



Monthly Jobs and Gardening Tips

No-dig method:

What is no-dig?

Simply put, it means that you don't dig over the soil each year to prepare it for the coming growing season. The core idea behind this method is to minimise disturbance to the soil, meaning that you not only have to do less work, but also the soil remains healthier with less intervention. With this method, the only time you're disturbing the soil is to plant your seeds and to do some light hoeing, before mulching your soil at the end of each growing season ready to start again in the Spring!

Benefits of a no-dig method:

- **Reduce weeds** → digging brings un-germinated seeds to the surface of the soil to sprout, so you can reduce this with a no-dig method.
- **Soil fertility & structure** → digging disturbs the beneficial microorganisms, fungi, and worms which enrich the soil, keep its structure, and help feed plant roots.
- **Less time, less effort** → lots of people are put off gardening because of the amount of manual labour and time that they think you need to spend in the growing area. With no-dig gardening, this just isn't the case, and you can focus on growing food with minimal extra effort.

The main steps to the no-dig method are soil preparation and soil enrichment.

Soil preparation:

This simply involves mulching and smothering any weeds using cardboard and then compost. Using lumpier compost on the bottom and finer compost on top makes this method a lot easier and more effective, because it means that you can plant straight into the top layer of compost and let organisms like worms break the compost down into the soil beneath.

Another method to add here is the 'chop & drop' method, which is part of the permaculture approach to food growing that mimics natural systems. As the name suggests, all it involves is cutting up plant material and dropping it back onto the bed. This will be part of your soil preparation between growing seasons, where instead of digging out weeds, you can chop the plants at their base, cut them up into small pieces and scatter this organic material into a layer over your bed.

Ideally you want to have a thick enough layer that light is excluded from the bed so weeds don't re-grow, but if you have a thinner layer of plant material, you can then cover the bed with cardboard or tarp or another material that blocks out sunlight, so that the plant material slowly breaks down over the winter and the weeds stop growing, turning instead into valuable plant nutrients. Don't worry about pulling the roots out as these will break down in the soil for minimal disturbance. Leaving the roots in also means that organic matter is spread deeper into the soil as they decompose.

Soil enrichment:

Instead of digging in compost, use a compost mulch - which just means covering the soil with compost. Mulch is material that covers the soil, keeping moisture in and preventing weed growth, and by using organic material as mulch we are also feeding the soil. Each year, add another layer of compost mulch to top up the soil with essential nutrients. This is different to most gardening guides which suggest feeding plants with fertilisers, rather than feeding the soil which enriches the plants that grow in it. By using this method, you're allowing the soil to thrive and feed your plants, saving you more time and money.

What kind of compost should I use?

- ✦ **Grass cuttings** - this releases nitrates into the soil when it breaks down, and is often used to keep soil moisture locked in around bushes and plants.
- ✦ **Bark and shavings** - suppresses weeds and is also used to create paths.
- ✦ **Cardboard, newspaper or plastic membranes** - prevents light from getting to the soil, preventing weeds from growing.

Water

One of the most important elements in a growing area is water! Make sure you have access to water in your growing area, so that you don't find yourself having to cart water from indoors to your garden.

It is a great idea to install a water butt which collects rainwater from your gutters - even in dry areas of the UK, you could collect 24,000 litres (or 150 water butts) from your roof every year! This is especially important as the UK's water resources are under increasing pressure due to climate change and population growth. Using our water supplies wisely will help us in the future when we may face hosepipe bans. Rainwater is also the correct pH for plants, and is naturally soft water, which plants love. It is also the better option for your plants in the long term, as tap water often contains treatment chemicals, minerals and salts that your plants will prefer to be without. This water treatment also uses a huge amount of energy in order to make the UK's mains tap water safe for human consumption, so using rainwater for your plants also considerably lowers your carbon footprint!

