



Felixstowe Allotment Association

A Guide For Jobs To Do Month By Month

An allotment is an area of land, leased either from a private or local authority landlord, for the use of growing fruit and vegetables. In some cases this land will also be used for the growing of ornamental plants, and the keeping of hens, rabbits and bees. An allotment is traditionally measured in rods (perches or poles), an old measurement dating back to Anglo-Saxon times. 10 poles is the accepted size of an allotment, the equivalent of 250 square metres or about the size of a doubles tennis court.

If your allotment is on land owned by the local authority then it will either be classed a statutory or temporary site. Statutory sites are protected by the Allotments Acts.



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How to plan an allotment

Allotments are wonderful things, but they must be cared for and nurtured in order to get the best out of them. The type of soil you have, the way the sun hits your plot and direction of the wind will all play a part in the types of plants you'll be able to grow. It is often worth having a chat with some of the longer established allotment holders as they will know instantly what does and doesn't work on your site, thus saving you time and effort.



If however you need to clear your site of weeds before you can even see the soil, then we recommend not using a rotavator as some weeds, particularly the more persistent (couch grass, docks, nettles, bindweed) will be chopped up and will spread and multiply as a result. It may seem tedious, but cut your weeds back to stubble height and then dig them out, also regularly hoeing in dry weather is the best way to kill off weeds.

Traditionally allotments are set in rows, on a three year crop rotation system (brassiccas, roots and then 'other veg'), but today the style of allotment planting is much looser – with people

choosing to mix up their beds, breaking up the formality of the rows. It is really up to the gardener to choose what works well for them, but the notion of rotating your crops is worth sticking to – as it helps to keep the soil in good condition and certain types of pests and diseases at bay.

It is also worth considering what type of crops you intend to grow, as some will take years to establish and will need a bed to themselves for the duration of their life (and as such will not be included in the rotation system) – for example, asparagus beds can last up to 20 years, cane and bush fruit are long term fixtures, requiring cages and netting, while fruit trees can outlive many generations of plot holder. Perennials such as rhubarb and globe artichokes also need to be thought about.

If your soil isn't ideal, or you're not sure the land you're growing on has been treated well in the past, then raised beds are an excellent option. They allow you to access your crops easily, especially handy for weeding and watering and you can choose the type of soil you want to grow in.

Soil and Rotation principles

In order to work out your soil type you need to get your hands dirty!

Sandy soil (also known as light soil) is gritty to touch– you will be able to feel sandy grains when you rub your fingers through it. This type of soil will drain quickly and heat up quickly, but it will often lack nutrients and be very acidic.



Clay soil (also known as heavy soil) is sticky when wet and when rolled between your fingers it will have a shiny finish to it. This type of soil is slow draining and takes a long time to warm up, but in the summer it will bake hard, leaving wide open cracks on the surface.

Silt soil can be easily compacted in your hands, it will hold more water than sandy soils but are not as heavy as clay soils. If the soil is left unplanted it can become eroded by the wind.

Loams are a mixture of the best bits of clay, sand and silt. It is fertile, well-draining and easy to dig.

Chalky or lime-rich soils are largely very alkaline, made up of calcium carbonate

Testing your pH level

The acidity of your soil will also help you to identify which plants you can grow more easily and if you need to add extra improvers to the soil. Soil testing kits can be bought at garden centres and cost very little.

pH 3.0 – 5.0
Very acidic soil, tends to be lacking most nutrients. Add lime and nutrients back into the soil

pH 5.1 – 6.0
Acidic soil, add lime unless you plan to grow ericaceous plants

pH 6.1 – 7.0
Moderately acidic soil, loved by most plants, high in nutrients and worm activity

7.1 – 8.0
Alkaline soil, some nutrients are lacking, but the brassicas family prefer this type of soil as risk of club root disease is minimised

If your soil is on the acid side then you can apply garden lime to make it more alkaline. If however your soil is very lime rich (alkaline) then you can use acidifying materials like sulphur – it all depends on what fruit and vegetables you wish to grow.

All soils can do with being conditioned from time to time, adding back in the precious nutrients lost over seasons of growing. Some soil testing kits will also be able to provide you with the levels of nutrients found in your soil – and so tell you what you need to add in order to make it rich again e.g. potash, phosphate, magnesium, nitrogen etc. Alongside this, it is always worth adding bulky organic matter to your soil every year (good rotted compost, that is dug well in) to help improve the general fertility of your soil and its ability to retain moisture during the summer.

Crop Rotation

After setting aside a section of your plot for perennial crops such as rhubarb and asparagus, every new plot-holder needs to give some thought to crop rotation. This helps to ensure that you do not get a build-up of pests and diseases in the soil, groups plants with similar nutritional needs together and helps to build soil fertility. Crops such as sweetcorn, squash and salads can be fitted in suitable places around the plot but take care not to grow them in the same spot every year. Some gardeners follow a 3 year rotation schedule.

Another vital ingredient for a healthy soil are worms! Find out more about these

fascinating creatures at the **Earthworm Society of Britain**

Monthly jobs

For monthly advice and tips on what you should be doing on your allotment, A large calendar with space for notes is a handy thing. You can always find them online or at your newsagents.



January

Overview

January is probably the coldest period of the winter and coming on top of the floods and heavy rains of just before Christmas it is well worth taking the time to look over the allotment and prioritise the jobs for the month. Top of the list has to be clean up the plot and dispose of all of the damaged and rotten crops. Don't worry too much about soil preparations for now just concentrate on clearing the way for a February blitz; weather permitting of course. Most of the overwintering vegetables will have suffered

under the wet conditions. Make a list, visit the site shed or garden centres and get in what replacement seeds or bulbs you will need for your immediate needs.

Harvesting

Brussels sprouts, cabbages, leeks and parsnips, if they haven't been damaged by flood water. Check on any vegetables in store and discard any that have gone mouldy or rotten.

