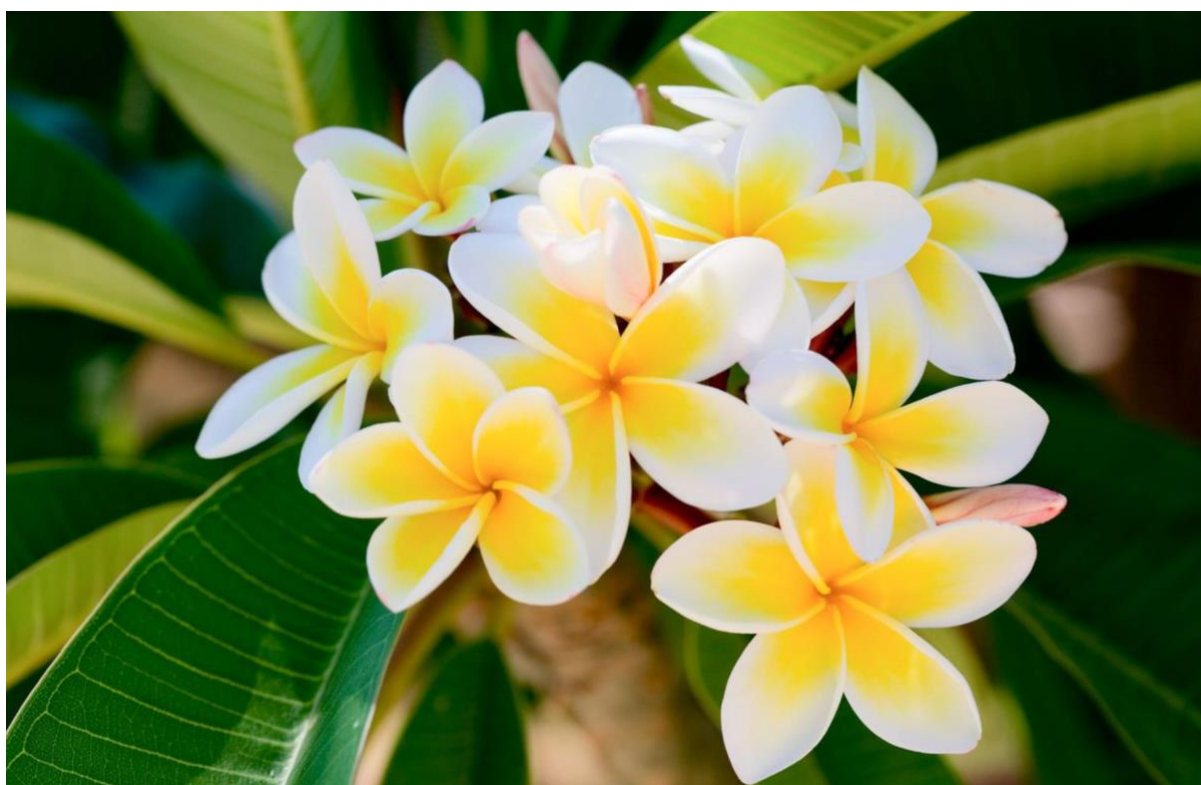


Gardening and planting for all Australian seasons

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You don't have to wait for Spring to have a blooming garden, it's possible for all Australian seasons to be bursting with colour and exuding vibrancy. If you do a bit of research, you will find many plants and flowers that thrive in different seasons throughout the year. Knowing what to plant and when to plant it will give your garden the dynamism and fervor of a fully blossoming Spring garden all year round. Make rolling up your sleeves, digging in some dirt and sowing some seeds a perennial practice. So, what are the best plants and flowers to grow in each season?

Summer



Depending on where you live in Australia will determine what you can grow during Summer. It is the optimal time to get your garden in the perfect summer solstice. In subtropical areas of Australia, including south-east Queensland and northern New South Wales, the best flowers to sow include; ageratum, impatiens, sunflower, torenia, and zinnia. As for wet and dry tropical areas like north Queensland, the Northern Territory and Western Australia, opt for flowers like balsam, petunia, salvia, and sunflower. Places like Sydney, coastal New South Wales, Victoria or any other temperate areas, plant blooms like; alyssum, cyclamen, Iceland poppy, malope, pansy, and wallflower. For the cooler, southern tablelands of Australia, like Melbourne, Tasmania and the cool highlands, stick to planting cleome, forget-me-not, lobelia, petunia, and wallflower. Mediterranean areas of Australia, including Adelaide and Perth should simply prune spring-flowering shrubs in summer and cut back flowering annuals to keep them blooming year round, instead of planting new foliage. There are some flowers that thrive across the majority of Australia during summer, including cockscomb, gomphrena, marigold, vinca, celosia and coleus.

