and pods.

■ **Earth-up** potato shoots by covering stems with soil up to lower leaves. This protects shoots from frost and stops tubers going green.

■ **Tuck** straw or woven plastic sheeting under strawberry plants to deter slugs and prevent the fruit rotting on the ground.

recipe...

Spring vegetable soup (for 8)

- 100g butter
- 6 medium onions, peeled and chopped
- 300g potatoes, peeled and chopped
- 4 pints vegetable or chicken stock
- 500g mixed vegetables (cabbage, kale, leeks, broad beans, carrot, parsnip) roughly chopped
- 200ml milk
- Salt and pepper to taste

Melt butter in a pan, add onions and potatoes, stirring so the veg become coated. Cover and simmer for 10 mins until the onions become transparent. Then add stock and simmer for 5 mins more. Add mixed vegetables and cook for 10 mins until tender. When cool, blend in a liquidizer. Return mixture to pan, add milk and heat gently till hot through. Serve immediately, garnished with chopped fresh herbs.



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wildlife watch... Insect numbers start to build up fast ■ migrating birds such as martins, swallows, swifts and warblers arrive ■ hedgerows burst into bloom



action

- **Sow outdoors** more lettuce, radish and salad leaves, french and runner beans, plus courgettes, pumpkins and squash
- **Plant out** young plants ready from April and May sowings
- **Harvest** salads plus the first carrots, peas and potatoes. Also strawberries and other soft fruit

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June

is the month to...

- **Investigate** the history and uses of herbs. Dyers' chamomile (pictured) will produce a yellow dye. Garden chamomile has been used as a rinse to brighten fair hair and also makes a soothing tea. Many herbs have been used for treating illness, and others have interesting myths and legends attached to them.
- **Create** a medieval herb bed or book with wattle and daub walls, or a herb wagon wheel – see the Growing Schools gardening factsheets for details.
- **Make** edible hanging baskets by using trailing tomatoes like 'Tumbler' combined with herbs such as thyme and basil.
- **Water** developing fruit and vegetables if the weather is dry for more than a week. Soak each area thoroughly, don't just wet the surface. Give priority to seedlings, leafy veg and quick-growing salads, plus vegetables that will be harvested soon.
- **Enjoy** the bounty of strawberries, raspberries, gooseberries and currants.

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recipe...

Summer fruit smoothies (for 8)

- 500g strawberries
- 500g fresh raspberries
- 400ml plain yoghurt
- 460ml milk
- 6 scoops vanilla ice cream (optional)
- sugar or honey to taste
- 8 sprigs mint to garnish

Put ingredients (except mint) in a liquidizer; blend for 10 seconds. Serve with a sprig of mint per helping. Alternatively, freeze it to eat as a sorbet. Tart fruit like blackcurrants and gooseberries can also be used if first stewed lightly with sugar.



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wildlife watch... tadpoles turn into froglets and toadlets ■ dragonflies emerge to hunt ■ fledgling birds try out their wings



action

■ **Sow outdoors** winter salad leaves including rocket, mizuna and corn salad to pick next term

■ **Harvest** your early summer crops including courgettes, french and runner beans and overwintering onions. Plus plums, and soft fruit

■ **Prune** gooseberries, trained apples and pears, plums, and red- and whitecurrants. Cut back strawberry plants; remove straw and add to the compost heap

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July

is the month to...



■ **Decorate** your plot. Surplus CDs make great mobiles and can help scare birds away too.

■ **Collect** and store your own seed for next year. Leave some peas and french beans unpicked so they can mature and dry on the plant. Allow some of your early lettuce and radish to flower in summer, then save the seeds. You can even make your own seed packets- a great way to develop skills in the practical use of design, maths and English.

■ **Plan** how you are going to look after your fruit and vegetable garden during the summer. Plants in containers or in the greenhouse may

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need watering every day, but a visit once or twice a week should keep outdoor plants ticking over. Auto-watering systems can help (see the Growing Schools gardening factsheets), but these still need checking. If you can organize a rota, there should be lots of produce for helpers to pick. Alternatively, plants grown in containers could be taken home for the holidays.

recipe...