Sowing and planting

Patience is the watchword. The days are still too short and cold even think of sowing seeds either outdoors or in the open. A few



sowings of onions, lettuce, peas, broad beans, radish and early carrots can be made under protection towards the end of the month. The January sun can push temperatures quite high so give a little air to the transplanted lettuce plants on warm days closing down early in the afternoon.

General

Protect overwintering vegetables under cloches or fleece. don't forget to ventilate and allow plenty of fresh air to get in on sunny days. Under the protection winter sunshine temperatures can get as high as on a hot summer's day.

Pack some straw or fleece around celery to protect it from any damaging frosts but remove it on sunny days to let the plants breathe.

Draw the soil up around the stalks of cabbages and winter cauliflowers to just under the first set of leaves. Check over Brussels sprouts and sprouting broccoli and support them with a strong stake to prevent them from being blown over in high winds.



Take advantage of days when the soil is frozen hard to barrow and stack manure and compost close to where it will be dug in later on. Don't walk on the soil as it begins to thaw it will be wet and sticky.

If you have any plants or seedlings ticking over in a cold greenhouse cover them with several layers of newspaper on frosty nights but remove it on warm days.

Dig up rhubarb roots and divide them leaving the sections on the surface of the soil for a few days to let them be frosted prior to forcing. Cover any crowns in the soil that have been set aside for forcing with an upturned bucket or flower pot and cover the drainage holes to shut out the light. With luck you will be harvesting pale pink sticks by late February.

Check on any fruit and vegetables in store and remove any that are diseased or soft.

Towards the end of the month when the weather and soil conditions allow plant out soft fruit bushes. Spray all fruit trees and bushes with a garlic winter wash on a fine day; do not spray in frosty conditions. It won't hurt to hold the job over to next month.

Seed potatoes will be available from the end of the month. Order your seed potatoes and collect seed trays or wooden tomato trays ready to chit them in. On days when you can't work on the plot clean the shed, greenhouse, tools and linseed oil any wooden handles. Check that the watering can and buckets don't leak and that the wheelbarrow doesn't have a flat wheel.

February

Overview

We get a glimpse of the early signs of the arrival of Spring this month. The soil begins to warm up around the middle of February and we can see for the first time this year the buds beginning to swell on fruit trees and bushes. Overwintering vegetables begin to look less sorry for themselves and they start to produce new growth. These are the signals that it is now safe to think about sowing a row of early peas and broad beans using a hardy cultivar. It is too late to sow the broad bean 'Aquadulce' it is only really suitable for growing overwinter.

Sowing and Planting

After the middle of the month it is safe to think about sowing the seeds of early vegetables. Prepare a seed bed and sow 'White Lisbon' Spring onion, early short horn carrots, early types of lettuce, try a cut and come again it saves on time waiting for a heart to form. It may be too early to make a start in the colder areas of the country but try sowing of parsnip seed if you really want large roots but use a canker



resistant cultivar.

February is the best month to plant out garlic and shallots. Prepare the ground as you would a seed bed and plant using a

trowel don't push the bulbs into the soil. Plant the garlic cloves about 2 ins/5 cms deep and leave the tips of the shallot bulbs just at the soil surface. The birds will pull one or two out leaving them lying on the ground. Replant them as soon as possible the birds will quickly lose interest.

General

Top dress all of the fruit trees and soft fruit bushes with a general fertiliser at the recommended application rate. At the same time top dress the rest of the plot with a general fertiliser as land becomes available.

Check over any fruit trees and bushes for damage and disease problems and take appropriate action.

Prune late/autumn fruiting raspberries down as low as possible and mulch around them. Tip back summer fruiting back to around 6ft/1.9 mts to encourage the development of fruiting side growths

Complete any outstanding winter pruning of soft fruit bushes cutting out down to soil level the older dark stemmed shoots of blackcurrants.

Cover the soil with cloches or sheets of plastic to warm it up in readiness for the next batch of sowing and planting. Don't overdo it little and often is the plan over the coming weeks.

Check over the chitting potatoes and begin to rub off any eyes that are unwanted leaving three or four well-spaced shoots. Keep some fleece or newspapers nearby to cover them up on starry, frosty nights you don't want to run the risk of losing them at this late date.

Keep checking frequently on the condition of any produce in store it will begin to wake up after its winter dormancy and start to regrow.



Crops and produce

For years allotments have been used to produce fruit and vegetables for family consumption. In today's economic climate, 'growing your own' has become a trend practiced by millions.

Below is a list of crops we think are commonly grown on allotments. The supplier Kings Seeds, supplies all of the seeds needed to grow the mentioned crops and as an Allotment Society member you are entitled to the best rates going.

Vegetables

Amaranthus
Aubergines
Beans
Beetroot
Broccoli
Brussel sprouts
Cabbage (Summer)
Cabbage (Winter)
Calabrese
Carrots
Cauliflower
Celeriac
Celery
Chicory
Courgette
Cucumber (greenhouse)

Cucumber (outdoor)
Garlic
Globe Artichoke
Jerusalem Artichoke
Kale
Leeks
Lettuce (Winter)
Lettuces
Marrow
Oca
Onions
Pak Choi
Parsnips
Peas
Peppers (Sweet & Chilli)
Potatoes
Radishes
Rhubarb
Spinach
Spring Onions
Squash (& Pumpkin)
Swede
Sweet Potato
Sweetcorn
Swiss Chard
Tomatoes
Turnip

Herbs

Angelica
Basil

Bay
Chervil
Chives
Coriander
Fennel
Lemon Balm
Marjoram
Mint
Oregano
Parsley
Rosemary
Sage
Tarragon
Thyme

Fruit

Apples
Apricots
Blackberries
Blackcurrants
Blueberries
Cherries
Gooseberries
Pears
Plums
Quince
Raspberries
Strawberries

Pests and diseases

Within this section we have tried to address

some of the common issues gardeners face when it comes to pests and diseases. If there is something you require advice on please see the secretary on most Saturday Mornings and we'll try to help.

