



Allotment jobs by Month

January

- Top tasks for January - Only the mildest of days are likely to drag you out to the allotment in January. Spend time ordering seeds and sketch out a plan for what you are going to grow and where on the plot you will grow it.
- Harvest hardy winter varieties of cabbages, cauliflowers and other brassicas, plus leeks, celeriac and root vegetables such as parsnips, swedes and winter radishes
- Spread well-rotted manure or compost over empty beds
- Warm up areas of seedbeds by covering them with sheets
- Buy and start to chit seed potatoes
- Winter prune established apple and pear trees
- Check fruit cages for damage and make repairs if required
- Devise your sowing and planting plan for the year

Sow or plant in January

- Broad beans - as long as the ground is not frozen sow broad beans, otherwise sow in pots and keep under cover until spring
- Fruit trees and bushes - plant new bare root trees and bushes during the winter months when they are dormant
- Garlic - plant only in mild areas and only if the soil is not frozen or waterlogged. Otherwise wait until February or March
- Onions and Leeks - to give them the longest possible growing season sow seeds in modules and keep indoors at a temperature of at least 10C. Transplant outdoors in March or April
- Peas - for a very early crop, sow seeds in pots under glass and harden off to plant outdoors in March or April
- Rhubarb - plant new sets or divide and replant old crowns at any time during the winter. Rhubarb will happily tolerate the cold but doesn't like being waterlogged.

February

- Top Tasks for February - The weather in February can swing from one extreme to the other. from grey days with persistent rain or sleet to a sudden spell of bright, sunny days. Provided the ground is not frozen or too wet to work complete your winter digging and incorporate as much organic matter as you can.
- Harvest cabbages, cauliflowers, brussels sprouts, and kale along with leeks, celeriac, parsnips and swede for warming winter stews
- Sow seeds indoors to raise seedlings for planting out in spring
- Plant shallots and garlic
- Chit seed potatoes, make sure you have purchased all the seed potatoes you need by the end of this month
- Dig over your plot and add plenty of well-rotted organic material
- Force rhubarb, covering crowns should stimulate them into producing an early crop

Sow or plant in February

- Broad beans - sow directly outside
- Brussels sprouts, kohlrabi and sprouting broccoli - sow first early varieties under glass to plant out in April or May
- Globe artichokes - sow in pots at a minimum temperature of 18C. Keep indoors until hardened off to plant out in April or May
- Jerusalem Artichokes - plant tubers direct outside in a single row somewhere the plants won't overshadow other crops when they reach their full height.
- Lettuces - for crops ready to harvest in May and June sow indoors this month, thin out seedlings and plant in cold frames next month
- Spinach - for an early crop in April or May sow a fast-growing variety indoors and plant out in March
- Tomatoes and Cucumbers - if your raising plants for a greenhouse sow seeds indoors now. to ensure germination use a heated propagator then maintain the temperature at a minimum of 21C

March

- Top Tasks for March - As winter begins to recede, sowing and planting outdoors can start. Probably the most useful thing you can do this month is begin preparing beds for sowing and planting. Remove any weeds that have survived the winter, rake the soil thoroughly and apply some fertiliser.
- Harvest your first Rhubarb of the year
- Plant first early potatoes, shallots and garlic by the end of the month
- Bare-root fruit trees and bushes should be planted by now
- Finish winter pruning gooseberries, blackcurrants, blueberries and autumn raspberries

- Apply fertilizers to boost nutritional content of your soil before sowing and planting begins

Sow or plant in March

- Asparagus - it is possible to grow from seed but much easier to buy ready-to-plant rootstocks. plant them in pre-prepared trenches
- Aubergines, chillies and peppers - these are all summer fruiting vegetables and need as long as possible to ripen. Get ahead by sowing seeds indoors this month
- Broccoli, cabbages and other brassicas - sow Brussels outdoors, any early summer cauliflowers raised from seeds indoors could be planted out now, but may still need protection under cloches
- Herbs - towards the end of the month sow seeds of chives, coriander, dill, fennel, oregano and parsley
- Potatoes - you should be able to start to plant them out now
- Root and stem vegetables - carrots and turnips can be sown outdoors but under cloches or frames
- Strawberries - plant out cold-stored runners as soon as they become available

