



PREPARING A NEW VEGE GARDEN

By Iain Eaton

As August rolls on there seems to be a few warmer days and a distinct whiff of spring in the air. But before you go ahead and start planting, there's a few things you need to do, and August/September is the perfect time to start.

Do a Vegie garden Plan. Think of the location. You'll need maximum sunlight, protection from the wind and

water close by. Taller vegies should be at the south end, so as to not shade smaller ones.

Allow space for later plantings, ie tomatoes, capsicum, egg plant. Also allow space to walk through to weed and pick

Manure and Mulch - really these are the two key ingredients. Cow, horse or chook manure is fine. Aged is best. If it's fairly fresh you need to give it a few weeks and try to dig it through.

If you have terrible soil, ie. rocky or sandy, you might need to introduce soil. Most landscape yards will do various "manure soils" which would be great. If the ground is hard, just place this on top and plant straight into it.

Pea or lucerne straw is the best mulch in this situation. Not only will it keep your soil

moist, but it is great organic matter for the garden structure, and is full of nitrogen which will release as it breaks down.

Vegies in Pots. Don't have room for a vegie garden? Try putting vegetable plants in Pots! I think in some ways it's easier, especially no heavy digging!

The principles are the same as a normal garden. Choose a nice garden pot - The beauty of this is you can make your vegie garden a feature with a nice pot, but practically, a long trough is the best, especially if you want to line them up at the edge of a balcony or deck.

Good potting mix - not garden soil. A good potting mix available at Bliss is Martins Premium. It has all the goodies, including slow release fertilizer, wetting agent, crystals, trace

elements, and coir. But it certainly wouldn't hurt to add some blood and bone too.

Regular watering - It is also helpful to incorporate a soluble fertilizer weekly when watering. For leafy vegies, use something with a lot of nitrogen like Miracle Gro. For the fruiting vegies like tomatoes, use something with a lot of potassium like Phostogen. Most will need as much sunlight as possible.

It's so rewarding to grow your own Vegies. Give it a try this season!