Ice bowl

- Edible summer flowers and herbs (borage, marigolds, nasturtiums, pansies, pinks, roses, violas)
- Drinking water
- Two freezer-safe plastic bowls, one to fit inside the other
- A freezer-safe weight (to stop smaller bowl floating)

Remove flowerheads, discarding leaves and stalks, and wash. Arrange them in and up the sides of the larger bowl, some facing in and others out. Place the smaller bowl on top of the flowers inside the larger bowl, and weight it down. Slowly pour water in-between the bowls till it reaches the rim of the larger one, taking care not to dislodge flowers. Place bowls in the freezer for at least 24 hours. To remove, run a little warm water over both bowls to enable the ice bowl to slip out easily. Place on a clean waterproof tray to catch drips, and use as an ornamental serving bowl for fruit desserts or ice cream at school summer parties.



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wildlife watch... honey bees work hard to collect pollen and nectar ■ lizards and grass snakes bask in the sun ■ young foxes and hedgehogs venture out



action

■ **Harvest** tomatoes, potatoes, salads and other summer vegetables. Also apples, blackberries, hybrid berries (tayberries, loganberries etc) and plums

■ **Prune** trained apples and pears, tidy up plum trees and cut raspberry canes down to the ground once fruit picked

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August

is the month to...

■ **Continue** children's interest in growing and wildlife by suggesting holiday activities and visits. You may be able to carry on gardening and wildlife-watching in the school grounds but, if not, there will be local events organized by other groups for children to join in.

■ **Check** in local newspapers and magazines, and at your local library, for news of city farms and community gardens activities, country fairs, animal and flower shows, nature reserves, pond-dipping, bird and butterfly walks, organized country rambles, and other events in your area. Ask your local council or check on their website for details of their environmental activities.

■ **Visit** gardens for inspiration. Interesting and informative gardens are run by Garden Organic, the RHS and Which? Gardening. (Contacts on back cover.)

■ **Contact** national organisations for information about their summer-holiday activities, and for their local branches and contacts.

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The following make a good starting point and can provide lots of other links.

■ **British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV)**

☎01302 388883 www.btcv.org

■ **British Waterways**

☎0845 671 5530

www.waterscape.com/things-to-do

■ **Buglife**

☎01733 201210 www.buglife.org.uk

■ **Butterfly Conservation**

☎01929 400209

www.butterfly-conservation.org

■ **English Heritage**

☎0870 333 1181

www.english-heritage.org.uk

■ **Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens (FCFCG)**

☎0117 923 1800 www.farmgarden.org.uk

■ **National Botanic Garden of Wales**

☎01558 667150

www.gardenofwales.org.uk

■ **National Trust**

☎0870 458 4000

www.nationaltrust.org.uk

■ **National Wildflower Centre**

☎0151 738 1913 www.nwc.org.uk

■ **Plantlife**

☎01722 342730 www.plantlife.org.uk

■ **Ramblers' Association**

☎020 7339 8500 www.ramblers.org.uk

■ **Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew**

☎020 8332 5655 www.kew.org.uk

■ **Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh**

☎0131 552 7171 www.rbge.org.uk

■ **Royal Society for the Protection of Birds**

☎01767 680551 www.rspb.org.uk

■ **Wildlife Trusts**

☎01636 677711 www.wildlifetrusts.org

■ **Woodland Trust**

☎01476 581135

www.woodland-trust.org.uk



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wildlife watch... many trees produce new shoots called Lammas growth ■ adult birds hide away to moult

■ insects feast on windfall fruit



action

- **Sow outdoors** spring cabbage
- **Sow indoors** salad leaves for winter use, including rocket, chinese leaves, and winter lettuce
- **Plant out** overwintering onions, strawberries
- **Harvest** all the summer vegetables including tomatoes and squash, plus salads, french beans and sweetcorn. Also apples, pears, plums, blackberries and autumn raspberries
- **Prune** blackcurrants



September

is the month to...