April

- Top tasks for April - with April being a lean month for harvesting but it is a good month to get ahead by sowing seeds indoors or outside in a cold frame.
- Harvest the first asparagus of the year along with spring cabbages and cauliflowers, sprouting broccoli and any remaining leeks and kale
- Sow outdoors if the soil is warm enough
- Plant second early and maincrop potatoes and the last of your onion sets
- Earth up first early potatoes
- Prepare seed beds by weeding thoroughly and raking over
- Prune cherry and plum trees

Sow and plant in April

- Carrots, beetroots - most root crops can now be sown outdoors
- Celery, chicory, and endive - sow these indoors to ensure germination, harden off next month and plant out in June
- Courgettes, pumpkins and other squashes - sow indoors ready for planting out next month
- French and runner beans - sow a few seeds in pots and keep in a heated greenhouse
- Leaf vegetables - spinach, Swiss chard can all be sown outdoors now
- Leeks and Onions - sow leeks outdoors now

- Sweetcorn - has a long growing season so its worth getting a crop off to an early start by sowing seeds in pots indoors
- Plant - asparagus crowns, globe artichokes, herbs, peas and broad beans, potatoes, lettuce and other salad leaves

May

- Top tasks for May - May can be a seductive month with longer days, higher temperatures and hopefully enough warm sunshine. Its the month to begin planting and sowing outdoors in earnest, however only transplant tender seedlings when the last chance of frost has gone. harden off any plants grown indoors before planting out and be aware of the possibility of a night time attack from slugs.
- Move seedlings grown under cover outdoors in the daytime to enable them to adjust to outside temperatures
- Earth up rows of potato plants to ensure tubers underground are not exposed to light
- Cover strawberry plants with cloches overnight for an early crop. remove cloches during the day
- Sow outdoors if the weather is mild
- Protect tender plants against sudden frosts, keep an eye on the weather forecast and be ready with cloches and fleece
- Weed regularly and thoroughly and keep young plants well watered
- Net fruit bushes to protect them from birds

Sow or plant in May

- Brussels sprouts, summer, autumn and red cabbage plants and cauliflowers - all these plants grow quite large therefore space out well across the plot, don't crowd them
- Celery - begin planting out this month
- Courgettes, marrows, pumpkins and squashes - plant out in soil that has been enriched with plenty of organic matter.
- Globe artichokes - this month is your last chance for propagating artichokes by dividing and taking offsets from established plants
- Leeks - May is normally the first month to start transplanting out leek plants
- Sweetcorn - start planting out, plant in blocks

June

- Top tasks for June - June signals the mid point of the year, the end of Spring and the beginning of Summer. This month offers the last opportunity to sow many seeds however it does offer the first opportunity to harvest some crops.

You would be very unlucky to experience any frosts now but unfortunately attacks from insects, birds, slugs and snails is more likely.

- Harvest new season early potatoes, peas and broad beans, onions, beetroot, summer salad crops and fruit such as strawberries, gooseberries and cherries
- Sow seeds for vegetables, salads and herbs for picking in late summer and autumn
- Weed ruthlessly and water crops regularly
- Net peas, cabbages and fruit bushes and build supports for climbing plants
- Feed tomatoes as soon as the first tiny fruits appear on the plants
- Keep a careful watch for pests and act accordingly to protect your crop

Sow or plant in June

- Aubergines - plant out by the end of this month to give them as much time as possible to grow and ripen into good sized fruit.
- Brussel Sprouts & cabbages - plant out sprouts and the last of your summer, autumn and red cabbages and the first of your winter cabbages
- Cauliflowers - any seedlings sown in spring for harvesting in the summer and autumn should be planted out now
- Celeriac - late June is probably your last chance to plant it out
- Chillies and sweet peppers - harden off young plants and if the danger of frost has passed then plant them out.
- Courgettes, marrows, pumpkins and squashes - these can all be planted out in June, allow plenty of space and keep them well watered and mulched.