Monthly Jobs

Month	Sowing & Planting	Problems	General Care
Jan	<p>Fruit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Plant bare-root fruit and nut trees and bushes, as long as the soil isn't frozen. <p>Veg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Broad beans - sow in pots and place in a cold frame or unheated greenhouse. - Sow seed indoors for early crops, eg: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lettuces • summer brassicas (cabbages and cauliflowers etc.) • spinach • salad onions • turnips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Check apples for canker and prune out. - Remove all remaining plant debris from the vegetable plot. Do not compost any diseased material such as blight-infected potatoes, onions suffering from white rot and any crops with rust. Burn or bin the diseased material. - Brassicas - protect from pigeons + check for grey mould + downy mildew. 	<p>Fruit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Apply winter washes to fruit trees and bushes. - Ensure tree stakes and ties are firm and sound. - Prune: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apples • Pears • Currants • Medlars • Gooseberries • Autumn raspberries <p>Veg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prepare beds by adding mulch (info on this at the bottom of this info sheet). If the weather is reliably dry and frosty, leave heavy soils exposed - the frosts will kill pests and improve soil structure by the continual freezing and thawing of soil water.
Feb	<p>Fruit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Plant fruit trees, bushes, canes and vines if the soil isn't frozen. <p>Veg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - From mid-February onwards sow tomato and cucumber seed for greenhouse growing. - Plant out garlic and shallots in light soils only; heavy soils need longer to warm up. - If you have light (sandy) soil and live in a mild part of the UK, you can sow broad beans, carrots, parsnips, early beetroot, salad onions, lettuces, radish, peas, spinach and summer cabbages outside under cloches. Otherwise it's best to wait until the soil has begun to warm up in March or April. - Plant Jerusalem artichoke tubers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Brassicas - protect from pigeon damage. - Pick yellowing leaves off Brussels sprouts and other brassicas promptly, to prevent spread of grey mould and brassica downy mildew. - Remove all remaining plant debris from the vegetable plot. 	<p>Fruit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Last chance to winter wash trees and bushes. - Clear the ground under trees and bushes of weeds. - Cover outdoor, soil-grown strawberries with cloches for an earlier crop. - Tip back summer-fruiting raspberry canes to 15cm (6in) above their top support wire. - Last chance to winter prune: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apples • Pears • Medlars • Quinces • Red currants • White currants • Raspberries - prune back newly planted raspberries back to 30cm (12in) • Established autumn-fruiting raspberries. <p>Veg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prepare seedbeds (see info below this table).

