

November - Jobs To Do

Flower Garden:

- Plant **Tulip** and **Lily** bulbs;
- Plant **hardy shrubs** and **trees** whilst the soil is still relatively warm;
- Continue to cut down **herbaceous perennials**, but leave **Penstemons** until Spring so that any tender new growth isn't damaged by winter frosts. It is a matter of gardener's preference as to whether the flowers should be cut off **Sedums** or whether they should be left over winter for "decoration";
- Lift and divide overgrown clumps of **herbaceous perennials**, eg Campanulas, hardy Geraniums, Flag Irises and Grasses;
- Root cuttings can be taken now and throughout the winter of plants such as **Papaver** (perennial poppies), **Verbascum** (mullein) and **Phlox**;
- Apply an autumn **mulch** (of compost or leafmould) to protect plants that are borderline hardy such as **Agapanthus, Kniphofia** (red hot poker), **Phygelius, Alstromerias and Zantedeschias**.
- Lift and store **Dahlias, Cannas** and **tuberous bedding Begonias** that have been hit by the first frosts;
- **Hellebores** rarely flower naturally by Christmas, despite their common name of Christmas rose, but they can be encouraged to flower a little earlier by covering them with cloches, potting them up and bringing them into a warm greenhouse, or placing them on a windowsill inside the house;
- Cut down by half tall **shrubs** such as **Buddleia** and tall **Roses**, to avoid wind rock damage;
- Prune **deciduous climbers** such as **Virginia Creeper** or **Boston Ivy (Parthenocis**), **Honeysuckle** and **Wisteria**;
- Take hardwood cuttings of **Forsythia, Buddleia** etc;
- Clean the **greenhouse** inside and out;
- **Large pots** that are at risk of cracking in the frost should be **insulated** with bubble wrap, hessian or fleece, to protect them over winter;
- Move pots with **tender plants** into the greenhouse;
- Now can be a good time to dig up **perennial weeds** with long tap roots, such as dandelions and mallow, from newly cultivated areas. Clay soils, in particular, can be more workable in autumn, as they are no longer baked hard, but not yet sodden and sticky with winter wet. Mulching will help to improve the soil structure;
- Clear **leaves** from lawns, rockeries, flowerbeds and paths and store in a mesh bin or black sacks punched with holes and kept damp, to make **leafmould**, which makes an excellent soil improver or mulch and can also be used as a seed-sowing medium.

Vegetable Garden:

- Plant out **Garlic** and **Onion Sets** (f not done last month);
- Divide **Rhubarb**, if this hasn't been done for over 5 years and replant with the growing point at soil level, or with the buds raised out of the soil on wetter soils to avoid rotting in soil enriched with well-rotted compost/manure;
- Sow **Broad Beans** (Aquadulce Claudia);
- Sow **Peas** now in an unheated greenhouse, either in pots or the soil border for an early summer crop - choose hardy peas such as 'Feltham First', 'Meteor' and mangetout 'Oregon Sugar Pod';
- Stake top-heavy **Brassicas** and draw up some soil around the base of the stem to prevent wind rocking the plant and causing damage to the roots;
- Clear old **plants** and **weeds** and add to the compost heap;
- Continue **winter digging** to allow the frost to break down your soil and add well-rotted manure or home-made compost. Digging the soil, especially bare patches or newly cultivated land, will expose pest larvae and eggs to birds and frosts, as well as clearing weeds and improving soil structure.

Fruit:

- Plant **fruit bushes**, digging in plenty of garden compost or well-rotted manure;
- Prune **Apple** and **Pear** trees: remove dead, diseased or crossing branches, then shorten the central shoots by a quarter, and cut side shoots back to 3 buds to encourage them to change into fruiting spurs, but don't be tempted to prune your **Plum** trees now as they will be susceptible to the silver leaf fungus - wait until midsummer;
- Stop winter moth damage to **Fruit trees** using grease bands around the trunks;
- Tidy up your **Strawberry** plants - cut off any dead leaves and remove runners.

Lawn:

- If you haven't already **aerated** your lawn, there's still time to do it before winter sets in, using either a lawn aerator or simply by inserting a garden fork at regular intervals and leaning it back slightly to let air in;
- Now your beds are clear, **edge** your lawn with a half-moon tool as this will create a neat and tidy appearance and make maintenance easier;
- Give grass a **final cut** with blades on the highest setting;
- **Clean away** any grass stuck to the **mower**.