



Annual Garden Maintenance;

General Principles for the Gold Coast:

- **Watering:** Deep and infrequent is generally better than shallow and frequent, especially for established plants. Water in the early morning to reduce evaporation and disease risk.
 - **Mulching:** Essential year-round! A good layer (5-10cm) of organic mulch (cypress, bark, hoop pine fines, ti-tree) conserves moisture, suppresses weeds, regulates soil temperature, and enriches the soil as it breaks down.
 - **Soil Health:** Focus on building healthy soil. Regular additions of compost and organic matter are crucial as well as a liquid seaweed application.
 - **Pest & Disease:** Monitor regularly. Early detection is key. Opt for organic solutions where possible such as pruning and application of eco oil as a preventative.
 - **Feeding:** Use slow-release fertilisers such as Searles 5 in 1 or Osmocote for consistent nutrition, or supplement with liquid feeds for a quicker boost. Consider specific fertilisers for different plant types (e.g., native, citrus, succulents).
 - **Pruning:** Crucial for shaping, promoting flowering, and maintaining plant health.
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Seasonal Overview & Monthly Breakdown

1. Winter (June - August): Dry Season, Mild Temperatures

- **Focus:** Preparation for spring, minor pruning, weed control, enjoying winter blooms. Reduced watering needs.
- **Climate:** Mild days, cooler nights (can drop to single digits, occasional light frost in western/hinterland areas, rare on the coast). Drier.

June:

- **Pruning:** Light prune frost-tender plants if any damage occurred. Remove spent flowers from winter annuals. Trim hedges lightly if needed. Don't heavily prune spring-flowering plants yet.
- **Weeding:** Continue hand-weeding or apply selective herbicides for winter weeds.
- **Feeding:** Light feed of established plants with a low-nitrogen, high-potassium fertiliser to encourage root growth and flowering (e.g., rose food for roses, or a general all-purpose slow-release). Hold off on heavy nitrogen feeds.
- **Watering:** Significantly reduce watering. Only water when the soil is dry to touch a few inches down. Focus on newly planted items or pots.
- **Pest & Disease:** Monitor for aphids on new growth and powdery mildew in damp, cool spots.

July:

- **Pruning:** Continue light pruning of winter-flowering shrubs after they finish blooming. Prune deciduous fruit trees. General tidy-up.
- **Weeding:** Consistent weed control.
- **Feeding:** Similar to June – light feeding, focusing on plants preparing for spring. Apply dolomite lime to acid soils if needed, particularly for vegetables.
- **Watering:** Very low watering. Check soil moisture before watering.
- **Planting:** Continue with winter annuals and cool-season veggies. Plant bare-rooted roses, deciduous trees, and fruit trees.
- **Soil Prep:** Prepare beds for spring planting by digging in compost and organic matter.

August:

- **Pruning:** Crucial month for pre-spring pruning! Prune roses hard (typically late July/early August). Shape summer-flowering shrubs. Remove dead/diseased wood.
- **Weeding:** Continue vigorous weeding.
- **Feeding:** Start transitioning to more general-purpose fertilisers. Light feed all established plants with a balanced slow-release fertiliser to prepare for spring growth.
- **Watering:** Gradually increase watering as temperatures rise and plants show signs of new growth.
- **Pest & Disease:** Be alert for insects on new spring growth. Use an eco oil application as a preventative.

2. Spring (September - November): Warming Up, Growth Spurt

- **Focus:** Vigorous growth, flowering, pest prevention, preparing for summer. Increased watering and feeding.
- **Climate:** Warming temperatures, increasing humidity.

September:

- **Pruning:** Finish any late winter pruning. Deadhead spent spring flowers to encourage repeat blooms. Tip prune hedges for shape.
- **Weeding:** Weeds will explode with the warmth – stay on top of them!
- **Feeding:** Main feeding period! Apply a good quality, slow-release balanced fertiliser to all garden beds, pots, and fruit trees. Liquid feed flowering annuals and vegetables fortnightly.
- **Watering:** Water more regularly as temperatures rise. Check soil daily for new plantings.
- **Planting:** Ideal time for planting almost everything! Summer annuals, tropical plants, shrubs, trees, herbs, and warm-season vegetables (tomatoes, corn, beans, cucumbers, eggplant).
- **Pest & Disease:** Vigilant monitoring for aphids, caterpillars, mites. Consider preventative pest control for susceptible plants.

October:

- **Pruning:** Continue deadheading. Lightly prune hedges for shape. Tip prune to encourage bushiness.
- **Weeding:** Daily weed patrol needed!
- **Feeding:** Mid-spring feed for hungry plants. Continue liquid feeding.
- **Watering:** Water regularly and deeply, especially during dry spells.
- **Pest & Disease:** Be proactive. Use organic sprays if needed. Look for grubs in lawns.