<p>March</p>	<p>Fruit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Last chance to plant bare-root fruit trees, and ideally plant container-grown ones too. - Plant cold-stored strawberry runners. - Plant cranberries and lingonberries. <p>Veg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sow seeds outdoors in mild areas with light soil - be guided by the weather, and sow only if conditions are suitable. • eg: broad beans, carrots, parsnips, beetroot, onions, lettuces, radish, peas, spinach, summer cabbage, salad leaves, leeks, Swiss chard, kohlrabi, turnip and summer cauliflower. - Sow seed indoors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sweet peppers • tomatoes • cucumbers • aubergines • celery • salads • globe artichokes - Plant: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • onions, shallots and garlic sets • Jerusalem artichoke tubers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protect early seed sowings from slugs. - Protect brassicas from pigeons. - Look out for grey mould and brassica downy mildew on brassicas. - Control aphids and other pests on fruit but don't spray when in blossom. - Get on top of weed control if not done in late winter and continue through to summer. 	<p>Fruit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protect fruit blossoms from frost, but make sure insects can access the flowers or else hand pollinate them. - Mulch raspberries, blueberries, cranberries and lingonberries with well-rotted farmyard manure (not mushroom compost as it is too alkaline). - Apply a mulch around fruit trees, nuts, and bushes as long as the ground isn't frozen. - Repot or top dress container-grown fruit if needed. - Carry out formative pruning of newly planted fruit trees if the weather is dry. - Prune blueberries. - Untie canes of blackberries and hybrid berries that have been bundled together for the winter, and train into arches before the buds burst. <p>Veg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prepare seedbeds, covering them with clear polythene or fleece to warm up the soil before sowing. - Protect early outdoor sowings with fleece and polythene. - Put supports in place for peas. - Start preparing runner bean supports and trenches for sowing (in May) or planting out (in June).
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<p>April</p>	<p>Fruit: - Ideal time to plant pot-grown fruit trees and bushes.</p> <p>Veg: - Chit and plant out second early potatoes in the first half of the month, maincrop potatoes in the second half.</p> <p>- Sow seeds outdoors for beetroot, carrots, Swiss chard, summer cauliflower, kohlrabi, lettuce, leeks, radish, turnip, spring and pickling onions, peas and perpetual spinach in well-prepared soil.</p> <p>- Sow seeds indoors of marrows, courgettes, pumpkins, squash, sweet peppers, tomatoes, cucumbers, aubergines, celery, celeriac, salads and globe artichokes.</p> <p>- In very mild areas sow dwarf French beans and sweet corn outside under cloches or fleece at the end of April. In cooler areas wait until May.</p> <p>- Sow a seedbed of brassicas to provide transplants of sprouting broccoli, cauliflowers and cabbages for planting out in June or July.</p> <p>- Transplant broad beans grown in pots.</p> <p>- Plant shallots, onion sets and garlic.</p> <p>- Plant Jerusalem artichoke tubers.</p> <p>- Pot up tomato seedlings when they develop true leaves above the more rounded seed leaves.</p>	<p>- Apply apple and pear scab controls.</p> <p>- Deal with aphids, apple sucker, pear sucker, pear midge, caterpillars and powdery mildew.</p> <p>- Look out for red spider mite and aphids on strawberries under glass and treat accordingly.</p> <p>- Keep on top of weed control and continue through to summer.</p>	<p>Fruit: - Deblossom strawberries planted after September in their first year to help establishment.</p> <p>- Ventilate strawberries under cloches and mulch with straw or mats.</p> <p>- Avoid using insecticides on crops in flower.</p> <p>Veg: - Support pea plants with sticks, twigs, green support mesh, or wire netting.</p> <p>- Thin out rows of seedlings as soon as they are large enough to be handled.</p> <p>- Protect early outdoor sowings with fleece and polythene.</p> <p>- Prepare runner bean supports for sowing (in May) or planting out (in June).</p>
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<p>May</p>	<p>Veg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sow French beans, runner beans, squash, cucumbers and pumpkin seeds directly into prepared beds outside. Be alert to late frosts (for which a covering of horticultural fleece should provide sufficient protection). - Sow cauliflowers and purple sprouting broccoli for harvesting next winter. - After all risk of frost has passed, plant out tomatoes, courgettes and pumpkins that were previously sown under cover. Other young plants can be planted out once conditions are suitable, and once they've been hardened off for 10 to 14 days. - Brussels sprouts for next winter should now be ready for transplanting after early or mid-spring sowing. - Plant out artichokes that were previously sown under cover. - Self-blanching celery can also be planted out towards the end of the month. - Ridge cucumbers can be sown indoors now, for planting out in early June. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Watch for the small holes flea beetles make on brassica seedlings. - Water plants well to help them continue growing despite the pest damage. - Protect carrots with insect-proof mesh to prevent carrot root fly. - Slugs pose a threat, and slug controls are necessary now, as always. - Protect brassicas and peas from pigeons. - Pick yellowing leaves off brassicas promptly, to prevent spread of grey mould and brassica downy mildew. - Deal with apple sawfly and capsid bug and prevent blossom wilt if it struck last year. - Put up codling moth traps in apple trees. - Look out for spur blight, cane spot and cane blight on raspberries, blackberries and hybrid berries. - Put bird protection in place for all soft fruit. - Deal with raspberry leaf and bud mite and raspberry rust from now on. - Keep on top of weed control and continue through to summer. 	