

Things to do in October

You could be picking

- Tomatoes, French beans, courgettes, cucumbers, lettuce, spinach, rocket, calabrese and globe artichokes and autumn raspberries are coming to an end but carrots, beetroot, spring onions are going on in the ground and can stay there if covered before the first frosts arrive.
- Butternut squash can be stored if the skin is allowed to dry off and harden and it is kept cool.
- Sweet peas, cosmos, asters and cornflowers are still flowering enough to cut. Primo cabbage is coming to an end but the kale, Brussels, red/winter cabbages and oriental greens are looking good under environmesh.
- Leeks and parsnips are okay and the celeriac will stand if earthed up well.
- I have lifted my potatoes and stored in the garage in paper sacks. If kept cool and dark they can go on 'til March (but may need sprouts removing to keep going through Feb). If you have not lifted dig on a sunny day as they store better if allowed to dry.
- I have not yet picked my grapes as they season now seems extended by a month but the wasps are a danger.
- Harvest apples and pears. Store in cool place.

You could still be clearing

- Keep compost heap going with a mixture of material, wet and dry and toss in some grass cuttings to keep it hot.
- DO NOT COMPOST PERENNIAL WEED ROOTS
- Prune and burn any areas with canker
- Try to cover any soil not in use to avoid annual weeds developing.
- Fleece is effective cover and gives some protection from bird/insects.
- Save seeds for next year. Many (particularly older) varieties types will grow true to type if ripened. Pick when brown and dry, then shell and spread out to dry further. Place in labelled enveloped and keep cold in plastic container (the fridge is good if you have room and silica gel sachets will help keep dry)

You could still be sowing and planting

- Buy winter varieties of broad beans to sow in late Oct
- Plant Garlic and autumn onion sets.
- Pot up some herbs for wintering on the windowsill. Put cover over other tender herbs like basil to keep going longer.
- Sow green manure crops like grazing rye or Lucerne which can help with soil condition when dug in the spring.
- Cut down asparagus tops
- Dig up chicory and dry for winter forcing.
- Sow winter lettuce if you have cover.

Other Jobs

- Keep cutting grass, brambles, thistles and any nettle regularly to keep in check and stop seeding. If you want to reclaim a grassy area cut weekly. Add to compost bin (not nettle roots)
- Fit guttering to your shed to feed a water butt
- Stake all top heavy brassicas like Brussels sprouts and Kale
- Grow some Russian comfrey (Bocking 14) for FREE high performance feed