

Your Garden In June

By Sue McDougall,
Horticulturalist & Gardening Personality

Welcome to the start of winter gardening!

As we embrace the official winter period and settle into cold climate gardening, planting bare rooted fruit trees, pruning rose bushes, and harvesting tasty oranges we can be forgiven for yearning after warm weather. Think lush tropical foliage and brightly coloured leaf variants in the very north of Australia. Tropical gardens are a delight at this time of the year, with ripening tomatoes and sweet potatoes being harvested and replanted, it's a time of abundance. In the south growth rates slow down and it's preparing and planting time.

Heating the house...

Don't forget the indoor plants

Indoor gardening has boomed over the last 18 months and there are now more plants decorating indoors than ever before. When you reach for the heater don't forget your plants. While reverse cycle heating systems remove moisture from the air many indoor varieties require humidity to thrive. To increase the humidity around indoor plants here are a few simple tips to keep your indoor plants thriving while the heater is on:

- Invest in a mister or spritzer bottle and mist foliage regularly.
- If plants are watered using self-watering pots and filled via the reservoir, water from the top through winter. Humidity will increase slightly around foliage as the soil dries out.
- Bunch indoor plants together during the cooler months to create a microclimate and increase humidity around the foliage.
- Place plants on shallow dishes with expanded clay or glass beads and regularly fill with water. Plants will benefit as the water evaporates.
- When purchasing new indoor plants in winter, chose those varieties which thrive in low humidity.
- Reduce watering as plants don't generally need as much in winter. For a lot of plants, let them dry out completely before watering again. Always check plant labels as a guide.
- Apply a liquid fertiliser such as **PowerFeed Indoor & Potted Plants** 1.25 litre trigger spray to the soil every couple of weeks to keep the foliage lush and flowers blooming.



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Grow your own tea

Delving into the world of herb teas and blending your own is fun. The flavour of freshly plucked leaves opens endless possibilities of creating flavour sensations. Most plants grown for herbal teas are gorgeous garden plants, so if you don't get to make your own tea as often as you like, plants will continue to look gorgeous in the garden.

Creating clever plant combinations will ensure fresh herbal teas aren't far away and fresh leaves plucked and steeped in boiling water is so easy to make. Plant in large mixed containers or reserve a sunny corner to create a 'well-being' garden jam packed full of fresh tea making ingredients.

Try these flavour combinations:

- Lemon grass, rosemary, and mint for a refreshing pick me up.
- Moroccan mint and peppermint will deliver a sweet minty flavour that smells divine.
- Dandelion, ginger, and lemon verbena is packed full of antioxidants and full of flavour.
- Chamomile and lemon balm will have you relaxing the evening away.
- Mint and lavender teamed together gives a delicious subtle and slightly sweet flavour, not to mention the floral aroma.

Tip: Water in your new plant combinations with **Seasol** or **Seasol GOLD** to help reduce transplant shock and aid plant establishment.



Storm Damage

Garden plants are incredibly resilient, usually standing up to severe storms with ease, the only tell-tale signs of damage are a few branches down and leaves missing. Use these leaves to your advantage, instead of placing in the bin, create a pile in the corner and compost them. Create an informal compost pile with layers of leaves, sheep manure and a light sprinkling of organic fertiliser such as **Seasol Plant + Soil Booster**. Very soon these leaves will have broken down and can be then spread around the citrus trees or vegetable garden.

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Inspect large trees and branches for signs of vertical splitting, where the plant may have twisted in the wind. If there are obvious weak spots, seek out the services of an arborist, because in this case prevention is better than cure. When trimming and removing branches with a pruning saw always complete a cut under the branch first (referred to as an undercut), then complete by trimming from the top. An undercut will prevent the branch peeling the bark away when it drops before the cut is finished.



Finally finish off by trimming any stubs or branches close to the main stem, this will ensure the plant can heal over quickly. Remember to retain any manageable size sticks or branches that have had side shoots trimmed off for the kids to let their imaginations run wild. For outdoor kids there is nothing more exciting in the garden than discovering a new pile of sticks and branches especially for them.

Perfect Potatoes

Potatoes are almost a set and forget crop for winter and perfect for small spaces or balcony gardens. A perfect winter project, one kilogram of seed potatoes has the potential to turn to 10kgs at harvest time.

Select seed potatoes from your local garden centre or hardware store, these are certified to be virus free and will produce perfect disease-free tubers every time. Potatoes develop on the stems as the plants grow, so selecting a largeish container will guarantee there's room for tubers to develop.

- Select a 50lt container or 40cm diameter pot. Large planter bags are ideal as they are a cost-effective container. Place in a sunny position.
- Layer about 10cm of premium potting mix before spacing potatoes evenly around the pot. Place tubers about 10cm apart ensuring they don't touch. Sprinkle a little **Seasol Plant + Soil Booster** around and cover tubers with about 10cm layer of potting mix.
- Just as the plants break through the soil surface apply about 10cm layer of potting mix over the shoots again. Continue to layer soil until the container is full.
- Apply **PowerFeed with Troforte All Purpose including Natives** when the pot is full and continue to care for the plants until they start to yellow and die back. Tip the pot out and harvest the fresh potatoes.

