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**OBSERVER  
ORGANIC ALLOTMENT  
BLOG**

## April Action Plan

From cloches to plug plants and artichokes to guttering, Caroline Foley allotment action plan for April

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The soil is beginning to warm, your seedlings are germinating on the window sill... what should you be doing next? **Caroline Foley** author of the best-selling *Allotment Handbook* gives you her allotment agenda for April...

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### THINGS TO DO IN APRIL

1. Finish planting your potatoes.
2. Put up sturdy supports for peas, beans and other climbers.
3. As soon as the soil temperature is above 7C/46F (or, as a rough guide, you have been working in your shirtsleeves for about week), you can start sowing hardy vegetables outside with cloche cover. Cabbage, broccoli, sprouts, broad beans, spinach and Swiss chard fall into this category.



4. Try starting early peas (like 'Early Onward') in a piece of plastic guttering. When you transplant, you just slide the contents off into a prepared trench without disturbing the roots.



5. If you haven't time to fuss over seeds, order little plug plants. They will arrive at the optimum moment ready to grow on.
6. Plant offsets of globe artichokes. They make architectural spires and if you don't eat them, the gorgeous blue flowers will be irresistible to bees.
7. If you would like some privacy or a cheap and decorative windbreak,

plant some Jerusalem artichokes (no relative to the globe variety). They can be grown from tubers bought at the green grocers and will shoot up to make a 3m/10ft theatrical green screen this summer.

**8.** Sow carrots towards the end of the month. Outwit the carrot fly. As it flies low and in straight lines, it is defeated by a barrier (30cm /2ft high) of fine netting or polythene.

**9.** Watch out for slugs and snails. They relish the April showers. Rake up debris where they like to lurk, top up beer traps. Be hospitable to their predators - frogs, toads, hedgehogs and song thrushes.

**10.** Keep an eye out for aphids. Rub them off by hand or, if this is too repellent, wash them off with a good squirt of water before the colonies build up.

**11.** Protect fruit against birds with netting. A gauge of about 2cm/3/4in will keep birds off while allowing bees to get in to pollinate.

**12.** Keep a hoe handy and get into the habit of chasing after weeds while they are young. This saves hours of work later.



**13.** Order one-year-old 'crowns' and start an asparagus bed. It will give you delicious gourmet spears each spring for 20 years or more.

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