

Boschendal keeping its food garden seasonal and sustainable

The Boschendal Werf Food Garden is donning a new cloak with winter officially here. Farm to table Werf Restaurant chef, Christiaan Campbell, is known for his dedication to sustainability and a preference for a seasonal eating philosophy. “I cook with what the garden delivers, which means our menu changes daily. In winter, I especially love the roots for their earthiness and high natural sugar and starch content. They're the perfect food to nurture us through the colder seasons.”



Boschendal Werf vegetable garden

Horticulturist Megan McCarthy is the green-fingered wizard behind the Boschendal garden. Winter is one of her favourite seasons and a time for reflection and renewal: “In winter, the garden is not as dormant as it may seem. It’s the time when the root crops are ready, along with brassicas, legumes, and leaves. Growth ticks quietly along and careful tending bears rich rewards.”

Beetroot is one of Campbell’s favourite ingredients and the team has a beautiful beet dish in mind for the 2017 winter season. “We use a Big Green Egg cooker to char the beets across the coals. Then we smash the beets with a yogurt sauce and add a sprinkling of coriander salt to finish. Broccoli is another ingredient that comes into season, and we have a chopped broccoli salsa recipe that everyone loves.”

Carrots, radishes, turnips, leeks, onions, cabbages, peas, broad beans, and cauliflowers are all wonderful winter crops to plant, along with avocados, oranges, lemons, and limes. In terms of herbs, plant rosemary, mint, thyme and parsley should be on the planting list. McCarthy says, “Of course, with the current Cape drought it’s important to garden responsibly, and to reuse and recycle when possible.”

Boschendal's seasonal planting guide:

McCarthy tells fellow green-fingered enthusiasts what to plant each season, and Campbell shares his favourite ingredients to cook with:

Winter: May to August

Campbell’s favourites: “In winter, the garden sleeps and everything slows down. It’s the time for the roots, which have an earthy flavour and are high in natural sugars and starches, to nurture and energise us through the colder months.

Brassicas, legumes and leaves are all in season.”



McCarthy's planting guide: "During the colder months, get your carrots, beetroots, radishes, turnips, leeks, cabbages, onions, cauliflowers, peas, broad beans and spinach into the ground. Plant your nectarines, pears, plums, oranges, lemons, and strawberries, along with rosemary, mint, thyme, fennel, bay, rocket and parsley."



Spring: September to October

Campbell's favourites: "Spring is my favourite season, the garden is gorgeous, with fresh peas, mange tout, and broad beans all ripening. These fresh flavours all pair together perfectly. We make a beautiful dish where we combine these together with our homemade olive oil, freshly torn buffalo mozzarella and mint leaves, with a

sprinkling of grated lemon zest."

McCarthy's planting guide: "In spring, start sowing your artichokes, mealies, asparagus, beetroots, butternuts, turnips, lettuces, sweet potatoes, pumpkins, radishes, turnips, and waterblommetjies. Now is the time to plant mulberries, figs, pomegranates, avocados, oranges, bananas, lemons, mangoes, litchis, apricots, and guavas, along with sorrel, sage, lemongrass, marjoram, oreganum, ginger, and tarragon."

Summer: November to February

Campbell's favourites: "The garden comes alive in early summer with an abundance of vegetables and my favourite globe artichokes. The peppers begin reddening and the baby beets start kicking in. For me, the globe artichokes are always something to look forward to – they're only around for two months and they're delicious roasted in butter and served with succulent confit chicken."

McCarthy's planting guide: "In summer, you want to plant asparagus, green beans, courgettes, sweet peppers, eggplants, garlic, mushrooms, potatoes, and pumpkins. In terms of fruit, it's the season for melons, spanspek, tomatoes, figs, apricots, lemons and litchis. Start sowing your mint, basil, sage, rocket, and lemongrass as well."

Autumn: March to April

Campbell's favourites: "Autumn is the time to forage for fungi. Boschendal is known for its wild mushrooms, although the lack of rain has impacted the last few seasons. I love the porcini and pine varieties especially. Our Textures of Mushrooms dish is one of the few we bring back every year – we dry powder, puree, pickled, and sauté a selection of beautiful mushrooms to create a rich assortment of flavours and techniques in one dish."

McCarthy's planting guide: "In autumn, you should plant your carrots, leeks, broccolis, celeriac, fennel bulbs, garlic, cabbages, kales, kohlrabies, onions, parsnips, peas, and cauliflower. It's also the season for all berries, cherries, grapes,

pears, strawberries, nectarines, apples, peaches and plums, along with coriander, dill, rocket, and rosemary.”

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