

# Jobs for the month March

March is the month when there is a whisper of Spring in the air and things start to really get going on the allotment. It is the true start of the growing season and is a very busy month with sowings of a wide variety of crops to be made. You need to make the most of any mild and dry weather as not only will over wintering crops start to begin to grow again but so will the weeds, and slugs and snails will start to become active again.

## Jobs to do

### Weeding

Start clearing your plot sooner rather than later. Weeding now is easier as the weeds have very shallow roots and can be easy to pulled up or dug out. Over the coming month a strong and sturdy root system will develop rapidly as the weeds grow and spread, making it a lot harder to get them out of the soil. So a couple of hours weeding at this time of year can save you an awful lot of effort and backache later in the growing season! From this month onward regular hoeing of your plot will go a long way to keeping those weeds under control.

### Feeding

Over wintering crops such as spring cabbage, sprouting broccoli, curly kale and Japanese onion sets will need feeding to give them the best possible start to the growing season. A top dressing with a high nitrogen fertilizer will get them off to a good start.

Now is a good time to spread that well rotted manure you got delivered last year or your home made compost. Top dress your beds with a barrow load per square metre to make an effective mulch that will help keep in the moisture and keep down the weeds. Beds for crops such as potatoes, peas and beans, all the curcubit family and your permanent fruit will benefit greatly from a good pile of well muck rotted muck.





## Sowing

Crops sown outdoors under cover in March are those that can tolerate a moderate amount of frost, whilst more tender crops or those that need warmth to germinate can be sown in the greenhouse or in a propagator on a windowsill.

### Sow outside

#### Early March:

Broad beans  
Parsnips  
Early peas (round type)  
Radishes  
Spinach

#### Late March:

Summer cabbages  
Brussels sprouts  
Leeks (winter)  
First early potatoes  
Shallot sets  
Garlic sets  
Early carrots (short rooted Nantes type)  
Beetroot  
Spring onions

### Sow inside

#### Early March:

Cucumbers  
Tomatoes  
Chilies  
Peppers  
Aubergines  
Melons  
Brussels sprouts  
Cauliflowers (summer and autumn)  
Cabbage (summer)

#### Late March:

Courgette  
Celery  
Marrows  
Lettuce  
Turnips  
sweet corn

## Maintaining

Prepare trenches for peas and beans - dig a trench 30cm deep and add 15-20cm well rotted manure in the bottom.

Support and prune raspberries - remove all the canes that fruited last year and tie in all the young canes which grew last year ready for fruiting this year. Give a good feed of a high potash fertilizer.

Prune gooseberries, red and white currant - cut back to a healthy bud and take out weak shoots, leaving an open centre for air to circulate.

Mulch all cane and bush fruit.

Plant strawberry and asparagus beds.