Slug and Snail control: to some the presence of slugs and snails on the plot are a nuisance while to other they are just part of nature.

Leek Problems: allium leek miner and leek moth

Many gardeners are now having serious problems with the allium leaf miner and leek moth attacking their crops. Up until a few years ago these two pests were mostly confined to the southern and eastern counties but now they are progressively working their way across the country.

Potato and tomato blight:

This is a common and serious disease that attacks potatoes and tomatoes whether they are grown outdoors or under protection. The disease is much more damaging to a crop in wet seasons and can be less of a problem in dry summers.

Club root:

A common disease that affects brassicas grown on allotment plots

Water is a vital ingredient for all plot-holders growing fruit, vegetables, herbs and flowers but it is a precious resource and can be a significant cost for allotment authorities. On sites with a mains water supply it should be used in a sensible and considerate manner by all. Where possible every gardener should have water butts to harvest any rain that does fall. This is vital when the plot has a greenhouse or polytunnel as this increases watering requirements significantly.

The best time to water your crops is in the evening or very early morning, using a watering can and aiming at the roots not the foliage. Water thoroughly on a weekly basis and soak the soil, this encourages the roots to go deeper in search of moisture. Water appropriately to the crop, plants also need different amounts of water at varying stages of growth and too much water can affect yield and taste.

Cucurbits Squash can survive and produce fruits from minimal watering but courgette plants need to be kept constantly moist. Fruiting crops Aubergines, cucumbers, sweet

corn and tomatoes need constant water throughout their growing period. Leafy vegetables and salad crops Crops such as cabbages, chard and spinach along with salad crops need water at every stage of growth.

Legumes

Avoid watering peas and broad beans when young but they will need water at flowering time and about 2 weeks later. Runner beans need constant moisture but French beans can cope with dryer conditions.

Onions etc

Water to establish and then only in dry spells.

Potatoes Water regularly from 6-10 weeks after planting when they start to produce tubers.

Root crops Carrots and parsnips will split if watered irregularly, water before dry conditions develop.



Stem vegetables

Celery, celeriac and Florence Fennel need copious amounts of water to develop and will be damaged by drought conditions.

Planting out - When planting out young plants it is always recommended that you water the hole or trench very well, before putting in your seedlings. This means the root system of your young plant will have instant access to water, also encouraging them to grow downwards to seek new water supplies.

Mulching - a 2 to 3 inch layer of mulch over the soil will help to retain moisture in the summer, suppress weeds, improve soil texture and release nutrients. Apply when the soil is wet and warm in autumn or spring and take care not to pile up against plants stems as it will cause them to rot. Compost companies offer a vast choice of ready-made products containing bark, seaweed, bracken etc. Alternatively can use your own allotment compost or materials such as well-rotted manure, leaf mould, spent mushroom compost, bark or grass clippings.

Climate change projections for the UK predict: wetter winters, drier summers and higher average temperatures across all seasons.

Being aware of climate change can help you to prepare for likely shifts in average rainfall and temperature on your allotment but also changing patterns of weather extremes. Summer rainfall may become more intense, which may increase localised flood risk and soil erosion, even though the overall amount of summer rainfall is likely to decrease.

Allotment growers often observe the early stages of drought through their growing. The Drought Risk and You project (DRY) found growers were adapting in creative ways to collect water and reduce water use on their plots. Read more: <https://dryutility.info/allotment-information>



January

Vegetables

- Take Chicory roots into the greenhouse for forcing.
- Cover Rhubarb with a bucket or similar container to force it for early crops.
- When Potato tubers arrive, place in trays to chit.
- Lift Celery, Parsnips and Jerusalem Artichokes as required.
- Clear away stems and roots of Savoy cabbages that have finished cropping.
- If the soil is not too wet dig over any beds ready for planting in spring.
- Cover any beds that will be used for early crops, with Black polythene or cloches. This will help to warm the soil.
- Inspect any vegetables still in store for decay.
- Celery may need extra protection if the weather is severe.
- Sow lettuce, carrots, radish, onions, broad beans and round seeded peas under cloches for early crops.
- Clean any decaying leaves from over wintering lettuce in cold frames.
- Continue winter digging if ground conditions permit.

- Clear away the stems of Brussel Sprouts that have been picked.
- Purple Sprouting Broccoli and Kale should now be ready for harvesting

Fruit

- Tie in Raspberry canes to the training wires.
- Examine Apple trees for signs of canker. If found cut back to clean wood
- and treat with a wound healing compound such as Arbrex.
- Feed Blackcurrant bushes with a general fertiliser at the rate of 4-60z per bush.
- Prune Gooseberries.
- Check labels and renew if required.
- Any newly planted Blackcurrants should be cut back to 2-3' above the
- ground to encourage the growth of strong shoots from below ground level.
- Cut newly planted Raspberries to a prominent bud 6' above the ground.
- Check any cuttings of Gooseberries and currants taken in the autumn and
- firm if they have loosened.
- Ensure tree ties are still in place and that stakes firm.
- Check and firm any newly planted trees.

- Check grease bands on older trees and renew if needed.
- If not done in December, spray all fruit trees with a winter tar wash.
- This must be done before the trees come back into growth.

February

Vegetables

- Keep an eye out for slugs on early sowings in cloches.
- Transplant Autumn sown onions to their final place.
- Continue to plant Shallots.
- Plant Garlic bulbs.
- Sow round seeded peas in a sheltered border.
- If using a plot rotation system, check soil pH and add lime, if needed, to the Brassica plot.
- If the soil is not too wet sow Parsnip seeds.
- In milder areas, Sow Broad beans under cloches for an early crop.
- Lift and pot up a few strawberry plants, place in the greenhouse or in a cold frame to get early crops.
- Feed Asparagus plants with a general fertiliser at the rate of 20z per Sq. Yd.
- Divide and replant Chive Plants.
- Sow early cabbage .
- Sow Lettuce and Radish (under cloches if necessary).
- Sow Broad beans.