■ **Take stock** of your garden after the summer break. Weed and mulch around plants that are still doing well, and clear away the rest. Plan how best to use your space for the coming year.

■ **Investigate** your soil. Its texture, nutrient content and pH (acidity/alkalinity) all affect plant growth. An understanding of the basics will help you get the most from your plot. Adding a good supply of bulky organic material each autumn will improve almost any soil problem, so if you don't have your own compost yet, seek out sources of cheap mushroom compost or farmyard manure or other locally available materials such as spent hops from breweries.

■ **Celebrate** the harvest! You can grow everything from apples to zucchini in a school garden. See the Plot Planner for a quick guide to timings.

■ **Explore** the history of apples; there may be some special to your locality. Find out more on www.keepers-nursery.co.uk and www.english-in-particular.info

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■ Sow hardy annual seeds to brighten your grounds, attract insects and produce edible flowers. The common marigold, or calendula, will do all three.

■ Check out these websites for more advice, help and inspiration:
www.ltl.org.uk ;
www.rhs.org.uk/schoolgardening ;
www.growingschools.org.uk

recipe...

Baked potatoes alfredo

- One potato for each class member
- Salad leaves (lettuce, rocket, spinach)
- Fresh herbs (basil, coriander, flat-leafed parsley), chopped
- Cherry tomatoes, halved
- Green, red and yellow peppers, chopped
- Cottage or grated cheese

Light barbecue, chiminea or bonfire in advance to ensure a high temperature, with visibly white-hot embers on surface. Wash and scrub potatoes thoroughly, removing any eyes; prick skins, wrap in kitchen foil and place on embers. Cook for 20-60 mins, depending on size, turning occasionally. Meanwhile, prepare mixed-herb salad. Once potatoes 'give to the touch' when squeezed (wear an oven glove), unwrap, cut a cross on top, pinch sides and place a spoonful of cottage or grated cheese in opening. Serve immediately with mixed herb salad.



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wildlife watch... summer migrant birds
assemble to leave ■ berries ripen on trees and shrubs ■
spiderlings parachute to new homes on threads of gossamer



action

■ **Sow outdoors** broad beans now or in spring. 'Aquadulce Claudia' is best for autumn sowing

■ **Plant** garlic cloves and overwintering onion sets. Plus cane fruit, egg raspberries, blackberries

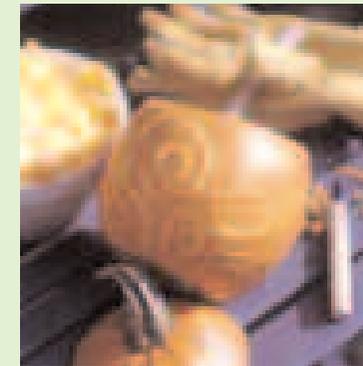
■ **Harvest** pumpkins and other non-hardy vegetables before the frost comes. Also harvest maincrop carrots and potatoes, and pick apples and autumn raspberries



October

is the month to...

■ **Build** on your pupils' enthusiasm for sowing, planting, tending and eating their own healthy produce. A productive garden is a great cross-curricular resource, providing learning opportunities and a stimulating environment for many educational activities. See the Growing Schools website for ideas.



■ **Decorate** pumpkins in imaginative ways; measure the pumpkins' weight and girth; design vehicles to transport them and use the seeds for craft work.

■ **Order** fruit trees and bushes from mail-order suppliers. They sell bare-rooted plants in autumn which are cheaper than container-grown plants from garden centres, and you get much more choice.

■ **Protect growing crops** from cold, and birds, using plastic cloches or horticultural fleece.

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■ **Dig over** beds once crops are finished to remove weeds and crop debris and loosen soil.

