



Gardening Jobs in November

- Protect tender plants from frost:

Leave the old growth of tender plants un-pruned over the winter months. This will help to protect the central crown of the plant and take the brunt of any frost damage. If plants are cut back hard in autumn new growth could be damaged by frost.

Protect tender plants grown up against walls with fibre fleece tacked on to wooden frames. Frames for plants in beds and borders can be made by pushing garden canes into the soil around the plant and draping fleece over the top to make a “tent”.

Tender bulbs, corms and herbaceous plants can be protected with a thick mulch of manure, straw or old leaves. Use a cloche in spring when the early shoots come through.

Protect tree ferns by wrapping the trunk with layers of fleece or hessian and straw and stuff the crowns with straw too. Tender cordylines and palms should have their leaves tied in bunches before wrapping in fleece or hessian. You can also use chicken wire to make a cage around the plant and then stuff it with straw.

Evergreen plants will benefit from a thick layer of mulch around the base. This will prevent the soil freezing solid and allow them to take up moisture as it's often dehydration that kills them in very cold weather.

Move very tender plants in containers inside. If you can't get them inside then take cuttings.

Plants in containers that are not fully hardy can be protected with fleece (you can buy fleece bags with drawstring bottoms for convenience) and also wrap the pot in bubble-wrap to protect the roots. Make sure that the pots are lifted off the ground with pot feet or wooden blocks as this will help avoid water-logging and also protect the pot from cracking.
- Finish planting evergreen shrubs and conifers early in the month. Make sure that you mulch around evergreens so that the soil does not freeze. This will allow them to continue to take up moisture.
- Plant fruit trees and bushes such as apples, plums, pears and raspberry canes.
- Check stored fruit for any signs of rotting – remember the saying “one bad apple spoils the lot”.
- If you are having a bonfire then don't forget to check around the base for hedgehogs as they will be looking for somewhere cosy to spend the winter.
- Last chance to bring some pots of herbs such as mint and chives into the greenhouse so that you will have some to pick over winter – divide them and re-pot if they are congested.
- It's time to plant bare-rooted hedging. There are lots of varieties to choose from depending on whether you want an ornamental or natural hedge. See the project for the month below.
- Tidy up your borders before winter. Cut back dead stems and foliage (you can leave some tall grasses or seed heads as homes for over-wintering insects). Clear out fallen leaves to prevent diseases and moulds.
- Plant up containers with winter flowering heathers, winter bedding and bulbs. Add some evergreen plants such as miniature conifers or euonymus for structure. We are happy to plant up tubs and containers for you.
- Continue to plant spring flowering bulbs, especially tulips, in borders or containers.

- Sow broad beans and peas for an earlier crop next year. Make sure that you protect them from mice.
- Harden off autumn sown sweet peas by keeping them in an open cold-frame during light frosts (down to -2 deg C).
- Pot on cuttings taken earlier in the season – move on to John Innes No1 or multi-purpose compost with added sand.
- Clear fallen leaves from the garden as they can make a slippery mess on paths, block up drains and gutters and harbour fungi spores and disease if left to rot on the lawn or border. However, they do make a great soil improver for the garden. Leaves don't break down well in the compost heap so collect them up and put them in black bin-bags. Wet them down and punch a few holes in the bags with a fork. Leave them in a pile in quiet corner for at least 12 months and you will have fantastic leaf mould.
- Winter prune established apple and pear trees. Make a nice open framework with plenty of fruiting spurs and no crossing branches. Apply glue bands to fruit trees to prevent winter moths climbing the trunks to lay their eggs in the branches. Prune gooseberries and redcurrants.
- If it's mild then November is the last chance to apply autumn lawn food to the grass. A last cut on a high setting will collect up fallen leaves as well.
- Spread manure on the vegetable plot so it will rot down over winter. However, you should never manure a bed in which your next crop is to be carrots or parsnips as it will cause them to fork. Horse and cow manure are most commonly used in the garden. Well rotted horse manure is easily available but can be more prone to weed seeds. Cow manure is great but not quite so easy to handle as it is wetter.
- Tidy up the garden before winter: Clean old pots and seed trays and store them neatly ready for next spring. Collect up garden canes and allow them to dry before storing in the shed. Clean spades and forks in a bucket of oiled sand and apply linseed oil to wooden shafts of tools. Clean the lawnmower and have it serviced if required. Drain the hose pipe and insulate the outside tap.
- To prevent the pond freezing over put something in to float on the surface – a ball, some polystyrene or wood blocks.
- 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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