

## Sensible seasons

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### Abstract

To detect and measure changes due to global warming, it helps to be 'in tune' with our environment. One excellent way is to use seasons that relate to significant changes in the biological world, and particularly in our gardens and native vegetation. Most people around the world use the European-devised system of four seasons – summer, autumn, winter and spring – even though these seasons often have little relevance to the biological changes in their region. Indigenous communities in Australia have long had systems of six or more seasons. I've recommended a five-season system for the coastal Sydney region, including an early spring ('sprinter' – beginning with the mass flowering of wattles in southern Australia) in August and September, a pre-summer season ('sprummer') in November and December, a longer summer (December to March), and a short autumn (April and May) and winter (June and July). While every year is different, this system better reflects the environmental changes around Sydney. We need better phenological data and a willingness to untie ourselves from four seasons based on the distance of the sun from the earth and/or environmental changes in a distant land. Botanic gardens can lead this debate, but clearly poets or Indigenous people should provide the new names...

For more information see [talkingplants.blogspot.com/seasons](http://talkingplants.blogspot.com/seasons).