■ **Prepare** to store your winter root crops. Store potatoes in a dry, frost-free place, in wooden or cardboard boxes, or thick paper sacks. These allow the tubers to 'breathe' but keep out the light. Store carrots and parsnips in just-damp sand. Otherwise leave them in the ground, covered with a bin liner filled with cardboard or straw for insulation.

recipe...

Pumpkin soup

(serves 8)

- 450g pumpkin, peeled and sliced
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2 carrots, diced
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 425ml vegetable stock
- 500ml evaporated milk
- 1 tsp cinnamon or nutmeg
- pinch of salt and pepper
- fresh Parmesan cheese or single cream

Put veg in ovenproof dish, coat with the olive oil, and roast at 200°C for 40 mins. Leave to cool, then puree in a food processor. Put puree in large pan with stock and evaporated milk, bring slowly to boil. Season with spice, salt and pepper. Serve in hollowed-out pumpkin shell, topped with Parmesan shavings or a swirl of cream.



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wildlife watch... birds and mammals forage widely to fatten up for winter ■ fungi develop in mysterious shapes ■ leaves change colour and fall



action

- **Plant** apples and other fruit trees and bushes any time from now to February, unless the ground is frozen or waterlogged
- **Harvest** leeks and other winter veg such as kale and parsnips
- **Protect** surviving salad leaves with fleece or cloches to continue the crop over winter
- **Prune** apples and other fruit – see the Plot Planner for a list

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November

is the month to...

- **Adapt** containers to grow fruit and vegetables if you haven't got a dedicated garden area. Position them outdoors in a sunny spot, or on classroom windowsills. All sorts of recycled containers can be used, just make sure they have holes in the bottom for drainage, and are at least 5cm deep for seedlings and 20cm to 45cm deep for mature plants. For more ideas see the Growing Schools gardening factsheets at www.growingschools.org.uk
- **Spread** manure on empty beds and let the worms incorporate it over winter; or sow a crop of green manure, like mustard or phacelia, to dig into the ground in early spring.
- **Set up** a compost heap to recycle all garden waste including weeds, crop remains and grass clippings. For more details see the composting factsheets on www.gardenorganic.org.uk (schools area) or www.rhs.org.uk You can also



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look for other materials to recycle, such as unwanted packaging and paper.

■ **Collect** fallen leaves to make leaf mould. Stuff them into black plastic bags, water if dry, and leave in a cool, shady spot for a year or so.

■ **Put up** post and wire supports where you intend to plant cane fruit (blackberries, loganberries, raspberries or tayberries).

recipe...

Vegetable curry

(serves 8)

- 2 tsp cumin seeds
- dash of oil or knob of butter
- 6 medium onions, finely chopped
- 2 tsp ground ginger
- 2 tsp mild curry powder
- 2 tbsp tomato puree
- juice of half a lemon
- small bunch of coriander, chopped
- 4 carrots, sliced
- 400g cauliflower florets
- 200g french beans
- 4 sweet peppers, sliced
- 2 medium tomatoes, chopped
- 100g peas

Roast cumin seeds gently in oil or butter till they pop. Add half onions, cook till transparent, then add spices, tomato puree, lemon juice, and half coriander. Stir over low heat till mixture looks dry. Add 2 cups water, carrots, cauliflower and beans, cover and simmer for 10 mins. Then add peppers, tomatoes, peas and remaining onion; simmer until tender. Garnish with coriander leaves and swirl of plain yoghurt or fromage frais. Serve with naan bread.



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wildlife watch... ladybirds hibernate in hollow flower stems ■ winter migrant birds arrive and may be seen on bird tables ■ ivy flowers attract late-flying insects



action

■ **Plant** rhubarb – dig in a bucketful of compost or well-rotted manure first

■ **Harvest** leeks and other winter veg including brussels sprouts, winter cabbage, maincrop carrots, chard, kale and parsnips



December

is the month to...



