

Things to do in April

You could be picking

- Over wintered curly kale and Italian kale are hanging on but purple sprouting flowered too early (last October) and never recovered. The spinach is just re sprouting.
- I usually have a few stored potatoes and onions but then it will be just the frozen soups (made freshly from just picked veg) before something comes through. Often this is a matter of luck but some stuff survives some years and not others. April is known as the 'hungry month' for this reason.
- Asparagus may be here at the end of this month. Plant new crowns before end of April.

You could still be digging and clearing

- If you are digging try to add some organic matter (compost or manure) to make it worth while.
- Get compost heap going with a mixture of material, wet and dry and toss in some grass cuttings to keep it hot. DO NOT COMPOST PERENNIAL WEED ROOTS
- Try to cover any soil not in use to avoid annual weeds developing.
- Uncover strawberry bed to improve pollination when flowers develop
- Divide clumps of mint/ chives to rejuvenate. Keep in a sunken bucket so not invasive
- HOE ON DRY DAYS TO KEEP DOWN WEEDS

You could be sowing and planting

- Environmesh/Fleece is effective cover and gives protection from bird/insects/frost.
- It is busy time for sowing – try peas (try sugar peas where you can eat it all- more substantial and easier than mangetout), broad beans, beetroot, radish, spinach, spring onion, cabbages, endive, lettuce and early carrots,(Cover to keep off carrot fly) chard, kohlrabi, parsnips and turnips.
- Sow herbs like chives, coriander, and parsley. If you can sow small amounts and re-sow when germinated you will have a steady supply
- Plant onion sets. Cover to stop birds pulling out.
- In a cold frame/greenhouse/or under fleece sow Brussels sprouts, Calabrese, summer cauliflowers and kale. At end of April try some French and runner beans and sweet corn.
- With heat sow celery, indoor cucumber, basil, melons and tomatoes. Sow courgettes, marrows, squash and sweet corn in individual pots for transplanting when frost over. Sow sweet peppers. Prick into individual pots when two real leaves.
- Feed over wintered brassicas like spring cabbage and sprouting broccoli and kale
- Finish planting potatoes this month. Earth up any early ones as they sprout to keep covered from frost. If you have trouble with scab on your potatoes try a layer of grass cuttings or cut wilted comfrey in the bottom of the trench to keep in moisture.
- You can still plant raspberry canes.
- Continue to sow hardy annuals like cornflower, nigella, Californian poppy, poached egg plant, sweet peas - all easy to grow and seed and bird friendly. Liked by hoverflies which eat aphids

Other Jobs

- If frost is forecast protect early fruit blossom with fleece. Uncover on frost free days
- Erect pea/ bean poles. If mice are a problem try sowing peas in a length of guttering under cover then plant out when rooted,
- Start cutting grass and any nettle beds to keep in check. Add to compost bin (not nettle roots) Grow some Russian comfrey (Bocking 14) for FREE high performance feed