- Lift any remaining Parsnips still in the ground from last year.
- In sheltered areas plant Shallots.
- Check spring cabbage and firm the soil around any that have been loosened by movement. Dress with a quick acting Nitrogenous fertiliser such as Nitrate of Soda to help increase growth as the days start to lengthen.
- Clean established Asparagus beds ready for spring growth. Rake the top inch of soil off the bed and top dress with well-rotted manure or compost and then replace the soil. This must be done before growth starts or the new tips will be damaged.
- Divide herbs such as Sage and Thyme and cut back any excess growth to encourage new fresh growth.
- Plant out Jerusalem Artichokes.
- Put Early Potato tubers to chit.
- Pre-warm the soil by covering with cloches or black polythene.
- Plant out shallots.
- In sheltered areas, Peas, Onions, Carrots, Radish and early lettuce can be sown. In less sheltered areas they can be planted under cloches.
- Now is the time to prepare new Asparagus beds. As this is a permanent crop the ground must be well prepared. This means removing all weeds and digging the bed to a spades depth. Incorporate plenty of manure or

compost in the bottom and a dressing of Bonemeal. Three year old crowns are usually advised but you can use 1 year old crowns if you are prepared to wait a bit longer before cropping.

- Lift and divide Rhubarb if it is getting congested.
- Ensure that Autumn sown Onions are kept free of weeds.

Fruit

- Protect new buds on Gooseberry bushes against bullfinches. Use netting or fleece.
- The planting of all bare rooted fruit trees must be completed before they start into growth.
- Ensure that all winter washing is completed before the trees come out of dormancy.
- Make sure that all winter pruning of apple trees is completed before they start to shoot.
- Protect early buds of Apricots, Peaches and Nectarines against night frost with hessian sacking. Make sure that it is rolled back during the day to provide maximum light.
- Prune Autumn fruiting raspberries. Cut right back to the ground level.
- Root prune any fruit trees (or ornamental) to restrict growth and encourage better fruiting.
- If Gooseberries were not pruned earlier, prune them now.
- Prune Fig trees and tie in the long young

branches.

- Firm the soil around red/white/Blackcurrants if they have been loosened
- by wind during the winter.
- Spray outdoor peaches against leaf curl with a copper based fungicide.
- There is still time to plant bare-rooted currants, Gooseberries and Raspberries.
- Feed fruit trees with Sulphate of Ammonia or Nitro-Chalk if they are growing in grass or if in bare soil feed with Sulphate of Potash at the rate of 40z per tree.

March

Vegetables

- Sow main crop leeks, peas and carrots.
- Feed winter lettuce with a general fertiliser to boost growth.
- Plant out young lettuce under cloches. If soil has dried enough to work, prepare seedbeds by raking to a fine tilth.
- Sow Parsnips, Onions and Broad beans.
- Plant Horseradish and Jerusalem Artichokes. (Caution: These plants tend to be very invasive).
- Sow lettuce under cloches.
- Boost the growth of spring cabbage by top dressing with a high nitrogen fertiliser such as nitro chalk.
- Plant more early potatoes to give a succession of crop.
- As soon as the soil warms up and is dry enough, sow parsnip seed.
- Start Mint (preferably in a container such as a bucket to restrict root spread).
- Plant main crop Peas.
- Sow a catch crop of Lettuce, Radish or Spinach in-between the rows of peas.
- Sow Turnips in rich ground.

- If Rhubarb has been forced, remove covers to prevent the plants becoming too weak.
- Sow Onion sets.
- Sow herbs.
- Plant out new crowns of Asparagus.
- Plant out Strawberry plants.
- Plant more early potatoes to give a succession of crops.
- Prepare celery trenches and work in plenty of well-rotted manure.
- Broad beans and Peas started off in pots, can now be prepared for transplanting,
- Plant out onion sets.
- Sow spinach.
- Plant out Jerusalem Artichokes.
- Lime any sites to be used for brassicas if this was not done in the autumn.

Fruit

- If fruit trees are planted in grass, ensure that the grass is cut back 2-3ft around the trunks or they will suffer from Nitrogen deficiency.
- Feed Black/Logan/Raspberries and Strawberries with a general fertiliser at the rate of 40z to each plant. Ensure that the fertiliser does not touch the leaves or they may be scorched.

- Cut back autumn fruiting Raspberries and tie in any loose stems of summer fruiting varieties.
- Pollinate Peaches and Nectarines by hand if the flowers are open.
- Prepare the site for any fruit trees you may be about to put in.
- Mulch wall trained fruit with compost, dry manure or straw. Keep an eye on the soil and if it becomes too dry - water.
- Spray Blackcurrant bushes with Malathion to help against Big Bud mites.
- As long as there are no blossoms on them, spray Apple, Pear and Plum trees with a systemic fungicide and insecticide.
- Mulch all fruit trees and bushes if not already done.
- Feed Blackcurrants with a high nitrogen feed. Check the buds and remove any that are infected with Big Bud mite. If Big Bud is prevalent, consider destroying the plant and replacing with new stock.
- Protect fruit blossoms from frosts if possible.
- Prune out some of the older shoots on acid cherries to promote new fruiting shoots.

April

Vegetables

- Sow Asparagus seed
- Continue to sow Lettuce, Radish, Carrots and Peas.
- It is probably a bit early to sow French beans but if the weather is mild sowing a few under cloches for an early crop
- Sow Beetroot for an early crop.
- Most Brassicas(Cabbage, Broccoli, Kale) can now be sown.
- Continue to plant chitted potatoes.
- Sow Salsify and Scorzonera.
- Earth up any Potatoes that are beginning to come through.
- Put up supports for Runner beans over the previously prepared trenches.
- Continue hoeing all beds to prevent weeds.
- Most hardy vegetable seeds can be sown now.
- Plant out chitted potatoes if the weather is mild and the ground is not waterlogged.
- Plant Asparagus crowns in the bed prepared previously.
- Brussel Sprouts sown earlier in the frame or

greenhouse can be transplanted to open ground. Ensure that the soil is firmed well after planting.