<p>Fruit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pull off suckers appearing around the base of fruit trees. - Deblossom strawberry runners planted since September. - Water blueberries, cranberries and lingonberries when needed with rainwater, but use tap water when butts are empty. - Move growing-bags into the greenhouse to warm up two weeks before planting indoor melons, and water well two days before planting. - Make sure fruit isn't drought stressed, especially those in containers, against a wall or newly planted. - Make sure bees can access caged and cloched fruit flowers to ensure pollination. - Keep a check on late frost forecasts and protect blossoms as necessary. - Remove wayward shoots on fan-trained trees and tie in better placed ones. - Thin out crowded raspberry shoots. - Thin gooseberries if you want large fruit. <p>Veg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Earth up potatoes when the shoots are 23cm (9in) high, in order to prevent the new tubers going green. Earthing-up is the drawing up of soil around the stems of the plants, leaving just 5cm (2in) of shoot uncovered so that the plant has enough foliage to continue growing. - Start to remove sideshoots from cordon tomatoes as you see them. The sideshoots develop in the leaf axils (i.e. between the stem and leaf), and if allowed to develop will sap the energy of the plant and reduce the quality of the yield. - Strings stretched along the tops of broad bean plants can support them, and prevent them flopping once pods develop. - Peas need staking with pea sticks, netting, or pruned twigs from the garden.
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<p>June</p>	<p>Veg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue sowing salad crops, such as beetroot, lettuce, pak choi and radish. Leafy salad crops may do better when sown in partially shady sites since hot dry weather can lead to bitter tasting leaves. - Sow French, runner and broad beans, peas, squash, sweetcorn, and outdoor cucumbers directly into prepared beds outside. - French beans are best sown in rows, 45cm (18in) apart, at 15-22cm (6-9in) spacing. - Runner beans need well-prepared ground and suitable supports (often a frame or wigwam of bamboo canes tied together with twine) for the shoots to twine around and grow upwards. - Courgettes, marrows and pumpkins can still be sown outdoors in early June in southern districts. - Although most winter brassicas need to be sown earlier in the season, calabrese, turnips and kohlrabi can be sown now for an autumn crop. - Celeriac and celery can be planted out early this month. A well-prepared site with lots of organic matter dug in is essential. - Outdoor ridge cucumbers can be planted out early this month. They benefit from a site that has been enriched with lots of organic matter to help retain water. - Plant vegetables sown indoors earlier in the season, including winter brassicas and sweet peppers. - Peppers can only be planted out when all risk of frost has passed, and ideally beneath cloches. - Gaps between winter brassica plants can be used for quick-maturing catch crops, perhaps radishes or gem lettuces. - Plant out artichokes that were previously sown under cover. They can be grown as perennials (in which case they need 90cm spacing), or as biennials (45cm spacing is sufficient). 	<p>Veg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pinching out the top of broad beans once the lowest flowers have set will help prevent aphid attack. - Look out for flea beetles on brassicas. - Ward off carrot fly by covering plants with a fine woven plastic mesh like Enviromesh. - Slugs pose a threat, especially to newly-planted seedlings and slug controls are necessary now. - Pick yellowing leaves off brassicas promptly to prevent spread of grey mould and brassica downy mildew. - Damping off of seedlings can be a problem both outside and in containers. - Deal with red spider mite, whitefly, codling moth and plum moth and raspberry beetle. - Look out for shothole on tree fruit, especially stone fruit – a sign of possible disease infection. - Start treating potatoes and tomatoes against blight. 	<p>Fruit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Peg down strawberry runners and remove cloches from outdoor strawberries once cropped. - Water blueberries, cranberries and lingonberries regularly with rainwater. - Water and feed indoor melons daily once they are established and plant into growing-bags in a heated greenhouse. - Avoid using insecticides on crops when they are in flower. - Make sure fruit isn't drought stressed, especially in containers, against a wall or newly planted. - Continue training fan-trained trees. - Pull off suckers appearing around the base of fruit trees. - Train in new shoots of blackberries and hybrid berries. - Summer prune red and white currants and gooseberries. - Shorten newly planted raspberry canes once new shoots are produced. <p>Veg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Peas need staking with pea sticks, netting or pruned garden twigs. - Continue to earth up maincrop potatoes. - Water tomatoes and peppers regularly to prevent blossom end rot – a symptom of calcium deficiency due to erratic water supply.