July

- Top tasks for June - Its the height of summer. The days are long, temperatures are most likely at their highest and all being well you are harvesting something delicious from your plot. July can often be a dry month so watering is crucial as most crops require a steady, unbroken supply of water.
- Weed regularly - don't ease up on hoeing, weeds will be growing as vigorously as everything else of your plot
- Mulch to conserve moisture - as soon as possible after rainfall spread mulches such as garden compost to retain the moisture in the soil.
- Net against birds - peas, brassicas and soft fruit need to be protected from birds by securing netting
- Dry out garlic, onions and shallots - a few days before harvest loosen the soil around the roots. Choose a dry spell of weather, lift the bulbs and lie on the soil surface in the sun. The more thoroughly dry they are the longer they will keep.

- Pinch out tops of climbing beans - climbing beans don't really know when to stop so pinch out the growing tips when they reach the top of the canes or they will soon become tangled and top heavy.
- Pinch out tomato shoots - nip off the side shoots and pinch out the growing tip at the top of each plant once four or five trusses have formed.
- Feed tomatoes & peppers - start watering regularly with a liquid fertiliser as soon as you see that the first fruits have formed.
- Summer prune - gooseberries, redcurrants, white currants, blackcurrants and raspberries and tidy up the strawberry patch.

Sow or plant in July

- Brussel sprouts, cabbages and cauliflowers - July is the time to sow cabbages for next spring and your last chance to plant out sprouts, winter cabbages and autumn cauliflowers
- Peas & French Beans - last chance for sowing or planting these, any later and the pods are unlikely to develop enough before the onset of frosts
- Leeks - finish transplanting out leeks raised in pots or modules
- Lettuce and other salad crops - succession sow more lettuce, rocket, land cress and other salad leaves for an ongoing supply into autumn

August

- Top tasks for August - Almost everything you have sown, planted and nurtured through the spring and early summer will be coming to fruition now. Daily trips to your plot should see you returning home with everything from peas, beans, carrots, beetroot, sweetcorn, tomatoes, peppers, potatoes, onions and salads to berries, currants and other fruits.
- Weed and water - in a dry summer the weed growth should slow down but it is important to continue regular watering to promote healthy growth and prevent plants bolting prematurely.
- Harvest regularly - courgettes, runner beans and French beans are notorious for the speed at which they grow, check daily and pick before they grow too large or become stringy.
- Tie up tomatoes, peppers and cucumbers - as the fruits develop they become heavy and the plants will require extra support to the main stems to avoid breakages and loss of crops
- Earth up - potatoes, trench celery to keep the stems out of the light and earth up around brassicas to support unsteady stems.
- Propagate strawberries - any strawberry runners can be pegged down to root, then potted up ready to transplant.

Sow or plant in August

- There is very little to sow or plant now in time for harvesting this year. However as space becomes vacant from crops harvested you can begin to plant out overwintering crops, such as
- Cauliflowers - August is the time to transplant winter and spring cauliflowers. If they overwinter successfully they should give you a harvest in the new year, January onwards.
- Cabbages, Broccoli & Kale - sow a few more cabbages now for harvesting next spring, in a temporary seed bed or pots until space is available on the main plot. Cover them with nets or fleece to keep birds off.
- Lettuce & other salad crops - still possible to sow lettuce though they may not germinate if the weather is too hot. For late autumn and winter salads continue to succession sow rocket, land cress and winter purslane.