■ **Get creative** with Christmas decorations using fruit and vegetables. Dried citrus slices, home-grown chillies, colourful strings of dried beans and dried ornamental gourds can give your Christmas tree a whole new look.

■ **Create** homes for wildlife – bird boxes, bat boxes, hedgehog hideaways and insect hotels can all be made from scrap materials. Log piles in a quiet part of the garden provide a refuge for a host of creatures. Many birds, mammals and insects will repay the good turn by eating pests in your garden next year. Most local Wildlife Trusts can provide construction details - contact www.wildlifetrusts.org

■ **Check** your tool kit to see what

December	16
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13	29
14	30
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needs cleaning, sharpening, mending or replacing. Appeal to parents, governors and friends, and check out local boot fairs, for second-hand tools. The Growing Schools website can also provide funding advice. Painting tool handles in bright colours makes them less likely to be lost or borrowed.

■ **Collect** regional and local names for fruit and vegetables, or make up your own. For example, in Chesterfield sprouts are known as 'knobby greens'.

recipe...

Festive baked apples

(serves 8)

- 8 large cooking apples
- 8 tbsp seedless sultanas
- 1 tbsp chopped walnuts
- 1 tbsp of butter
- Juice of half a lemon
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 3 tbsp apple juice
- 8 tbsp demerara sugar

Wash apples, slice off tops to make a lid, remove cores, and prick a few holes in sides. Place in high-sided ovenproof dish, add dash of water. Fill centre with sultanas and walnuts. Melt butter in saucepan, add lemon juice, cinnamon, apple juice and half sugar. Pour over apples, sprinkle with remaining sugar, and replace apple lids. Bake at 180°C for 30-45 mins (or 2-3 mins in a microwave oven on high setting) till soft. Serve with a spoonful of plain yoghurt, fromage frais or creme fraiche.



www.growingschools.org.uk

wildlife watch... evergreens provide winter cheer and shelter ■ shrews, mice and voles remain active all winter ■ flocks of finches and tits search the garden for food

plot planner



Vegetables shown in **bold** can be sown, planted and cropped within one school year. Some vegetables that are difficult to grow, such as cauliflower and celery, or have limited appeal, like swede and turnip, have been omitted.

January

Vegetables

- Harvest brussels sprouts, winter cabbage, chard, kale, leeks, parsnips, **winter radish, salad leaves**

Fruit

- Plant apples, currants, gooseberries, pears, plums
- Prune apples, pears, autumn raspberries

February

Vegetables

- Sow outdoors **beetroot, early carrots, salad onions, peas, radish**
- Sow indoors **broad beans, lettuce, salad leaves**
- Protect **beetroot, early carrots, peas, radish**
- Harvest brussels sprouts, winter cabbage, chard, kale, leeks, **salad leaves**

Fruit

- Plant apples, currants, gooseberries, pears, plums
- Prune apples, pears

March

Vegetables

- Sow outdoors **beetroot, broad**

radish, salad leaves

- Harvest spring cabbage, rhubarb

Fruit

- Protect **early strawberries**

May

Vegetables

- Sow outdoors **beetroot, winter cabbage, calabrese, maincrop carrots, french beans, kale, leeks, lettuce, salad onions, radish, runner beans, salad leaves**
- Sow indoors **courgettes, pumpkins, squash, sweetcorn**
- Plant out brussels sprouts, cucumbers, **french beans**, lettuce, maincrop potatoes, pumpkins, **runner beans, squash, sweetcorn, tomatoes**
- Plant indoors **aubergines, chillies, cucumbers, peppers, tomatoes**
- Protect **courgettes, french beans, early potatoes, pumpkins, runner beans, squash, sweetcorn, tomatoes**
- Harvest **beetroot, spring cabbage, lettuce, salad onions, radish, rhubarb, salad leaves**