- Sprouting Broccoli should now be ready for picking. Pick regularly to ensure continued growth of new shoots.
- Complete the planting of early Potatoes and start to plant Main crop.
- Thin out early vegetables sown under cloches.
- Plant out seedlings of Broad beans and peas that have previously been hardened off.
- Sow Parsley for summer use.
- Continue to pollinate peaches if required.
- Thin out Parsnip that were sown last month.
- Hoe any seed beds to ensure that no weeds appear and to ensure the soil is aerated.
- Erect protection (or use fleece) around Carrots against Carrot Fly
- Plant final main crop Potatoes.
- Prepare trenches for Runner Beans by incorporating plenty of manure or compost.
- Transplant Onions that were sown in the greenhouse in December to their final positions.

Fruit

- Mulch Strawberry beds with straw, proprietary Strawberry mats or black polythene to preserve moisture in the soil.
- Spray Raspberries with Derris as a precaution against Raspberry Beetle. If mildew is a problem spray with a fungicide as well.
- Ensure that any newly planted fruit trees are well watered.
- As soon as the petals have dropped from apple trees, spray to keep scab and mildew at bay.
- Pick off the flowers of any Strawberry plants that you intend to use for propagation of new runners.
- Cover Strawberries with fleece if any late frosts are forecast.
- Spray Plum trees against aphids.
- Put cloches over Strawberries to encourage early fruits.
- Spray Gooseberries against mildew.
- Spray trees with a combined Fungicide/ Insecticide. (Do not spray if they are in blossom).
- Spray plum trees after the petals have dropped to prevent plum moth.
- Keep an eye out for Aphids on all fruit trees and spray if necessary.
- Spray Blackcurrant bushes with Malathion to

kill off ant Big Bud mites.

- If not already done, mulch Raspberries, Loganberries and Blackberries with well-rotted manure or compost or grass clippings. This will help to conserve moisture at the roots.
- Protect the flowers on currants from frosts at night by covering with fleece.

May

Vegetables

- Clear cold frames and prepare for Cucumbers by incorporating plenty of manure or compost.
- Keep up sowings of seeds such as Beetroot, Beans, leaf beet, sprouting Broccoli, Calabrese, Cauliflower and kale to keep a succession of crops going.
- Plant outdoor Tomatoes but ensure that they have protection at night.
- Sow Swede seeds.
- Make sure that all vegetables under cloches are kept well-watered.
- Sow more peas for a succession of crop.
- Plant Cucumbers in cold frames.
- Potatoes should be earthed up regularly. A little general fertiliser sprinkled between the rows will help growth.
- Prepare the ground for frame raised Courgettes and Marrows by incorporating plenty of manure or compost.
- Plant out Runner beans.
- Sow Sweetcorn in blocks outdoors.
- Cut herbs as required for use fresh or for drying. Sow more seeds if needed.
- Sow Basil now that the temperatures are

higher.

- Transplant Brussel Sprouts previously grown in seedbeds or greenhouse.
- Use a club-root dip if there has been a problem with this disease previously.
- Sow more Peas for a succession of crop.
- Sow seeds of Broccoli (Calabrese) , Kale, Endive, Chicory, Swede, Courgettes and Pumpkins.
- Sow Sweetcorn direct into the soil where they are to mature.
- Sow seeds of Lettuce and Radish for continuous crops.
- Plant out Summer cabbages and Brussel Sprouts that have been previously grown in a cold frame.
- Plant up a herb pot for use in the house.
- Continue to hoe all beds to keep weeds down.
- Sow Runner and French beans directly into their growing sites or harden off the plants previously grown in the greenhouse ready for planting out.
- Thin Beetroot seedlings to about 9" apart or 6" if smaller baby beets are required.
- Thin out Carrots previously sown and sow more for a succession of crop.
- Prepare the ground for outdoor Tomatoes by incorporating plenty of manure or compost.

- Plant out Celery in blocks.
- Once Broad beans have stopped flowering, pinch out the tips as a prevention against Blackfly.
- Start to harvest the young shoots Fennel, Dill, Chives and Parsley. This will also help to encourage bushy new growth.
- Sow seeds of Chervil, Coriander and Parsley.

Fruit

- Thin out new shoots on Raspberry canes to 4 or 5 of the strongest shoots.
- These will be the fruit bearing canes next year.
- Spray Apple trees against Scab and Codling Moth larvae.
- Put nets over Strawberries to prevent damage from birds.
- If Apple trees are growing too strongly and there are very few flowers, one way of reducing the growth is to bark ring the tree. This is done by cutting a ring of bark $\frac{1}{2}$ " wide from around the trunk of the tree.
- Check all fruit against attack by aphids and other pests. Spray if needed.
- Continue to spray trees against attack by aphids.
- Protect Strawberries by placing straw, mats or polythene under the fruits to keep them off the ground or being splashed by soil.

- Plant out Melons that have been grown in the greenhouse into frames or under cloches.
- Earth up Potatoes or, if grown under plastic, cover with fleece at night to prevent frost damage.
- Remove the growing tips side shoots on grapevines once the shoot has developed two leaves beyond a flower trus.
- Tie in the young growth of Peaches and Nectarines.
- Make sure newly planted trees are well watered.
- Keep an eye out for attacks of aphids and caterpillars and spray if needed.
- Watch for signs of Gooseberry sawfly on Gooseberries and spray at the first signs of attack.

June

Vegetables

- Plant out Marrows and Courgettes in positions previously prepared
- Plant out Sweetcorn that has been started in the greenhouse or frame.
- Continue to thin out Carrots, Beetroot, Endive and Chicory.
- Plant out Celery and Celeriac grown in the greenhouse, into the prepared beds.
- Sow white Turnips as a catch crop in-between rows of Peas.
- Plant outdoor Tomatoes into prepared sites.
- Continue to thin Carrots and Beetroot as needed.
- Stop Cucumbers growing in frames. As the fruits form, put a piece of slate or tile under it to keep it off the soil.
- Remove any flower spikes that have grown on Rhubarb.
- Fold a leaf over any Cauliflowers that are beginning to form. This will help keep them clean.
- Keep a general eye on crops for pests and spray as required.
- Most herbs will now be at their peak and can be picked and stored for later use in cooking.

