



Magazine Issue 12
October 2026

Dear Fellow Allotmenters,

October is a month of autumn harvests, winter preparation, and sowing hardy crops for an early spring start.

With autumn well underway, October brings chilly mornings and spooky nights – the perfect time for hot mugs of tea, bowls of soup, and some hearty winter digging on the allotment! Don't forget, the clocks go back at the end of the month, so make the most of daylight hours.

October is a month of transition and preparation. Focus on harvesting, protecting crops, enriching soil, and planning for next year. With thoughtful attention now, your allotment will glide smoothly through winter and be ready to burst back into life come Spring.

October has just two birthstones, tourmaline, and opal. Opals come in a myriad of striking colours that often seem to swirl together and are a symbol of faithfulness, purity, and hope.

October has two strikingly different birth flowers: the pastel-hued cosmos and the radiant marigold. The cosmos flower represents the joy one finds in peace and love. The marigold, otherwise known as the calendula, is said to be a symbol of tranquility, grace, and grief.

Those born in October can be born under one of two very different star signs. If you're born before October 23rd, then you have the sign of Libra. Those born on October 23rd or later have the sign of Scorpio. Libras are said to value harmony and diplomacy and are said to be both intelligent and kind. Scorpions are quite different, valuing trust and honesty above other things, as well as being quite intense yet imaginative people.

Thanks for reading

Gareth Richards (Treasurer)

Yeovil Allotments Association

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October Garden Checklist – Essential Tasks to Keep Your Garden Thriving



October is the month where your garden shifts from summer abundance to quiet preparation. The air cools, days shorten, and your soil is ready to support new plantings that will reward you in spring and beyond. Whether you're a home gardener, flower farmer, or simply someone who wants their beds neat before frost, October offers a perfect balance of cleanup and planting opportunities.

This guide covers what to do in the garden in October, what to plant now, and how to make the most of the season no matter where you live.

Why October Is a Key Gardening Month

Autumn is not just about shutting the garden down. October is one of the best months to plant, thanks to warm soil, cooler air, and

regular rainfall. This combination helps roots establish quickly without the stress of summer heat. From planting bulbs to seeding leafy greens, October is the month where today's work translates into tomorrow's blooms and harvests.

October Garden Tasks – What to Do Now

The October garden checklist is all about tidying, protecting, and planting. By tackling these essential tasks, you'll not only protect your garden through winter but also set yourself up for a thriving spring.

- **Remove spent crops** – Pull up tomatoes, cucumbers, beans, and any other plants that have finished producing. Leaving them in place invites pests and disease.
- **Mulch beds and perennials** – Add a fresh 2–3 inch layer of mulch around shrubs, trees, and perennials. Mulch insulates the soil, conserves moisture, and prevents weeds from sprouting.
- **Rake and recycle leaves** – Fallen leaves are a free garden resource. Shred them to use as mulch or add them to your compost pile. Whole leaves can smother grass and garden beds, so break them down first.
- **Sow cover crops** – Plant clover, winter rye, or vetch to protect soil from erosion and build organic matter for spring.
- **Water before frost** – Plants that enter winter hydrated are less stressed. Give perennials, trees, and shrubs a deep soak before your first freeze.
- **Weed thoroughly** – Weeding now keeps seeds from germinating in spring and makes beds easier to manage.
-

- **Prepare tools for storage** – Wash, sharpen, and oil pruners, hoes, and shovels. Proper care extends their life and makes spring gardening easier.
- **Protect tender plants**– Bring in pots of succulents, citrus, and tropical plants. In mild zones, use frost cloth or cloches to extend their season outdoors.

What to Plant in October

Planting in October is one of the best-kept gardening secrets. With warm soil and cool air, plants focus on root development rather than leaf growth. This means stronger, healthier plants come spring.

