

Vegetable plots cropped continuously will, over a period of years, become 'tired' even if crop rotation to minimise pests and diseases is practised and fertilisers/soil conditioners are added regularly. Soil becomes over-worked and production reduces. If this is the case in your garden, then it's time to take some remedial action!

Rejuvenation should be done every two or three years to keep the soil in top condition and the plot producing healthy, quality vegetables.

The best times to undertake revitalisation are:

1. At the end of the winter season, before sowing or planting spring and summer crops.
 2. At the end of the summer season, in early autumn, before sowing or planting winter crops.
- Start by pulling out the crops just finishing, clearing the vegetable patch completely. Remove all roots and foliage in and on the soil and add to the compost bin if disease-free.
 - Dig the soil over to loosen it, incorporating any remaining mulch and removing weeds as you go.
 - To 'sweeten' the soil and stabilise the pH (reduce excessive acidity from regular fertiliser applications), add a good handful of **Dolomite Lime or Garden Lime** per square metre and leave on the top of the soil – rainfall or watering will wash it in.
 - Leave fallow for two or three weeks, regularly removing any weeds that appear.
 - If you have time between this work and planting time for the next season (four to six weeks minimum), try growing a green manure crop like lupins or peas, which should be dug in when about 30cm tall. Nitrogen-fixing crops like these will improve soil fertility and add extra organic material into the soil.
 - A week or so before sowing or planting fresh crops, add **Certified Organic Poultry Manure or Organic Fertiliser, Sulphate of Potash** (at the rate recommended on the bag), **Organic Compost and Organic Planting Mix** to build up the organic content and encourage earthworms and beneficial soil organisms. Fork through the soil to a depth of about 30cm and water well.
 - If your soil has become hydrophobic (water-repellent), add **Granular Wetting Agent** to improve moisture penetration.
 - Rake soil level, add your central pathway for access, and you're ready to start growing your own healthy vegetables and herbs again.

