

DAVID STEPHEN'S

with monthly guide by
PETER CUNDALL

ORGANIC GROWING CALENDAR

J U N E

TASKS FOR THE SEASON

- Attending garden club meetings and being in touch with local fruit growers is handy when you are looking for new varieties of fruit to graft onto your own trees.
- Short lengths of grafting wood (called scions) can be pruned off any deciduous tree from early winter, wrapped in newspaper and plastic, and refrigerated until late winter, the ideal time for scion grafting. Bud grafting of stone fruit trees is a summer job - not to be confused with the former.
- Sowings of peas and broad beans are not dependent on soil temperature. But plants producing their flowers during frosty weather are likely to incur damage to flowers or young pods while the vines remain unaffected.
- Check over sweet and Irish potatoes, onions, pumpkins, apples and any other stored crops for signs of rot.
- Expose lumpy clay to the elements: frost can shatter wet clay which was once rock hard.
- Sow under glass, cabbage, cauliflower, lettuce.
- Seed catalogues are normally printed this month for midyear distribution. It's never too early to order seeds for spring planting. Clean up tools, oil or paint wooden handles and sharpen spades, hoes and mattocks ready for the new season.
- To save time on cutting back the leaves of a large number of **strawberry plants**, a rotary mower can make short work of the job. Set the blades on 'high', remove all stones and boards and use the mower on half throttle.

STORING CITRUS

A novel way to store lemons is to use old panty hose. Drop a lemon at the bottom, tie a knot; drop in another, tie a knot and so on until the stocking is filled. You get a long 'string' of lemons which are separated from each other. Hang in a dry cool place. Use them from the bottom up by slitting the mesh. If you are juicing citrus fruits, keep each half of skin for fashioning a slug trap in the garden. The smell of decaying citrus attracts them to shelter inside each skin dome.

NEWSPRINT COMPOST ENCLOSURE

Individual bundles of waste newspapers, tied very securely with rotproof binder twine, not household string can be used as bricks to build a long lasting compost enclosure. A circular enclosure with a diameter of about one metre would suit most households, and is easier to build and maintain than any other shape. Lasts about 2-3 years before it needs replacing - for the cost of some binder twine.

HARVESTING CITRUS

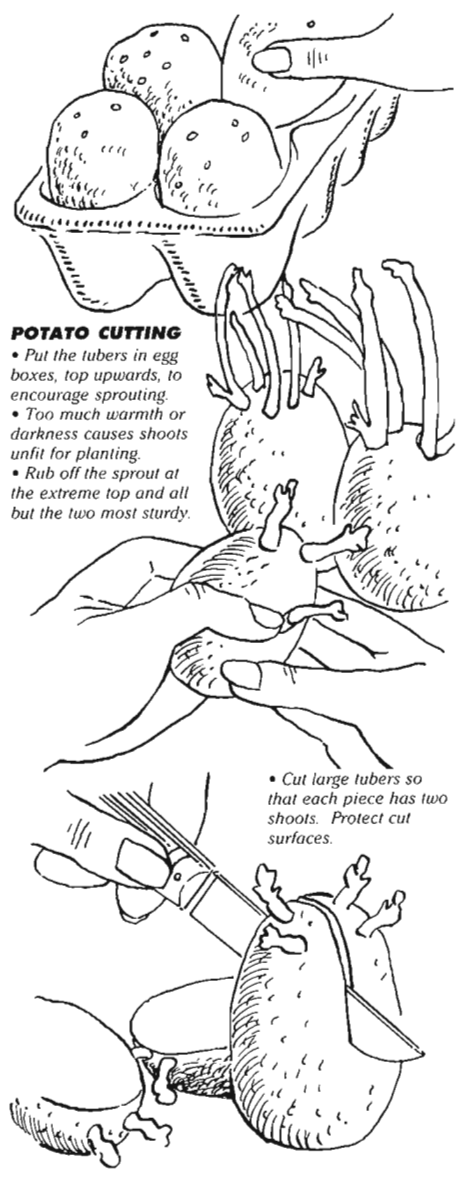
Don't pull the fruit off a citrus tree, otherwise it will pull out the 'plug' at the base of the stalk - the fruit may not keep. Lemons should be neatly cut off and their skins left unscratched. Like other citrus, if the skins are thick, and there seems to be little juice, put them aside for a few weeks. The skins become thinner and the lemons juicer.

PETER CUNDALL'S GUIDE

When wind damages a plant, it does so in several ways, most obviously when a branch is broken or torn off. Some trees are more brittle than others. Apricots have a tendency to split down their trunks, leaving half a tree. The wound should be trimmed immediately and smeared with Bordeaux paste, made from the fungicide powder mixed with a small amount of water. Don't ever bother trying to nail or tie the two split halves together. They rarely knit to heal but can become a source of infection and a haven for insect pests. Broken branches should be neatly and carefully cut back to the nearest junction or almost flush with the main stem and, if the final cut is vertical, there should be little need to paint the wound. Sometimes, a little heavy grease is enough to make the wound waterproof until healing takes place.

TWO HINTS

- **SULPHATE OF IRON** for blueing **hydrangeas**. Start in late winter. Treatment after late spring will have no effect on the current seasons growth.
- **CODLIN MOTH LURE**: sweet wine and water in a bottle suspended **horizontally** in the tree.



POTATO CUTTING

- Put the tubers in egg boxes, top upwards, to encourage sprouting.
- Too much warmth or darkness causes shoots unfit for planting.
- Rub off the sprout at the extreme top and all but the two most sturdy.

WINTER AUSTRALIAN HERBAL CALENDAR

DIVIDE THE FOLLOWING PLANTS:

- GOLDEN ROD
- SHALLOTS
- POTATO ONIONS

SOW

- HOLLYHOCK
- CORNFLOWERS

Most of the herbs listed for dividing in spring (see September) can also be divided during late winter if the soil is not saturated. Under such conditions heavy soil should not be tilled, forked or turned.

Herb flavours change and become stronger when herbs are dried. If you are not an experienced herb - user try making **TABOULI** (LEBANESE SALAD). Use brown rice, lots of mint, parsley, spring onion. Or try a **BOUQUET GARNI** of two parsley sprigs, plus one of marjoram, two of thyme, and half a bay leaf. Add to soups and stews. Some of the short lived perennial herbs such as **sage** and **lavender** become very woody with bare stems. If a mound is constructed with just the young tips protruding, many new plants will result. These can be separated carefully and replanted.