- **Spring bulbs** – Plant tulips, daffodils, hyacinths, crocuses, and alliums now for breathtaking displays next spring. Stagger bloom times by planting early, mid, and late varieties.
- **Garlic and onions** – Garlic cloves and onion sets planted in fall establish strong roots and reward you with large bulbs the following summer. Mulch heavily for protection.
- **Leafy greens**– Sow spinach, lettuce, kale, and Swiss chard for quick fall harvests. In mild climates, you can harvest these right through winter.
- **Root crops**– Carrots, radishes, beets, and turnips do well in cool weather and even improve in flavor after a frost.
- **Perennials, shrubs, and trees** – October is the ideal time to plant woody ornamentals and long-lived perennials. They'll spend winter quietly establishing roots, leading to vigorous growth next year.
- **Herbs** – Parsley, cilantro, and chives love the cool weather. Pot a few to bring indoors and extend your herb harvest.

Regional Gardening Tips for October

Your exact October garden checklist depends on your USDA zone and climate.

- **Cold zones (3–6)** – Focus on wrapping up. Plant garlic, onions, and bulbs before the ground freezes. Add protective mulch, drain irrigation lines, and clean tools. Use row covers or cold frames to extend leafy green harvests.
- **Mild zones (7–9)** – October is prime planting season. Sow cool-season crops, plant bulbs, and set perennials in the ground. Continue harvesting late tomatoes and peppers until frost.
- **Warm zones (10+)** – Gardening continues almost year-round. Use October to plant cool-season vegetables and herbs. Protect against late heat waves with shade cloth or mulch to prevent stress.

Master Gardener Tips for October

- Plant garlic cloves 2–3 inches deep with the pointed end facing up, then cover with mulch for winter protection.
- Rotate vegetable beds when planting fall crops to reduce pest and disease problems.
- Use shredded leaves as one of the best free mulches you'll ever find. They break down quickly and enrich soil.
- When planting bulbs, mix in bone meal or bulb fertilizer for strong roots and more vibrant blooms.
- Compost piles thrive in October when you layer nitrogen-rich green waste with carbon-rich fall leaves.

Final Thoughts

October gardening is a balance of putting the garden to rest and planting for the future. It's a month that rewards preparation—garlic cloves become fat bulbs, bulbs become blooms, and mulched perennials come back stronger than ever. With this October garden checklist and planting guide, you'll enter winter confident and ready for spring success.

FAQ – October Gardening

What vegetables can I plant in October?

In most regions, plant spinach, lettuce, kale, carrots, beets, radishes, garlic, and onions.

Is October too late to plant bulbs?

No. October is the perfect month to plant spring-blooming bulbs before the ground freezes.

Can I still start a fall garden in October?

Yes. Even in colder zones, quick crops like radishes and spinach can be sown, and cover crops will protect soil over winter.

Do I need to water in fall?

Yes. Water deeply before your first hard frost so perennials, trees, and shrubs go into winter well hydrated.

What should I do with fallen leaves?

Shred and use them as mulch, add to compost, or save them as carbon material for balancing your compost pile through winter.

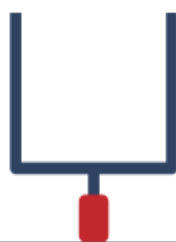
GYM

T	T	E	R	F	S	D	U	O	N	T	Y	X	C	A	S	E	S
J	A	H	W	I	C	B	D	U	M	B	B	E	L	L	U	C	C
N	S	D	X	N	O	S	A	R	V	S	A	V	U	P	T	E	Y
R	T	R	O	B	W	A	R	M	U	P	R	U	T	O	R	R	U
G	E	O	V	H	Y	E	E	T	Y	U	B	A	J	E	E	G	I
C	P	L	M	O	S	O	I	I	I	O	E	T	Y	X	A	T	S
R	P	J	L	U	G	A	O	G	E	C	L	O	W	O	D	O	G
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I	D	L	S	G	K	U	T	Y	X	R	R	C	P	Y	A	U	E
C	E	W	S	T	R	E	T	C	H	I	N	G	Y	A	U	J	S
S	O	B	V	N	S	E	E	A	C	A	P	N	R	O	S	N	M