Fruit

- Protect **early strawberries**
- Harvest gooseberries, **early strawberries**

June

Vegetables

- Sow outdoors **beetroot, calabrese, courgette, french beans, lettuce, salad onions, pumpkins, summer radish, runner beans, salad leaves, squash**
- Plant out brussels sprouts, **courgettes, cucumbers, french beans, kale, leeks, pumpkins, runner beans, squash, sweetcorn, tomatoes**
- Plant indoors **cucumbers**

courgettes, cucumbers, french beans, lettuce, onions, salad onions, potatoes, radish, runner beans, salad leaves, sweetcorn, tomatoes

Fruit

- Harvest apples, blackberries, hybrid berries
- Prune trained apples, trained pears, raspberries

September

Vegetables

- Sow indoors **salad leaves**
- Sow outdoors **spring cabbage, winter radish**
- Plant out **overwintering onions**
- Harvest aubergines, beetroot, summer cabbage, calabrese, maincrop carrots, chard, chillies, courgettes, cucumbers, french beans, lettuce, onions, salad onions, peppers, maincrop potatoes, pumpkins, radish, runner beans, salad leaves, squash, sweetcorn, tomatoes

Fruit

- Plant **strawberries**
- Harvest apples, blackberries, hybrid berries, pears, plums, autumn raspberries
- Prune trained apples, blackcurrants

October

Vegetables

- Sow outdoors **broad beans**
- Plant out **garlic, overwintering onions**
- Harvest aubergines, summer cabbage, maincrop carrots, chard, chillies, courgettes, cucumbers, french beans, lettuce, peppers, maincrop potatoes, pumpkins, winter radish, runner beans, salad leaves, squash,





beans, early carrots, chard, salad onions, parsnips, peas, radish, salad leaves, summer cabbage

- Sow indoors aubergine, brussels sprouts, calabrese, chillies, french beans, leeks, lettuce, peppers, tomatoes
- Plant out broad beans, lettuce, onion sets, early potatoes, salad leaves
- Protect beetroot, early carrots, lettuce, peas, early potatoes, radish, salad leaves

- Harvest calabrese, rhubarb, salad leaves

Fruit

- Plant strawberries

April

Vegetables

- Sow outdoors beetroot, broad beans, summer cabbage, calabrese, early carrots, chard, french beans, kale, leeks, lettuce, salad onions, parsnips, peas, radish, salad leaves

- Sow indoors brussels sprouts, chillies, courgettes, cucumbers, french beans, leeks, peppers, pumpkins, runner beans, squash, sweetcorn, tomatoes

- Plant out lettuce, onion sets, early and maincrop potatoes

- Protect beetroot, early carrots, peas, french beans, lettuce, early potatoes,

- Harvest beetroot, broad beans, early carrots, garlic, lettuce, overwintering onions, salad onions, peas, early potatoes, radish, salad leaves

Fruit

- Harvest currants, gooseberries, raspberries, strawberries

July

Vegetables

- Sow outdoors beetroot, spring cabbage, chard, winter radish, salad leaves

- Harvest beetroot, broad beans, summer cabbage, calabrese, early carrots, chard, courgettes, french beans, garlic, lettuce, overwintering onions, salad onions, peas, early potatoes, radish, runner beans, salad leaves

Fruit

- Harvest plums, black-, red- and whitecurrants, gooseberries, raspberries and strawberries

- Prune trained apples, gooseberries, trained pears, plums, red- and whitecurrants

August

Vegetables

- Harvest aubergines, beetroot, summer cabbage, calabrese, chard,

sweetcorn, tomatoes

Fruit

- Plant blackberries, hybrid berries
- Harvest apples, pears, autumn raspberries
- Prune blackberries, gooseberries, hybrid berries

November

Vegetables

- Plant out garlic, rhubarb
- Harvest brussels sprouts, winter cabbage, maincrop carrots, chard, kale, leeks, parsnips, winter radish, salad leaves

- Protect salad leaves

Fruit

- Plant apples, currants, gooseberries, pears, plums
- Prune apples, pears, blackberries, hybrid berries, gooseberries, red- and whitecurrants

