

10 JOBS FOR NOVEMBER IN THE VEG GARDEN



As the daylight hours decrease and the temperatures starts to drop, you'll notice the cycle of growth slowing. However, there are a few jobs left to do, giving us a reason to get outside and make the most of the late autumn days.

1. If you haven't dug over your beds, take the opportunity now whenever the soil is workable. For clayey soils it's a great time to dig in organic matter. If you have a sandy soil, cover it with a layer of mulch, which will help with winter drainage and improve soil structure. Half an hour whenever you have time will see them dug over in no time at all.
2. Tidy up and clean seed trays and planters with a plant friendly disinfectant (see organic tips below) or Citrox is available from www.theorganiccentre.ie. Pests and diseases can overwinter and when you're in the throws of spring planting, the last thing you'll feel like doing is washing all your old pots.
3. Prune soft fruit bushes. Newly planted cane and bush fruits can be cut back hard as soon as they're planted, which will encourage strong growth next year. Different fruits require different handling so if you're new to growing fruit, consider adding The Fruit Expert by Dr D G Hessayon to your Christmas list this year.



4. Start netting fruit bushes - Bullfinches in particular enjoy pecking the buds of gooseberries from late autumn onwards.
5. If you have a greenhouse or polytunnel, don't forget to ventilate it to allow fresh airflow.
6. Keep raking up fallen leaves and either placing into a leafmould bin (see Tips for October) or put into black plastic bags, tie up, make a few holes and store out of the way. In a year's time you'll have perfect leafmould mulch. If you have lots of leaves, set the lawnmower blade on its highest setting and let the collector bin pick them up for you.

7. Keep removing yellow leaves from brassicas and compost any fallen debris.
8. Lift and store late-sown swedes, turnips, carrots and beetroot.
9. Remove the stems from old bean plants, composting them if disease free. Dig the roots into the beds so that the brassicas that follow will benefit from their nitrogen fixing abilities.
10. Tidy and clean away old bamboo or hazel canes ready for use next year.

Suggested Varieties to Sow/Plant Now:

Broad Beans - try 'Super Aquadulce'. Take care that they are no more than 2.5cm high before the onset of winter and heavy frosts or they could be damaged. If you live in a cold area you may need to protect them with cloches. As long as the soil is workable they can be planted directly into it. They will be ready in about seven months as opposed to three months for spring-sown varieties.

Winter salads can still be grown under cloches such as spinach, pak choi, endive and mibuna.

Pea - try Meteor (Thompson & Morgan).

Garlic (try Albigensian Wight)

Bare-rooted fruit trees and canes are best planted between Late Autumn (November) through to early spring (March). Try *English's Fruit Nursery* in Enniscorthy or Irish Seed Savers www.irishseedsavers.ie.

Organic Tip for November

Make a home made disinfectant:

Eucalyptus oil has many uses - most of us are familiar with it's health benefits when used in strong smelling nasal sprays and research has proved its anti-viral properties. However, it can also be used in home cleaning products.

Ingredients:

Eucalyptus oil, 50mls
Water, 1 lt
1lt size bottle/container with lid



Just mix the eucalyptus oil and water together, bottle up, tighten the lid and shake well before each use.

Note that the disinfectant qualities of eucalyptus oil will improve with age. Caution: avoid splashing the oil on your skin as pure essential oils can irritate.