September

- Top tasks for September - September marks the onset of autumn. at this time of year, the early crops will be coming to an end. On the other hand later crops are coming into harvest now and you should be lifting maincrop potatoes, pulling leeks, picking apples, pears and late-season plums. The season certainly isn't over yet.
- Sow green manures - field beans, annual ryegrass and phacelia can be sown. They will overwinter and can be dug into the ground next spring.
- Turn your compost heap - turn the compost heap regularly with a fork to aerate it and stimulate decomposition. water it if dry and cover to keep the heat in, this all speeds the compost production up.
- Ripen and pick tomatoes - to encourage tomatoes to fatten up and ripen remove all lower leaves from the plants and keep picking.
- Cut down asparagus - tall, feathery asparagus foliage will be starting to turn yellow and should be cut down to just 2.5 cm above ground level.
- Feed and trim celeriac - feed regularly with a liquid manure, remove any old, damaged leaves from around the stems
- Harvest apples and pears - check for ripeness of fruits and pick when the moment is right. Early pears can be picked while still slightly firm and then ripened indoors.

Sow or plant in September

- Cabbages - transplant your spring cabbages this month or next. Its now time to plant them out in their final growing position
- Salad Crops - sow winter lettuce and further batches of rocket and land cress along with a few last minute radishes may give you a final crop before the end of the year.

- Onions - plant overwintering onion sets , prepare the ground well first and add an all purpose fertiliser.
- Cranberries - try a new fruit and plant cranberry bushes at any time from September to November. Bear in mind they do need an acid soil, so you could grow them in large tubs of ericaceous compost instead.
- Strawberries - plant new strawberry plants, sooner they are in, the sooner they establish and therefore produce a bigger crop next year.

October

- Top tasks for October - This is the month when it feels as if the year is starting to turn. The days are noticeably shorter, the sun is lower in the sky and temperatures are dropping. Leaves are changing colour and beginning to fall and you are likely to get the first early frosts. At this time of year the work is primarily about clearing away and composting the remains of the summers harvest.
- Clear old vegetation - remove all dead foliage and old, dying plants. Unless there are signs of disease add it all to the compost heap.
- Remove plant supports - clear away all bean poles, canes and plant supports and store
- Cover beds with sheeting - use polythene or weed suppressant membrane to cover areas this keeps weed growth at bay and allows you to sow earlier next spring.
- 'Cure' pumpkins and squashes - cut and leave the crop to dry in the sun. This 'curing' hardens the skins, and the tougher the skins the longer they will store.
- Lift carrots - lift carrots and other root vegetables where possible and store
- Earth up - leeks and celery to keep the stems blanched.
- Cover late crops - use cloches to cover and protect any late sown crops, especially salad crops.
- Harvest fruit - continue picking apples and pears/ cook or eat any that are damaged, only store perfect fruit, any that are blemished will simply rot and infect the others stored.

Sow or plant in October

- Broad beans - sow seeds of early varieties, they should overwinter and give you a crop in the following June.
- Cabbages - last chance this year for transplanting spring cabbages. Plant them in ground that has been well firmed and cover with nets to protect from birds, especially pigeons.
- Garlic - plant garlic cloves, if they are not in a waterlogged are they will overwinter. the longer they are in the ground, the bigger next year's bulbs will be for harvesting.

- Rhubarb -they should be entering the dormant period now, from now until March, so now is the best time to plant new sets or divide and replant old crowns.
- Fruit Bushes - plant new, bare root bushes this month, allowing them time through autumn to get their roots down before start of next growing season.

November / December

- Top tasks - These are the months to ensure you have sharp pair of secateurs to hand as pruning begins in earnest. Fruit bushes and trees will have shed their leaves and will be entering their dormant phase, so now would be a good time to prune them, with the exception of cherries and plums.
- Carry out winter digging, clear weeds, apply compost or well-rotted manure to beds. Clear weeds and mulch around the base of existing fruit trees and bushes and prepare the ground to plant new fruit stock.

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