

What to do on the plot in November

Contributed by Behemoth

Just when you thought you could sit indoors by a roaring fire, Behemoth drags you off to the allotments...

Sow

Until mid-November you can sow:

Broad Beans: Make sure it's a hardy variety such as Aquadulce Claudia. Ready in June.

Garlic: If you have heavy clay soil it may be better to wait to spring as they may rot. Ready in late June/early July

Shallots: ready early July

Other Jobs

Lift Carrot and Beetroot if you have space for storage: See [Veg Storage](#) article here

Tidy up the plot. Put old greenery and yellowing brassicas leaves in the compost. Collect up canes and put them in your store. If you get high winds your brassicas may need supporting with stakes..

Protect autumn sowings of salad and oriental greens with a cloche or some fleece. Not only does it protect them but it also helps keep them clean.

Digging: For something so simple there are many words written. Now is a good time to dig over your plot, particularly if you have a heavy soil. Remember to not over work yourself. Here's a few tips

Keep your spade clean.

Drive the spade in to its full length.

Pull the handle back, levering the soil onto the blade.

Only lift as much as you can comfortably manage.

Bend your knees and elbows avoiding putting strain on your back. Keep it as straight as you can.

Twist the spade over to get air into the soil.

Work backwards so you don't walk on the soil you've already dug.

On raised beds you shouldn't have compact the soil so they won't need digging. However they will appreciate a thick layer of compost and a gentle forking or you can leave the work to the worms.

Undercover

Sowings

Salads

Carrots

Hardy winter lettuce – try Valdor

Perpetual Spinach

Mizuna

Garlic cloves in pots to plant out in spring

Peas – mange tout varieties can be ready by April. Feltham First and Pilot can also be sown. Start them in pots.

Broad beans – Aquadulce type, start them in pots.

You need to keep the air dry now so reduce watering and ventilate well on warmer days. Remove plants with any sign of grey mould (botrytis).

An extra layer of insulation can make a great difference. Bubble wrap is a favourite though it does affect light transmission. You can make a bubble wrap cloche in the poly tunnel or greenhouse if you prefer.

Now is a good time to feed the soil, remember it is worked very intensively. Dig in manure or mulch around crops.

Clear up crops coming to an end of their productive lives e.g. peppers and tomatoes.

Fruit

Now is a good time to prune, white red and black currants. Consult a good book as trying to tell you here without diagrams is too difficult. You can use your prunings to propagate new bushes. Take strong straight shoots, about the dimensions of a pencil, snip the thin end as well. For blackcurrants push the cutting straight into the soil leaving only 3 inches showing. For Red currants and gooseberries push

into the ground and leave about half the length showing. For gooseberries first remove the thorns and shoots.