- Ensure that beans are kept well-watered and apply a mulch if not already done so.
- Transplant Leeks to the previously prepared bed ready for winter use.
- Transplant Savoy and January King Cabbages.
- Sow more Peas for a succession.
- Continue to sow Lettuce and Radish.
- Parsley can also be sown now for winter and spring use.
- Asparagus has probably finished cropping now so apply a general fertiliser to the bed at the rate of 20z to Sq. Yd.
- Take out side shoots of Tomatoes (not the bush varieties though).
- Stop cutting Asparagus to allow the ferns to grow. Feed with a general fertiliser.
- Earth up late Potatoes and ensure that they are well watered.
- Stop Cucumbers in frames by pinching out the growing tip. This encourages the side shoots to grow. These side shoots should be stopped each fourth leaf.
- Pinch out the tips of Broad beans to encourage fruiting and prevent Blackfly from colonising the tip.
- Thin out Spinach seedlings sown in May.
- Lift early Potatoes and prepare the ground for planting Leeks.

- Keep Onions and Shallots watered well and feed weekly with a general fertiliser.
- Thin out Scorzonera and Salsify sown in May.
- Keep French beans, runner beans and courgettes well-watered.
- Sow Swedes to overwinter.

Fruit

- Spray Raspberries with Deris to control the grubs of Raspberry Beetles.
- Give a second application in ten days' time.
- Remove suckers of fruit trees below the ground.
- Gooseberries should now be coming into season. Pick as required. Continue to watch for signs of Mildew and spray with fungicide if required.
- Thin out Apples and Pears if they have set well. This will help to get a good crop later on and also prevent the tree from becoming a biennial bearer.
- Check Raspberry canes regularly for ripening fruit and pick as they ripen.
- Thin out the runners of Strawberry plants to 5 or 6 runners on plants that have been earmarked for propagation of new plants.
- Stop Melons by pinching out the shoots one or two leaves beyond the point where the young Melon fruits are forming. Secondary growths should be stopped beyond the second leaf.

- Prune Gooseberries by cutting back lateral shoots to about five leaves.
- Summer prune Apple trees.
- Tie in long shoots of fruits as they grow to stop them being damaged.
- Thin out the fruits of Apples and Pears if the crop is particularly heavy. This will allow the final crop to grow to a larger size. Do not overdo the thinning though as the tree has a natural tendency to drop excess fruits itself.
- Protect desert Cherries from bird damage by covering with netting.
- Check strawberries for signs of Botrytis. Remove and dispose of any infected fruit to stop it spreading. Cover with nets to prevent bird damage. Pin down runners to propagate new plants if required and remove all other runners.
- Treat Raspberries with Derris before the fruits have ripened to prevent
- Raspberry beetle.
- Tie in young shoots of Black/ Logan/Tayberries.
- Continue to thin out tree fruit if needed.
- Keep an eye out for Raspberries plants turning yellow, it could be a sign of magnesium deficiency. Water with Epsom salts to cure it.

July

Vegetables

- Clear away any early crops that have finished to make room for catch crops of Carrots or Beetroot.
- Sow an early maturing Pea such as Meteor or Kelvedon Wonder to catch a late crop of Peas.
- Sow late Savoy Cabbage. Sow thinly where the plants are to mature and thin to 5 apart later.
- Plant winter Cabbage such as January King. This is probably the latest you can do this to achieve a winter crop.
- The same goes for autumn headed Cauliflowers and Broccoli.
- Keep Celery well-watered. It will run to seed if allowed to go dry.
- Spray Main crop Potatoes against Blight with a copper based fungicide.
- Continue to pinch out side shoots of tomatoes.
- Earth up around sweetcorn to encourage basal shoots and ensure that the plants are kept well-watered.
- Feed Onions and keep the beds well hoed.
- Sow Endive for autumn and winter use.
- Sow Spinach Beet and Seakale for use over

winter.

- Mulch French and Runner beans to conserve moisture.
- Regularly water plants in frames to ensure that they do not dry out.
- Sow Spinach to ensure a regular supply.
- Sow more Lettuce, Radish and salad Onions for succession.
- Pick Courgettes while they are young. This will encourage more fruits to form.
- Keep an eye on Brassicas for the eggs of Cabbage White Butterfly. Squash the eggs on the underside of plants before they do any damage or spray with Deris.
- Spray Celery with a combined fungicide/ insecticide against Leaf spot disease and Celery fly.
- Spray Runner Beans daily to assist the setting of their flowers. Continue to water freely.
- Keep outdoor Tomatoes well-watered and feed once a week with Tomato fertiliser. Stop the plants one leaf after the fourth truss.
- Sow Parsley and Turnips for a succession.
- Continue to pick young courgettes to ensure crop succession. If you are growing
- a marrow for size, remove all new flowers and fruits to ensure maximum growth.
- The planting of sprouting Broccoli and Kale

should be completed as soon as possible.

- Cucumbers in frames should be fed once a week and kept well-watered.
- Feed Onions for the last time.
- Lift Shallots and Garlic and dry in the sun.
- Remove seed heads of spring sown Parsley.
- Gather and dry herbs for winter use.

Fruit

- Peg Strawberry runners on the plants reserved for this purpose. Ensure that the plants are completely healthy before doing this. The runners can be pegged down into the soil or into pots of compost.
- Prune Blackcurrants as soon as the fruit has been picked. Cut out the old stems to make room for new shoots that will fruit next year.
- Water Strawberry runners in pots regularly.
- Thin out Pears, Plums and Cherries if the crop is particularly heavy.
- Give Apples their final thinning. If the King fruit (the one at the centre of each cluster) has not already been removed, do it now. This is usually of poor shape and removal will allow the other fruits to form better.
- Spray Gooseberries against pests and mildew if needed.
- As soon as the Blackcurrant crop has been picked, prune the plants.

