

TO DO IN OCTOBER



During the month of October, the gentlest of breezes gives us a shower of orange and yellow leaves!

FLOWERING PLANTS

- ◆ Cut back dead or withered summer flowers. Leave grasses and other sturdy plants that provide structure or seeds for the birds. Some dead flower heads look especially attractive when dusted with frost.
- ◆ Final planting for spring bulbs.
- ◆ Dig up non-hardy bulbs and dry them off.
- ◆ Continue to dig up, divide and transplant any overly-vigorous plants.
- ◆ Plant spring bedding such as wallflowers, bellis, primulas and winter pansies for a fantastic spring display.
- ◆ Sow sweet peas in a cold frame or unheated greenhouse to overwinter, planting outdoors in March or April to produce early blooms.

MAINTENANCE

- ◆ Pile up autumn leaves and garden debris in a quiet corner for hedgehogs.
- ◆ Protect guttering from becoming blocked with fallen leaves.
- ◆ Use the last of the dry weather to paint sheds and fences with preservative before the winter arrives.
- ◆ Check stored onions and garlic and remove any rotting bulbs immediately. The neck of the bulb is usually the first area to rot.
- ◆ Make time to give evergreen hedges a final trim before the bad weather sets in, so they look neat and tidy for the winter.
- ◆ Raise pots off the ground for the winter by using bricks or 'pot feet' to prevent waterlogging.
- ◆ Invest in bird baths and bird feeders this autumn. Birds are gardeners' friends and will keep pest numbers down.

TREES AND SHRUBS

- ◆ Plant new trees, climbing plants and hedges.
- ◆ Thin out or prune deciduous trees and climbing roses.
- ◆ Begin pruning harvested fruit trees (but not apples, as this is done in winter when the trees are dormant). Clear the bed around the base of the tree and cover with half rotted compost.
- ◆ This is the ideal month to move shrubs and trees.

FRUIT AND VEGETABLES

- ◆ Remove any diseased fruits from branches or the ground, as they will carry any infections over next year.
- ◆ Dig compost or well-rotted manure into beds which have been harvested.
- ◆ Move citrus trees indoors to a bright, frost-free position, away from radiators and draughts. Reduce watering. Don't let them dry out completely.
- ◆ Divide clumps of rhubarb by digging up and splitting into several pieces with a spade. Re-plant the healthiest looking pieces.
- ◆ Clear the straw from around the base of strawberry plants to increase ventilation. Shear back old foliage to encourage fresh new growth.
- ◆ Harvest plums, quince and the late apples.
- ◆ Cut down asparagus to near ground level.

LAWNS

- ◆ Keep raking up fallen leaves, add to compost or use as mulch.
- ◆ Give the lawn its final cut for the year.