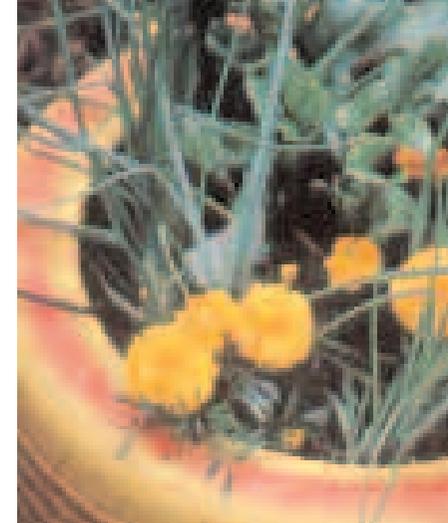
December

Vegetables

- Plant rhubarb
- Harvest brussels sprouts, winter cabbage, maincrop carrots, chard, kale, leeks, parsnips, winter radish

Fruit

- Plant apples, currants, gooseberries, pears, plums
- Prune apples, pears, autumn raspberries



SOW OUTDOORS Cultivate soil to produce a fine, crumbly seedbed. Avoid sowing into cold, sodden soil, sow indoors instead. If dry, water soil before sowing.

SOW INDOORS Sow in pots or trays of multipurpose compost. Place in a greenhouse or on a well-lit windowsill. Some veg need extra heat to germinate – check the seed packet.

Once seedlings are large enough to handle, transfer into individual pots. Move to final positions once they are 7cm-8cm tall with several leaves.

PLANT OUT Hardy veg such as peas, carrots and radish will tolerate some frost, but grow better if protected until the weather warms up. Tender veg, eg courgettes, french beans and potatoes, must be protected from frost.

PLANT INDOORS Aubergines, chillies, cucumbers, peppers and tomatoes can be grown on in large tubs or greenhouse borders.

PROTECT Rigid translucent plastic cloches or clear polythene tunnels will protect young plants from cold wind and a few degrees of frost. Horticultural fleece can be added to increase protection overnight.



Growing Schools is a Department for Children, Schools and Families programme that encourages schools to use the outdoor environment as an educational resource for pupils of all ages and abilities, across the National Curriculum. It aims to help pupils understand how their food is grown, be aware of the countryside and the role of farming, realise the importance of a healthy diet and lifestyle, and care for the natural environment. The Growing Schools website has a wide range of information including:

- News and events listings
- Regional information including places to visit and training opportunities
- Funding and fundraising
- Health and safety in relation to outdoor and out-of-school activities
- Teaching resources including schemes of work, lesson plans and factsheets
- Support organisations and networks

www.growingschools.org.uk



The Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) is working to bring the joy of gardening to a significant number of UK children through the Campaign for School Gardening, a national campaign encouraging schools to register and benchmark their gardening progress through an interactive website for teachers and students. The website contains clear and simple tips and techniques for teachers on growing and curriculum planning and is complemented by a national CPD programme of practical workshops, and 'on the ground' advice and training for teachers from Campaign Regional Advisors, all of whom are expected to be in place by 2012. Teachers can arrange free visits for schools to the four RHS gardens. For more information go to:

www.rhs.org.uk/schoolgardening or email schoolgardening@rhs.org.uk



Garden Organic (formerly HDRA) is the UK's leading organic growing charity, has been at the forefront of the organic horticulture movement for 50 years and is dedicated to researching and promoting organic gardening, farming and food. Garden Organic for Schools provides resources to help schools set up and manage organic vegetable gardens. For more information go to

www.gardenorganic.org.uk/schools_organic_network or email enquiry@schoolsorganic.net



Which? Gardening (formerly Gardening Which?) provides independent expert advice to help gardeners choose the best goods and services. Its subscription-only magazine is packed full of informative features and inspirational photography, backed up by a free advice service. To find out how to subscribe, go to

www.which.co.uk or email gardening@which.co.uk



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