For those looking to inject the feeling of summer in their garden simply through colour and aesthetics and not so much based on climate, some of the best, quintessential summer flowers include:

Dahlias: these require full sun exposure, with miniature Dahlias suitable for growing in small pots. Frangipanis: these tropical flowers thrive from December to April in well-drained soil, ample sun and typically by the beach. Gardenias: not just for the aesthetics, but for the scent too, Gardenia's perfume is unmistakable and refreshing. Bougainvillia: pretty in pink, Bougainvilleas do well in pots and more confined courtyard gardens. Lavender: preferring hot summers and dry winters, Lavender is best grown in neatly clipped hedges, in pots or courtyards.

Autumn



There is no better time than Autumn to grow some edible plants. Whether you start an entire veggie patch, plant a few fruit trees or stick to a herb garden, Autumn is the time to get growing plants you can really sink your teeth into. If you live in Adelaide or Perth, consider yourself lucky in Autumn; you have the capability of planting citrus, avocado and olive trees by the end of March. The climate in mediterranean areas of Australia allow for different plants, herbs, fruit and vegetables to grow compared to other areas of the country. The climate fosters growth of these types of plants better than anywhere else. So if you reside in the mediterranean areas of Australia take advantage of the wide range of planting options.

For those who live outside the parameters of Adelaide and Perth, herbs that flourish best include coriander, garlic, parsley, tarragon, marjoram, oregano and thyme. As for fruit and vegetables, you're best to stick to beans, broccoli, spinach and peas. If you live in wet and dry tropical areas of Australia, like north Queensland, the Northern Territory and Western Australia, you have a plethora of options when it comes to growing fruit and vegetables. Beetroot, capsicum, carrot, cauliflower, celery, cucumber, eggplant, lettuce, melon, mustard, okra, onion, parsnip, potato, pumpkin, radish,

rosella, silverbeet, squash, sweet corn, sweet potato, tomato and zucchini are among some of the best fruit and vegetables that thrive in these conditions.

Winter



Despite popular belief, flowers and plants can thrive in winter, just like their spring and summer counterparts. It's about knowing what plants are made for the cooler months and understanding the different condition in which they can prosper. It's important to remember winter has some of the most delicate flowers, perfect for lifting your spirits during the colder climate. While plant growth in winter is slower than other seasons, it doesn't mean there is no growth at all. When looking to plant flowers in winter, here are some ideal options:

Winter rose: even though they're not technically part of the rose family, the winter rose is a low ground cover with petite flowers and papery texture. Blanketing the terrain, they add to the look and feel of a classic winter garden.

Fairy primrose: these are lacy, delicate blooms, flowering in white, pink, or lavender. While they only last a season, they grow up to thirty centimetres high and are idyllic in the winter months.

Paper daisy: these are small, white flowers that thrive in well-drained soil. If you have exposed wall or ground you need covering, paper daisy is the way to go.

Daphne: popular for its strong scent, Daphnes come from the wooded hillsides in China and Japan, flowering in small, pale pink blooms.

Hardenbergia: known as the 'happy wanderer', Hardenbergia flourishes in well drained soil and partial shade.

Snowdrops: not just a wintery name, but a wintery flower too. Snowdrops grow best in the shade, making them the perfect plant for balcony gardeners.

Lily of the valley shrub: this flower enjoys cooler areas of Australia and blooms best in shady areas under bigger trees.

Spring



The season of spring is when flowers, plants, vegetables and fruits have sprung. With a newfound warmth in the air, spring is the time to keep a close eye on your exploding garden, but also admire the unstoppable richness of foliage that is taking over your space. It is the optimal time to bring life and colour into your garden. The only issue when it comes to gardening in spring is deciding what you want to plant. The options are endless with very few plant types off limits. If your space permits, grow a mixture of plants, flowers, vegetables, fruits and herbs in spring, creating the ultimate diverse garden space.

If you have limited space yet want to take advantage of the liberty springtime gardening offers, there are some plants that work better in confined spaces. If you only have a balcony to work with, opt to grow beans, basil, spring onions, tomatoes, capsicum and chilli. If you've only got a plot of soil on offer, grow eggplant, potato, cucumber, climbing beans and pumpkin.

As for flowers, stick with native plants as opposed to non-natives, as they're acclimated to your area so won't need as much attention as other flowers. If you're really after that spring feeling though, and want your garden to be vivid all season long, some of the perfect spring flowers to grow include; pansy, lilac, iris, hyacinth, daffodil, tulip, hydrangea, and azalea.

With different plants, flowers, herbs, vegetables or fruits making seasonal appearances, you have the capability of a keeping a flourishing garden from summer to spring. If you're unsure what plants will work best in your garden, simply talk to your local gardening expert. Then, happy planting!