

MOON PHASES AND MOON GARDENING

At the new Moon phase, the Moon is between Earth and Sun, crossing the sky with the sun during the day, therefore no illumination. At first quarter, the half-lit Moon is highest in the sky at sunset. At full Moon, the Moon is behind Earth in space and as the Sun sets, the Moon rises with the side that faces Earth fully exposed to sunlight. The illuminated shape of the moon that is visible from Earth is called a phase.

Each lunation takes 29.53 days (however some months are 28 days while others are 30 days) and there are 3 full moons in every season. A lunar year is 354 days and our solar year is 365 days.

The side of the moon towards the sun is lit, so before a full moon, the left side of the moon is the lit side (for southern hemisphere viewers) and the right side of the moon is lit after a full moon.



The Moon's gravitational pull affects the movement of water on the Earth. We see this clearly with the tides at their fullest during a full moon and their lowest during a new moon. The moon also affects the surface tension of moisture in the soil, something we can't clearly see, but can take advantage of when deciding on the best time to plant. There is also an effect on the flow of water through plants. Sap moves more vigorously during the waxing phase as the moon grows to full, and slows down as the moon wanes towards the new moon.

The highest amounts of rainfall correlates with new & full moons. The Moon Phases can help us to determine the best time to do things in our gardens.

NEW MOON Phase

The New Moon (dark moon) is increasing in light, it looks like it is growing bigger, this is known as a **waxing moon**. Water in the Earth is starting to be drawn up at this time, we will see the tides start increasing in height. This means the moisture is increasing in the soil.

This is the best time for planting leafy and stem annuals and biannuals as well as plants that bear fruit with external seeds such as corn.

It's also a good time for applying liquid fertilisers and pruning and grafting, as increased sap flow produces new growth more quickly.

FIRST QUARTER Phase

The moon is still **waxing**, the pull on the earth is increasing and the tides are reaching much higher levels. The moisture in the soil is increasing and so is the sap in the plants.

This is the best time to plant fruiting annuals where we eat the seed or fruit bearing part of the plant such as tomatoes, beans, pumpkins, capsicum, cucumber, broccoli etc.

A good time for applying liquid fertilisers and pruning and grafting, as increased sap flow produces new growth more quickly.

FULL MOON Phase

The moon is decreasing in light and is known as a **waning moon**. The tides have turned and will now start to decrease in height. There is still moisture in the earth and the sap is still high although the flow is drawing down. This focusses the energy more towards the roots.

This is the best time to plant root vegetables, bulbs and perennials such as beetroot, carrots, onions, potatoes, turmeric, ginger, rosemary, sage, rhubarb and asparagus.

Take cuttings and divide plants. Repotting. Apply solid fertiliser and harvest for storage.

THIRD/LAST QUARTER Phase

The moon is still **waning** and half of the visible surface of the moon is now in darkness. The tides will soon be at their lowest and the sap in plants has slowed. This phase is viewed as low in vitality and planting is not recommended now.

This is a good time to do mowing (if you want slow regrowth), weeding, composting, mulching and insect control. Apply solid fertilisers and prune to restrain growth.

KEEPING IT SIMPLE:MOON GARDENING IN ONLY 2 PHASES

1. Waxing Phase

The **waxing moon** is when light increases in the waxing crescent, first quarter and waxing gibbous phases and sap flow is drawn up. This is the most suitable time for sowing and transplanting flowering annuals, biennials, grains and melons. Basically any short lived plant that we want to harvest its leaves, seed, flowers or fruits. It's also a good time for applying liquid fertilisers, pruning and grafting as increased sap flow produces new growth more quickly. 2 days either side of a NEW MOON rising vitality, cultivate the soil ready for fertile time ahead. 4 days either side of FIRST QUARTER is fertile , plant leaf/stem and fruiting crop.

2. Waning Phase

The **waning moon** is when the light decreases during the waning gibbous, last quarter and waning crescent phases and the sap flow is drawn down. This focuses the energy towards the roots, which is more suited to root crops and perennials, plants that live longer than two years. It's also a good time for applying solid fertilisers, pruning dormant plants and harvesting, as there is less likelihood of rotting. 2 days either side of a FULL MOON is when you avoid planting or sowing seeds as they will germinate quickly resulting in spindly growth. It is however a good time for edible sprouts.

The first and second day before and after the LAST QUARTER are barren days, good for maintenance.

The third and fourth day before and after the LAST QUARTER are good days for all root crop.

ADDING ASTROLOGY

The astrological symbols helps us to determine the best time to plant within the appropriate moon phase.

Water signs (Cancer, Scorpio and Pisces) during the waxing phases are best days for planting above ground crop.

Earth days (Taurus, Virgo and Capricorn) during the waning period are best days for planting root crop.