

WHAT TO DO IN THE GARDEN THIS MONTH: NOVEMBER



Late autumn is a quiet time in the garden with cold, short days and long colder nights. There is a possibility of frosts and fog and most plants are becoming dormant. If we have any bright days then it is a good time to be planting shrubs and herbaceous plants, and for clearing up before winter.

TASK LIST

☒ Continue to sweep up fallen leaves and add to the compost heap. Always burn diseased leaves (those with black spot, for instance) as adding them to the compost will perpetuate the disease in the compost. Lawns, especially, need to be kept free of leaves as they will encourage fungus and moss to grow and may even kill the grass if left for some time. The lawn will benefit from aeration (makes lots of holes with a digging fork!) and apply autumn fertiliser if you haven't already done so.

☒ This is a good month to dig over any spare ground that you will be planting up in the spring and allow the winter frosts to break it down. Cut off the tops of any herbaceous plants that have finished flowering and add the debris to the compost. Dig between border plants on heavy soil to allow winter weathering.

☒ One long-term job that begins this month is planting deciduous trees and shrubs, both ornamental and fruiting. Timing depends on the weather and the condition of the ground – container grown plants can be planted anytime except when the ground is frozen or waterlogged. It is also a good time to move any young plants that you would like in a different position in the garden. Bare-rooted plants need to be heeled into the ground if conditions for planting are unsuitable (dig a shallow trench, heel in the roots and 3 inches of the stems and cover with soil).

☒ There is still time to plant tulip and hyacinth bulbs in the garden. If you have planted up bowls of bulbs inside for early flowering, check them regularly and water if necessary and move them to a warmer, lighter position when they are showing 1 inch or more of leaf and bud growth.

☒ Take cuttings of hardwood plants such as ivy, forsythia, deutzia and ribes and insert in a cold frame or open ground. They are slow to root so do not expect to move them for a year.

☒ Ventilate the greenhouse freely on sunny days and clean the glass and remove leaves from the outside to ensure maximum light. Although plants in the greenhouse will still need occasional watering take care not to over-water as the combination of damp and cold can easily cause fungal infection. If you have a greenhouse heater, check that it is in good working order.

☒ In the vegetable garden it is time to sow broad beans and peas and hope for a mild winter! Select hardy cultivars and protect the young plants with cloches or fleece when the weather is severe. However, protection should be removed when the weather is warm and sunny or the plants will become soft and vulnerable.

☒ Plant out new roses after preparing a planting mixture containing bonemeal and peat to give them a good start. Established roses can be lightly pruned now with a view to harder pruning in the spring, after the worst of the weather.

PLANTS TO ENJOY IN NOVEMBER

Acer (Maple), Amelanchier, Arbutus, Aucuba, Berberis, Callicarpa, Calluna, Cotoneaster, Cornus kousa, Crataegus (hawthorn), Cyclamen alpinum, Erica, Erigeron, Euonymus, Fatsia japonica, Gentiana sino-ornata and farreri, Ginkgo, Hebe, Jasminum nudiflorum (winter jasmine), Mahonia japonica, Malus, Pernettya, Pyracantha, Skimmia japonica, Sorbus, Symphoricarpos (Snowberry), Viburnum

DIANA'S CHOICE

A good plant for cutting now is the kaffir lily (*Schizostylis coccinea*). It has tall spikes of starry flowers of pink or red and is grown from corm-like rootstocks. It reaches a height of 3 feet and gives welcome colour and structure to the herbaceous border in the autumn. Large clumps can be divided in the spring when its grass-like leaves push through the soil.

