

August

Growing Guide with Grace Mandeville



With plenty to harvest, ongoing maintenance and a final wave of sowing, August is my favourite time in the vegetable garden. The days are still long but the first signs of autumn are creeping in, so now's the time to enjoy your summer bounty, preserve your gluts of vegetables and fruit (or shove it in the freezer for later use), all while preparing for the months ahead.



Harvesting Highlights

August is one of the most abundant months for harvesting and regular picking helps encourage plants to keep producing.

Vegetables:

Keep harvesting courgettes (before they become huge marrows), runner and French beans, tomatoes, sweetcorn, cucumbers, beetroot, carrots, lettuce, and spring onions.

It may also be time to dig up your maincrop potatoes, so pull up a few and have a look.

Fruits:

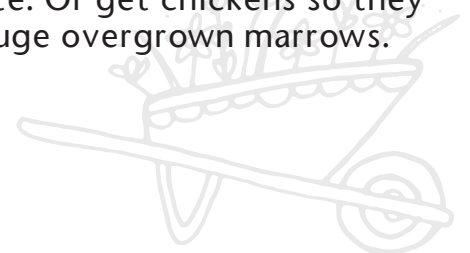
Pick raspberries, blackberries, plums, cherries, apples, and pears as they ripen. If you have a huge glut of fruit, I tend to wash them, dry them, and store them in the freezer for future use throughout autumn.

I love nothing better than making jam or cordial but let's be honest, we all want to be in the garden right now, not stuck in the kitchen!

We can spend time cooking tasty food with our home-grown ingredients later in the year.

Top tip:

Check daily for ripe produce and harvest little and often to get the best flavour and avoid waste. Or get chickens so they can eat your huge overgrown marrows.



What to Sow in August

Although summer is well underway, there's still time to sow fast growing crops or get a head start on autumn and winter harvests:

Salad leaves: Sow lettuce, rocket, and mustard for quick crops into September and October.



Radishes and spring onions can still be sown directly. Plant your radishes in a shady area to stop them from bolting in the current heat.

Spinach, chard, and kale sown now will give harvests later in autumn and may overwinter in mild areas or grow them under cover in a greenhouse or polytunnel.

Chinese cabbage, pak choi, and turnips are also good choices for late sowings.

Key Gardening Jobs for August

August isn't just about picking—it's also a crucial time to maintain plants and prepare for the seasons ahead.

Pinch out the growing tips of outdoor tomatoes once they've set 4–5 trusses of fruit to direct energy into ripening.



Tie in vigorous growth on climbing crops to keep them tidy and productive.

Clear leaves around your winter squash and pumpkins so they can ripen in the sun.

Save seed from open-pollinated varieties like lettuce, peas, tomatoes, and beans if you want to be self-sufficient next year.

Turn your compost heaps and water them if they're dry. If you make your own compost, now's the time to turn and add to them - ready for mulching your beds later this year or early next.



Pest & disease watch

Watch out for blight on tomatoes—remove any infected plants or foliage.

Remove caterpillars on brassicas.

Cross your fingers that the ladybirds are doing their job with the aphids!

Planning Ahead

Although August is full of life, it's time to start thinking ahead to autumn and winter: their job with the aphids!

Plant out spring cabbages, kale, and purple sprouting broccoli if you've raised them earlier.

Prepare space for overwintering crops such as onions, garlic, and broad beans (to be planted in autumn).

Clean and organise your greenhouse and seed trays ready for autumn sowings.



About the author

Grace Mandeville is a self-made Digital Creative and Small Holding owner, on a mission to live the stereo-typical good life and bring you all along for the adventure. Grace began her career acting in children's TV on CBBC, since then she has presented for MTV, acted in TV Commercials and has even been lucky enough to appear in Vogue (twice).

Grace's passions took a turn towards nature and sustainability after presenting a series for the BBC on Sustainable Fashion. Since then she has bought a Small Holding with her family in Somerset (multi-generational style) which has attracted the attention of Escape to the Country and Gardeners world. You can see her vegetable growing and DIY projects on her successful Instagram profile, Youtube Channel 'The Little Holding' that she runs with her husband or follow some of her cooking and gardening tips on her TikTok.