

Dig For Victory: Gardening For The Zombie Apocalypse



Horrendous weather. One moment we are slugging it out in the blazing heat, only to receive a severe drenching in the next. In my opinion, horrendous weather is probably the best portent of apocalypse there is. Let's be honest, if our species met its doom and demise on a mild May afternoon I would feel more than a little underwhelmed.

Lurking around the blogosphere lately, there seems to be a growing contingent of survivalists and doomsday-preppers. Even if the outbreak of a disease that would bring humanity to its knees seems unlikely, being a little more self-sufficient doesn't sound like a bad idea. To this end, I have put together a little series about survival gardening to help prepare you for the imminent collapse of civilisation.

The way I see it, there are a number of completely plausible scenarios where survival gardening could come in extremely handy. I compiled a list- and then a short list- and then a shorter list

with the intention of picking a few so I can cover all angles. Maximum contingency distribution is the game – and it is most certainly afoot.

Ok – let's start with a Zombie Apocalypse, as it seems to be the most likely (according to popular thought). Assuming that your brain doesn't immediately become a free-range, locally-sourced ingredient for a gourmet walker – you will probably want to source some food of your own. With that in mind, wouldn't it be extremely helpful if you had already prepared months – maybe even years in advance with your own little self sustaining patch of vegetable goodness?

Although there is no true perennial vegetable, many root vegetables can be split and re-planted after harvest. This brings us on to the “root” of our salvation – the humble potato. Brought back to England by Sir Walter “Potato” Riley, the potato quickly became a staple crop – especially in Ireland where it grew extremely well. You will need some space for this, perhaps installing some raised beds. I would suggest putting spikes around the edge to protect from nibbling zombies – but my understanding is that they are purely carnivorous, so this may not be a problem.

Potatoes like acidic soil and tend to develop a case of the “common scab” in alkaline conditions – in the event that you are planting into alkaline soil, apply sulphur. Application of sulphur will help combat this, as well increase the size of your crop. Start preparing your miniature potato field in the November/December before you intend to start planting. Pick an open, sunny position with well drained soil and avoid planting in the same spot for three consecutive years as this will increase the risk of disease.

Plant your first seed potatoes roughly 30cm apart at the end of February and harvest approximately 10 weeks later when the plants begin to flower. If you leave them longer they will as a rule, get bigger. Given that this is a zombie apocalypse however, you will be forgiven for not having the luxury of patience. Plant your second crop of seed potatoes at the beginning of August – the same distance apart and harvest roughly 11 weeks later. After 11 weeks, cut the plant down just above the stem and then you can harvest as and when you want up until Christmas. If you are planning to leave them in the ground though, you increase the risk of pests and diseases. It will also be worth covering them in straw or a suitable substitute to stop your tubers getting cold. More about potatoes you can to know with Plant spot app [free on iTunes](#).

Make sure you store them somewhere cool and dark – preferably in a paper or hessian sack rather than polythene – so they don't sweat and rot. No one wants sweaty spuds.

That is the gist of it anyway – the method can be refined, but you have the foundation of your Zombie apocalypse contingency plan. In the next article, I will cover gardening for the Nuclear Holocaust. See you then.