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<p>July</p>	<p>Veg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sow spring cabbage, turnips, Oriental vegetables, chicory, fennel, and autumn/winter salads. - Carrots can still be sown, but beware of carrot fly when thinning existing seedlings. - Last chance to sow French beans and runner beans (south of England only). - Plant out leeks and brassicas for a winter supply, if not yet done. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Check plants regularly for aphids. - Watch out for potato blight and tomato blight. - Look out for asparagus beetle. - Keep an early eye out for the sunken brown patches of blossom end rot on tomatoes. - Deal with woolly aphid, plum rust, pear leaf blister mite and pear rust. 	<p>Fruit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Check tree ties as tree trunk girth increases. - Water cranberries, lingonberries and blueberries regularly with rainwater. Tap water will do when butts run dry. - Pollinate female indoor melon flowers, then pinch out 2cm (0.75in) beyond the flower. Pinch out the growing point of outdoor melons twice, at four-week intervals. Water outdoor melons regularly once established. - Pull off suckers appearing around the base of fruit trees. Make sure fruit isn't drought stressed, especially those in containers, against a wall or newly planted. - Continue training fan-trained trees. - Complete summer pruning of gooseberries and redcurrants and white currants. <p>Veg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Don't forget to stop cordon tomatoes by removing the main shoot. Look for the leaf that's above the fourth truss (set of developing fruit) and cut it off here. This should ensure that all the fruits ripen by the end of the season. - Climbing beans may also need stopping, to maximise cropping on existing sideshoots. Stop them when they reach the tops of their supports. - Beans need sufficient watering to help the seed pods set. - Check climbing vegetables are securely tied to supports.
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<p>Aug</p>	<p>Fruit: - Plant out rooted strawberry runners.</p> <p>Veg: - In the south of England you can still sow quick maturing salad crops such as summer lettuce, radish, rocket, sorrel, chicory and fennel.</p> <p>- Continue to sow spring cabbage, turnips, Oriental vegetables and overwintering onions, in the south of England.</p> <p>- Sow green manures such as crimson clover and Italian ryegrass to act as a soil improver and to cover bare areas. When dug in, they conserve nutrients and improve soil texture.</p>	<p>- Check plants regularly for aphids and deal with them as soon as you see them.</p> <p>- Look out for tomato and potato blight and deal with it as soon as you spot it.</p> <p>- Watch tomatoes for blossom end rot, and other ripening problems.</p> <p>- Look out for fungal spots on bean and pea pods and leaves.</p> <p>- Remove any sweetcorn cobs affected by smut. Carrot fly is still about.</p> <p>- Check stored onions for softness and the grey or black mould of neck rot.</p> <p>- Deal with brown rot on tree fruit.</p> <p>- Deal with powdery mildew on grapes and melons.</p>	<p>Fruit: - Summer prune restricted apples and pears.</p> <p>- If necessary, prune plums, gages and damsons immediately after harvest.</p> <p>- Water cranberries, lingonberries and blueberries regularly with rainwater. Tap water will do if butts run dry.</p> <p>- Loosely tie together new blackberries and hybrid berry canes.</p> <p>- Remove straw and old leaves and tidy up strawberries after fruiting.</p> <p>- Prune out fruited summer raspberry canes and tie in new ones.</p> <p>Veg: - Irregular watering can lead to problems with blossom end rot in tomatoes, splitting of root vegetables and flower abortion in runner beans. Help prevent this by watering well during dry spells.</p> <p>- Marrows should be raised off the ground slightly, to prevent them discolouring from contact with the soil.</p> <p>- Take care when thinning out any late-sown carrot seedlings to prevent the scent released attracting carrot fly females.</p>
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<p>Sept</p>	<p>Fruit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue planting new strawberry beds. <p>Veg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue to sow vegetables for overwintering, to mature next spring, including: turnip, spinach, winter lettuce, Oriental vegetables. - Plant overwintering onion sets. - Spring cabbages that were sown last month are probably ready for planting out. Cover them with horticultural fleece or netting to stop the pigeons shredding them. - Sow green manures such as crimson clover and Italian ryegrass to act as a soil improver and to cover bare areas. Then use the chop & drop method later in the year to add nutrients to the soil. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Watch tomatoes for blossom end rot, and other ripening problems. - Be sure to clear debris created when lifting potatoes, and take care not to damage the tubers. - Control against bacterial canker at the end of the month. 	<p>Fruit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Harvest top fruit such as apples and pears. Look for fruit falling under the tree (windfalls) to indicate which apples are ready, but also assess taste and texture to determine whether they are ready for harvesting. - Begin harvesting quinces and medlars. Finish tying in shoots on wall-trained trees. - Continue to provide support for heavily-laden fruit tree and bush branches. - Finish tying in shoots on fan-trained trees. - Cut back old canes of blackberries and hybrid berries after fruiting and tie in the new canes. - Prune blackcurrants. <p>Veg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Irregular watering can lead to problems with blossom end rot in tomatoes, splitting of root vegetables and flower abortion in runner beans. Help prevent this by watering well during dry spells. - Keep up with watering winter squash and pumpkins - this will prevent their growth from being checked.
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<p>Oct</p>	<p>Fruit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Now is a good time to plant any pot-grown fruit. - Take cuttings of currants and gooseberries and dig up rooted layers of blackberries and hybrid berries. <p>Veg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In mild areas you can sow overwintering broad beans in situ. Cover broad beans with fleece or cloches to provide insulation in colder areas, as well as protection from pigeons. - Sow overwintering varieties of peas such as 'Douce Provence' or 'Meteor', but only in mild areas. - Plant out spring cabbages. Remember to net them for protection from pigeons. - Finish planting autumn onion sets for a crop in early to mid-summer next year. - Plant garlic cloves. - In the south of England, green manures can still be sown until the middle of the month. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Check stored apples regularly and remove rotting fruit. - Keep an eye on Brussels sprouts, removing yellowing leaves to prevent grey mould from becoming troublesome. - Remove all plant debris from the vegetable patch or allotment, to reduce the spread and the overwintering of disease and pests. - Place mouse controls near your stored vegetables. - Flea beetle can still be a problem until the end of October. 	<p>Fruit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Order your new raspberries this month, make sure they are certified as virus-free stock. - Take cuttings of currants and gooseberries and dig up rooted layers of blackberries and hybrid berries such as tayberries. - Prepare the ground for new fruit trees, nuts, vines, canes and bushes. - Autumn is also a good time to mulch under fruit trees and bushes with either garden compost, woodchip or bark chippings. Chippings will help keep weeds down while garden compost will improve soil structure and fertility. - Trim over cranberry beds after you've harvested the fruit. <p>Veg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dig up outdoor tomato plants and hang them upside-down in the greenhouse to allow the fruits to ripen. Any that don't ripen can be used green in chutneys. - Cut back the dying tops of Jerusalemartichokes to ground level.
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<p>Nov</p>	<p>Fruit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Buy and plant new fruit trees and bushes. Don't plant if the ground is frosted or too wet. <p>Veg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sow overwintering broad beans (mild areas only) outside or under cloches where the soil is well drained, or in pots in an unheated greenhouse in cold districts. - Dig up chicory roots to be forced. Pot them up after removing foliage and position them in a dark warm place. The tasty chicons will appear in three to six weeks. - Plant garlic cloves in modules inside a cold frame, or outdoors in mild areas in their final position (free-draining soils and low rainfall areas only). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protect new sowings and crops still in the ground from mice. - Protect brassicas from pigeons using cloches, netting or fleece. - Remove any yellowed leaves on Brussels sprouts and other brassicas. This will prevent the development of grey mould and brassica downy mildew. - Remove all remaining plant debris from the vegetable plot. Do not compost any diseased material. - Deal with rodent damage on any stored fruits and nuts. - Remove any rotten stored fruit. - Deal with apple and pear canker. - Deal with bitter pit in stored apples. 	<p>Fruit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thin out congested spurs on trained fruit trees. - Tie in new tiers of espaliers. - Prune apples, pears, quinces, medlars, as well as red and white currants and gooseberries. <p>Veg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parsnips can be left in the ground until needed, or lifted and then buried in a shallow trench for easy access when needed. They taste better when frosted. - Celeriac can also be left in the ground for a bit, but do protect them from the cold with a thick mulch of straw, bracken, or other suitable material. - Stake any Brussels sprouts stalks that look leggy and vulnerable to wind rock. - Clean and store bamboo canes in the shed or other dry place to ensure they're still in good condition for next year. - Use chop & drop method to cover and prepare soil for winter.
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<p>Dec</p>	<p>Fruit: - Plant new trees and bushes. Don't plant if the ground is waterlogged or frozen.</p> <p>Veg: - Plant shallots and garlic in mild areas with well-drained soil.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protect new sowings and crops still in the ground from mice. - Place mice controls near stored fruit and vegetables as well. - Slugs can still pose a threat, and slug controls are necessary now, as always. - Protect brassicas from pigeons using cloches, netting or fleece. - Remove any yellowed leaves on Brussels sprouts and other brassicas. This will prevent the development of grey mould and brassica downy mildew. - Remove all remaining plant debris from the vegetable plot. Do not compost any diseased material. - Remove any rotten stored fruit. - Deal with apple and pear canker. - Deal with bitter pit in stored apples. 	<p>Fruit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tie in new tiers of espaliers. - Thin out congested spurs of restricted fruit trees. - Prune apples, pears, quinces and medlars, as well as autumn raspberries, red and white currants and gooseberries. <p>Veg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If hard frosts are forecast, cover trenches of stored root crops with a protective layer of cardboard so you can still access your crops to eat and enjoy during cold snaps. - Stake any Brussels sprouts stalks that look leggy and vulnerable to wind rock. - There's still time to force chicory. Pot them up and position them in a dark warm place. The tasty chicons will appear in three to six weeks. - Clear late-season debris off the vegetable plots, and compost it. Bin or burn any diseased material. - Clean and store bamboo canes in the shed or other dry place to ensure they're still in good condition for next year. Broken or rotted ones can be shortened, where possible, for re-use.
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Learn more:

RHS Allotment Journal (book)

RHS Gardening Through the Year: Month-by-month Planning Instructions and Inspiration (book)

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/>

<https://www.almanac.com/gardening/tips>

<https://www.countrylife.co.uk/gardens/gardening-tips/month-month-checklist-garden-2021-209949>

<https://www.gardenersworld.com/>

<https://schoolgardening.rhs.org.uk/Resources/Activity/Get-the-Soil-Ready-for-Planting>

<https://hub.suttons.co.uk/gardening-advice/monthly-gardening-jobs>

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<https://www.gardenninja.co.uk/no-dig-gardening-for-beginners-charles-dowding-explains-to-garden-ninja/>

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