



Gardening Jobs in December

- If it's not too wet underfoot and you are feeling energetic then December is a good time to prepare the new beds for next season. Applying compost or manure will help improve soil structure and nutrient levels. The winter frosts will break down the manure and it can be dug over in spring.
- You can still plant shrubs and trees if the weather permits – don't chance it if it's very dry, too wet or frosty!
- Plant winter displays of heathers, pansies and dwarf conifers.
- Clear away the remains of old veg crops – great for the compost heap.
- Winter brassicas such as cabbages and sprouts might need a bit of help to stop them blowing around in the wind – build up some earth around the roots. Tall sprouts might even need a stake.
- Take hardwood cuttings of currants and gooseberries. The cuttings should be about 25-30 cm (10-12 inches) long and should be buried in a trench in the open ground to about half their length.
- Continue pruning apples, pears, gooseberries and redcurrants.
- Grape vines must be pruned when dormant as otherwise the sap will gush out severely weakening the plant. Pruning can be done now – be ruthless and cut back all new shoots to just two or three buds. Main stems can also be shortened if necessary.
- If you haven't already done it then line your greenhouse with bubble wrap to conserve heat and prevent draughts.
- Poinsettias are a really popular choice as Christmas plants. Keep them looking good by keeping them in a warm place and keeping the soil moist but not soggy. Never let them stand in water and avoid cold draughts.
- Keep off the lawn if the weather is very wet or frosty.
- Keep an area in pools and ponds ice-free to stop the build-up of gases that could harm wildlife. If it does freeze then never smash the ice - melt it by standing a pan of boiling water on it.
- Knock any snow off tree branches so that they don't snap under the weight.
- Make sure the garden birds have plenty of food and fresh water.

This information is intended for guidance purposes only. We are happy to give help and advice on most gardening topics at the garden centre.

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