- Blackcurrants fruit on new wood so approximately one third of the old wood should be cut out to encourage new growth for next year. After pruning feed with a general fertiliser at 40z per plant.
- Cover Morello Cherries with nets to prevent bird damage.
- Prepare the ground for new Strawberry beds. As the plants will remain in this bed for 3 years it is well worth ensuring that the bed is well dug with plenty of organic matter.
- Cut out and burn any branches of Plum that have Silver leaf disease.
- Keep Melons in frames watered to help swell the fruits.

August

Vegetables

- Cut Marrows and Courgettes as they are needed.
- Thin out sowings of Spinach and Seakale sown last month.
- Gather French and Runner beans while young and tender.
- If there is any bare ground without a crop in it, consider planting a green manure such as Rape or Mustard to help with the soil fertility next year.
- Sow Onion seed in a cold frame for transplanting in Spring.
- Sow Spring salad onions such as White Lisbon.
- Continue to watch for Blight on Potatoes and spray with a fungicide if found. It is also worth checking outdoor Tomatoes for signs of this disease as they are part of the same family so can also get it.
- Start to blanch Celery by wrapping the shoots in newspaper or corrugated cardboard and earth up the plants.
- Make sowings of Chinese leaves, leaf beet and Spinach for crops into autumn and winter.
- Pick Runner beans frequently to encourage more flowering and keep well-watered to

prevent flower drop.

- Keep an eye on Brassicas for whitefly. Spray at first signs to keep down infestations.
- Continue to keep Celery and Runner beans well-watered. They will benefit from a feed at this time.
- Japanese Onions sown last Autumn should now be ready for lifting. Place on trays to ripen in the sun.
- Keep an eye on Peas for mildew, spray with fungicide at first sign of infection.
- Sow Spring Cabbage seeds.
- Make a further sowing of Lettuce for late Autumn use.
- Cut Cucumbers in frames as they mature.
- Continue to feed outdoor Tomatoes and remove some of the lower leaves to allow the sun to ripen the fruit
- Brussels Sprouts and other winter greens will benefit from a feed of general fertiliser sprinkled around the base of each plant. Do not let it touch the leaves or they may scorch.
- Sow more winter salads and Chinese leaves.
- Cut back the stems of Potatoes, particularly if they are showing signs of blight, and lift the first main crop varieties. If slugs are causing problems, consider lifting all of them and placing in storage.
- Stake Brussels sprouts as they get bigger to

prevent them from rocking in the wind and becoming loose.

Fruit

- Plant out Strawberries to allow the plants to make good growth ready for next year.
- Start to prune Raspberries as they finish fruiting. Cut out the old canes
 - that have fruited this year and reduce the new shoots to 5 or 6 of the strongest ones. Tie new shoots in to the wires as required.
- If pruning of Blackcurrants was not done last month, do it now to ensure strong growth for next year.
- Select strong Strawberry plants and pot up for placing in the greenhouse for an early crop next year.
- The earlier Apple varieties will now be ready for picking. Check daily by gently lifting each apple, if it comes away easily they are ready for picking.
- Pick the crop before they fall themselves and are damaged.
- Remove any runners on Strawberry plants as they are not needed and if left will weaken the plant and reduce the crop next year. Water any newly planted Strawberry beds.
- Order new fruit trees ready for planting in the autumn.

September

Vegetables

- Lift Carrots and Beetroot and place in store.
- Transplant Lettuce sown last month to cold frame for winter use.
- Continue to earth up Celery.
- String up Onions or put in storage in net bags.
- Lift a few plants of Endive and place in a frame. Cover with pots to blanch them.
- Test Main crop Potatoes to see if they are ready for lifting. This is done by digging up a tuber and rubbing the skin to see if it has set. If the skin does not rub off easily the Potatoes are ready for lifting.
- Gather all outdoor Tomatoes including the green ones before they are damaged by frost. The green fruits can be ripened indoors on a sunny windowsill.
- Ensure that ripening Onions are kept dry. Place them in a cold frame if necessary.
- Lift, dry and store Shallots.
- Feed Leeks with a general fertiliser.
- Place excess Marrows in store. A good way of storing them is to place them in net bags in a cool dry place.
- Sow green manures for overwinter growing.

- Onions should now be ready for lifting and ripening.
- Continue to pick French and Runner beans so that they do not become stringy.
- Continue to earth up Celery a little at a time.
- Pick Sweetcorn as soon as it is ready. If left too long it will not be as sweet and will be starchy.
- If the haulms of main crop potatoes have died down, lift, dry and store the tubers to prevent attacks by slugs or blight spores.

Fruit

- Continue to gather Apples and Pears.
- Melons in frames should now be approaching ripeness and should be cut as soon as fully ripe.
- Prepare the ground for new plantings of Raspberries and Blackcurrants.
- Place grease bands around fruit trees.
- Continue to cut out the old fruited canes of raspberries.
- Pick Apples and other fruits as they ripen.
- Cut out any woody stems of summer fruiting raspberries to just above ground level. Tie in any new shoots to prevent them being damaged in the wind.
- Prepare the ground for any new trees that you may be putting in. If buying bare rooted trees they need to go in shortly. Container grown

trees can be planted most of the year.

- June Logan/Tay berries by cutting out the canes that have fruited this year. Tie in new shoots for next year.
- Continue to hoe all beds to keep weeds at bay.

October

Vegetables

- Dig up a couple of roots of Parsley and move them to a frame for: winter use. Alternatively pot up and take indoors on a windowsill.
- Apply a general fertiliser to Brussel Sprouts and Winter Cabbage.
- Cut back the top growth of Jerusalem Artichokes to ground level.
- Lift Celeriac and store in boxes of sand in a cool place.
- Sow round seeded Peas under cloches.
- Begin double digging of any empty beds in preparation for next spring.
- Harvest Jerusalem Artichokes.
- Finish lifting all Potatoes before frost threatens.
- Pick the last of the Runner beans and French beans before frost kills them off.
- Late sowings of French beans should be covered with cloches.
- Earth up Celery for the last time.
- Plant out Spring Cabbages. Firm the soil well to avoid too much movement in winter winds.
- Plant out Garlic.
- Plant out Strawberry plants for next year.

