



BTC Allotment Newsletter

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February

We get a glimpse of the early signs of the arrival of Spring this month. The soil begins to warm up around the middle of February and we can see for the first time this year the buds beginning to swell on fruit trees and bushes. Overwintering vegetables begin to look less sorry for themselves and they start to produce new growth. These are the signals that it is now safe to think about sowing a row of early, peas and broad beans using a hardy cultivar.



Prepare beds for sowing

Preparing beds before sowing begins in spring is one of the most important February allotment jobs. In doing so, you'll help to aerate, drain and warm the soil. When digging over, be sure to incorporate plenty of homemade compost or composted manure.

Planting

February is the best month to plant out **garlic and shallots**. Prepare the ground as you would a seed bed and plant using a trowel don't push the bulbs into the soil. Plant the garlic cloves about 2ins/5cms deep and leave the tips of the shallot bulbs just at the soil surface. The birds will pull one or two out leaving them lying on the ground. Replant them as soon as possible the birds will quickly lose interest.



For tasty harvests of **rhubarb**, choose a bright, open position and prepare the soil by digging deeply and incorporating plenty of rich, homemade compost. Plant the crowns so that the buds are level with the soil surface, so make sure your the hole is big enough to allow this. Firm in and water well. Let plants establish for two years before harvesting.

Broad beans are easy to sow under cover, and will provide a rewarding harvest in late spring. Sow indoors now in deep pots or modules, before placing in a cool, frost-free location, such as an unheated greenhouse or cold frame.

