

SEPTEMBER - Jobs To Do

Flower Garden:

- Liquid-feed **flowering containers** weekly, as if slow-release fertiliser was added at planting time, it will be probably be exhausted by now;
- Wipe Vaseline onto the stems of Dahlias to discourage earwigs from reaching the flowers and damaging them;
- Collect **seeds** from: **Poppies, Nigella (Love in a Mist), Honesty** etc and store in a labelled paper envelope in an air-tight container. If you have any spare seeds, please bring them along clearly labelled to the Autumn Show for sale on the day (see under "Other" for more information re the Show).
- Plant **spring-flowering** and **hardy summer bulbs**, eg **Daffodils, Tulips, Crocuses, Lilies, Alliums** – buy early to get the best selection and quality, though don't plant Tulips until November to minimise the risk of fungal disease (tulip fire);
- Plant out **spring bedding** eg **Wallflowers**, **Pansies**, **Bellis Perennis, Cyclamen**;
- Prune **Lavender** plants, cutting back to a few cm above bare wood;
- Take cuttings from **tender perennials** such as **Pelargoniums**, **Fuchsias** and overwinter indoors;
- Buy and plant **shrubs** for autumn colour, such as **Cotinus** (smoke bush), **Fothergilla**, **Euonymous Alatus Compactus** (for red/pink colour) and **Liquidamber** (tree);
- Give **evergreen hedges** their final trim to create a crisp edge;
- Pot up **containers** with colourful evergreen plants such as **Festuca Grasses, Heathers, Pernettya, Ajuga (Bugle Plant), Gaultheria, Lollo Rosso Lettuce, Dwarf Sedums**;
- If you've had problems with **Vine Weevil**, try using a biological control (which attacks the larvae hatching from this year's eggs) or use Provado Vine Weevil Killer on the adults (available from the Trading Centre) but do not use on vegetables.

Vegetable Garden:

- Sow **winter salad** in modular trays to plant out in October, eg **Mizuna, Mibuna, Lettuce Winter Density** and **Spinach**;
- Expose **Squashes** and **Pumpkins** on plants to fully ripen in the sun and place on a tile or brick to minimise damage from slugs etc. Towards the end of the month, cut fruits with as much stalk as possible, and stand in a sunny, sheltered spot or in a greenhouse to finish ripening;
- Dig up any remaining **maincrop Potatoes** and **Onions**;
- Sow **Green Manure** (such as **Phacelia**, which has purple flowers attractive to bees) on bare ground to mop up nutrients that would otherwise be flushed out by winter rains into the soil;
- Net **Brassicas** to keep pigeons off during the winter;

- Plant out **Spring Greens** sown last month;
- Stake **Brussel Sprouts** and **Purple Sprouting Broccoli**;
- Prepare ground and add an all-purpose fertiliser in readiness for planting out **Garlic** (soon available from the Trading Centre).

Fruit:

- Plant our new **Strawberry** plants (either bought in or propagated from your own runners);
- Chop off the old leaves of **Strawberry** plants to encourage new ones to develop;
- Remove fruited stems from **Blackberries** and **hybrid Berries** and tie in new canes;
- Try getting 2 crops next year from your **Autumn-fruiting Raspberries** by leaving some of this year's canes in place and tying them in with this year's new canes;
- Cut out to ground level this year's fruited canes on **Summer-fruiting Raspberries** and tie in the new canes produced this year.

Lawn:

- **Rake out** any accumulated dead grass and moss to improve drainage. Where heavily compacted, push a garden fork in the surface every 20cm (8") or so to encourage air to reach the roots. Brush a **top dressing** of 6 parts sharp sand, 3 parts sieved garden soil and 1 part sieved garden compost, spreading at a rate of 1kg (2lbs) per square metre (square yard). If resulting turf looks sparse, scatter some grass seed. Finally, give the lawn a **feed** using lawn sand, which also kills moss, or autumn feed (to encourage roots rather than leaves).

Other:

- Turn your **compost heaps** to aerate them and mix any dried material from the outside with the damper material on the inside.