- Order your manure ready for use.
- Lift Seakale crowns and store in sand. They will keep like this until required for forcing.
- Finish picking French and runner beans. Cover with fleece at night to protect from frost.
- Sow winter lettuce under cloches.

Fruit

- Clean up Strawberry beds of dead, diseased or damaged foliage. If the soil is dry enough hoe between the rows. They can also be top-dressed with a little well-rotted compost or manure.
- Prune Blackberries by cutting out the canes that have fruited this year and tying the new canes.
- Continue to inspect fruit in store for deterioration.
- Continue to tie in raspberry canes to prevent them whipping about in wind and being damaged.
- Pick any remaining fruit.
- Continue picking Apples and Pears as different varieties become ready.
- Take Gooseberry cuttings.
- Cut out woody stems of Summer flowering Raspberries and tie in the new stems. Autumn fruiting varieties may still be fruiting so these should be left till Spring.

November

Vegetables

- Continue to remove any yellowing leaves on Brussel Sprouts.
- Early Savoy Cabbages should now be ready for picking.
- Pick red Cabbages, they will store better in a shed than leaving them in the ground.
- Check sheds and polytunnels for wind damage and repair before it gets worse.
- Plant new Apple and Pear trees.
- Protect winter salads like Lettuce and Endive from wetness by placing cloches over them.
- Lift Salsify and Scorzonera and place in storage in sand.
- Get as much winter digging done possible before the ground becomes too wet.
- Sow a few Broad beans for over-wintering in a sheltered position. Cover with cloches if necessary.
- If the soil is well drained, sow round-seeded peas such as Feltham First or Meteor to over-winter in a sheltered position.
- Lift and split mature clumps of Rhubarb. Replant the divided clumps. Any clumps that are not used can be left on top of the ground to be frosted for 2-3 weeks and then potted up in pots and covered with black polythene and

kept at a temperature of 45F (7C) to force an early crop in spring.

- Lift and divide and replant chives. Put a couple of clumps in pots for the kitchen windowsill.
- Now is a good time to plant Grape vines. They need to be planted when dormant but avoid planting in frosty weather.
- Remove any yellow or dead leaves from Brassicas. Pick Sprouts as they start to crop to prevent them from blowing.
- Lift roots of Chicory for forcing in warmth and darkness.
- Cut down Globe Artichokes and protect the crowns with straw.
- Work can be started on any empty beds by digging over and incorporating manure if required ready for next Spring.
- Keep Lettuces in frames free of weeds.
- Lift and store Jerusalem Artichokes in the same way as you would Potatoes.
- Lift a few roots of Parsnips and Horseradish for use should the ground freeze up.
- If it is too wet for outside work, take the opportunity to clean up any unused cloches and tools that will not be used again until spring.
- Place container over Rhubarb and Chicory to force them.

Fruit

- Prune Apple and Pear trees.
- Plant new fruit trees and bushes in ground that you prepared earlier.
- Inspect posts and stakes to ensure that they are firm and do not collapse in winter winds.
- Prune Red/White currants. Cut back leading shoots to 6" above this
- year's new growth and side shoots to leave one bud. This builds up a spur system, which helps, because these plants fruit on spurs of mature branches. Cuttings can also be taken at this time of the year. This is done by taking a hardwood cutting of this seasons growth, approximately 10" long and planted in a trench of sufficient depth to cover all but the top three buds. Make the trench by pushing the spade in its full depth and waggle it backwards and forwards to open the slit. Sharp sand can be put in the slit to improve the drainage. Firm the soil back well to avoid air pockets as the cutting will not root into these.
- Now is a suitable time to deal with old or neglected fruit trees. Rather than snipping of a lot of shoots, remove complete branches to open up the centre of the tree to allow more light and air in. Check for signs of canker while doing this and remove any infested branches back to clean wood. Any large wounds like this should be cleaned up with a sharp knife so that there are no jagged edges and treated with wound paint such as Arbrex.
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- By now most of the leaves will have fallen from the trees and these should be swept up and placed on the compost heap.
- Take hardwood cuttings of Blackcurrants but ensure that they are free of viruses such as big bud.
- Cut back fruited canes of blackberries and related fruits and tie in new shoots to prevent wind damage.
- This is a good time to plant Raspberries, Blackberries, Tayberries and Loganberries. Between now and March is a good time to propagate all these fruits, either by division of the roots or by layering.
- Pruning of all trees (with the exception of plum) can be carried out.

December

Vegetables

- Lift Celery as it is required.
- Continue to check Cabbages and Sprouts for any loosening in winds.
- Lift any root crops and store in boxes of moist sand. This is especially important if your ground is wet and heavy or you have serious problems with slugs.
- Sit down and plan out next years crop rotation and what seeds and plants you will need.
- Check that cloches are firmly secured to prevent them blowing away in the wind.
- Brussels Sprouts and winter Broccoli should now be ready for picking.
- Consider where you are going to place your Runner beans next year and dig out a trench. Ridge the soil up on either side and leave it open to the beneficial effects of the winter.
- Leeks should now be ready to start lifting.

Fruit

- Spray fruit trees with a winter tar wash. Choose a dry day when there is no wind.
- Burn all tree pruning's to prevent spread of any disease or pests.
- Inspect grease bands for signs of damage.

- There is not much to be done with fruit at this time of the year, but, if not already done continue with the pruning.
- Prune Grape vines now that they are dormant.
- If not already done, spray with winter tar wash.
- Apply Sulphate of Potash at the rate of 40z per tree. This will help the tree to fruit and will help in the ripening of the fruit next year.

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