November:

- **Pruning:** Light trimming to maintain shape. Remove any faded flowers.
- **Weeding:** Stay on top of weeds before they seed.

- **Feeding:** Light feed of slow-release for plants that have flowered heavily. Continue liquid feeding pots and veggies.
- **Watering:** Increase watering frequency as summer approaches. Ensure pots are well-watered.
- **Planting:** Last chance for summer annuals and vegetables before the peak heat.
- **Pest & Disease:** Monitor closely as pests multiply quickly in the heat. Scale, mealybugs, thrips can become issues.

3. Summer (December - February): Hot, Humid, Wet Season

- **Focus:** Sustaining plants through heat and humidity with mulching and watering, managing vigorous growth, pest/disease control.
- **Climate:** Hot, humid, regular rainfall (can be heavy), risk of cyclones/storms.

December:

- **Pruning:** Light pruning only to remove spent flowers or wayward growth. Avoid heavy pruning which can stress plants.
- **Weeding:** Weeds will flourish with rain and heat.
- **Feeding:** Light liquid feeding for pots and flowering annuals. Avoid heavy granular feeds in intense heat.
- **Watering:** Supplement rainfall if dry spells occur. Ensure good drainage to prevent root rot. Pots will need daily watering.
- **Planting:** Very limited planting due to heat. Focus on maintenance.
- **Pest & Disease:** High risk for fungal diseases (powdery mildew, black spot) due to humidity. Be vigilant for pests.

January:

- **Pruning:** Only prune to remove dead or diseased material.
- **Weeding:** Constant battle!
- **Feeding:** As per December. Avoid fertilising during heatwaves.
- **Watering:** Crucial for survival during heatwaves. Ensure deep watering.
- **Planting:** No general planting.
- **Pest & Disease:** Highest risk period. Monitor for fungal issues, caterpillars, grasshoppers, fruit fly. Be ready to treat.

February:

- **Pruning:** Light trimming. Remove spent flowers from summer annuals.
- **Weeding:** Still very active.
- **Feeding:** Light feed as per previous months. Prepare for autumn feeding in March.
- **Watering:** Continual watering as needed.
- **Planting:** Can start some early autumn vegetables if the heat breaks (e.g., beans, corn, some leafy greens).
- **Pest & Disease:** Continue monitoring.

4. Autumn (March - May): Cooling Down, Preparing for Winter

- **Focus:** Replenishing soil, planting winter/spring annuals, last chance for significant pruning.
- **Climate:** Cooling temperatures, less humidity, often pleasant.

March:

- **Pruning:** Can do some light shaping and tidying of shrubs. Prune any leggy summer annuals.
- **Weeding:** Still active but slowing down.
- **Feeding:** Good time for a final granular feed before winter with a balanced or lower nitrogen fertiliser to strengthen plants for cooler weather.
- **Watering:** Gradually reduce watering as temperatures drop.
- **Planting:** Ideal time to plant winter/spring flowering annuals, cool-season vegetables, and herbs. Many shrubs and trees can also be planted.
- **Pest & Disease:** Monitor for fungal issues if autumn rains are heavy.

April:

- **Pruning:** General tidy-up. Remove spent annuals. Deadhead perennials.
- **Weeding:** Less active, but important to remove them before winter.
- **Feeding:** Last chance for a light feed before winter dormancy sets in for some plants.
- **Watering:** Reduce watering significantly.
- **Soil Prep:** Prepare beds for next spring by digging in compost and organic matter.

May:

- **Pruning:** Remove dead or diseased wood. Prepare for rose pruning in winter.
- **Weeding:** Light weeding.
- **Feeding:** No heavy feeding.
- **Watering:** Minimal watering needed.
- **Planting:** Last chance for winter annuals and cool-season vegetables if temperatures remain mild.
- **Mulching:** Top up mulch layers for winter protection and moisture retention.
- **Tools:** Clean and sharpen tools. Service mowers.

Key Garden Zones on the Gold Coast:

- **Lawn:** Mow regularly (height varies by grass type, see previous responses). Fertilise seasonally. Control weeds, pests, and thatch.
- **Pots & Containers:** These dry out much faster and need more frequent watering and liquid feeding.
- **Vegetable Garden:** Requires consistent feeding and watering. Rotate crops.
- **Fruit Trees:** Specific fertilisation and pruning needs. Monitor for fruit fly.
- **Natives:** Generally lower maintenance once established, but still benefit from occasional water during dry spells and a specific low-phosphorus native fertiliser.

Remember: This is a general guide. Observe your specific plants and garden microclimates. Adjust watering and feeding based on rainfall and plant response. Enjoy your beautiful Gold Coast garden!