WEIGHTS
TREADMILL
BIKE
DUMBBELL

ELLIPTICAL
STEPPER
BARBELL
CRUNCHES

CIRCUIT
STRETCHING
AEROBICS
WARM-UP



NFL TEAMS



X	E	I	Y	N	S	D	U	O	N	T	C	X	C	A	S	E	Z
K	O	A	S	S	O	B	V	N	R	C	O	O	P	E	U	C	B
N	C	T	I	P	O	S	E	A	H	A	W	K	S	P	K	B	A
I	O	M	G	V	Y	B	S	T	P	U	B	T	E	R	F	I	S
F	L	N	I	O	H	O	P	I	U	B	O	A	H	E	I	R	K
D	T	N	A	L	L	P	I	S	E	H	Y	J	E	T	S	D	E
R	S	I	N	I	L	G	A	C	C	O	S	O	R	I	G	I	T
I	D	O	T	X	J	I	K	N	Y	U	G	A	O	T	I	E	B
V	E	S	S	Y	S	E	G	U	T	S	C	H	P	A	R	A	A
E	R	U	E	N	H	S	N	A	Y	H	R	U	J	N	H	G	R
R	A	L	N	G	A	O	B	V	N	S	E	Q	B	S	G	L	L
L	V	N	S	I	O	C	I	Y	E	U	J	R	H	A	R	E	H
U	E	R	N	A	L	C	A	Y	S	C	N	Y	S	X	L	S	Y
R	N	T	E	S	A	E	B	D	O	P	E	Y	F	O	P	L	F
I	S	L	S	G	H	D	O	L	P	H	I	N	S	V	D	N	E
C	E	S	P	F	A	I	R	W	A	Y	A	L	T	C	R	A	L
O	C	H	A	R	T	R	E	G	O	J	A	G	U	A	R	S	R

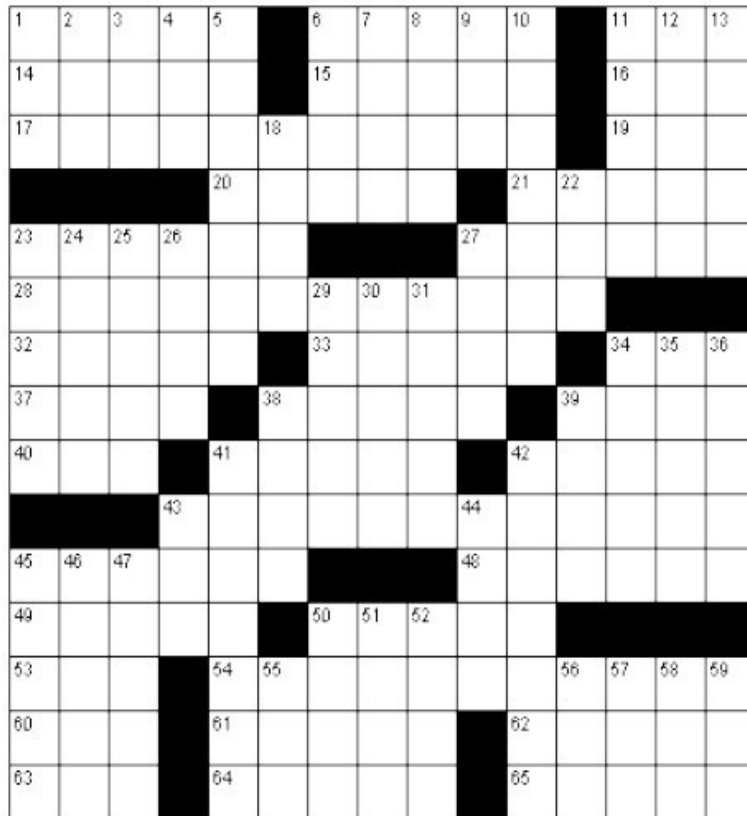
GIANTS
PANTHERS
JETS
SAINTS

DOLPHINS
EAGLES
RAVENS
JAGUARS

TITANS
COWBOYS
COLTS
SEAHAWKS



Crossword no.83



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ACROSS

1. Put up with something
6. Leave immediately
11. Timid
14. One of the 2 cities destroyed by God
15. An Australian marsupial
16. Tiny
17. Aggressions
19. Entirely
20. Renowned
21. Get undressed
23. One more than 10
27. One of the moons of Mars
28. Not straightforward
32. Something inserted
33. Supply
34. In the past
37. Sediment from fermentation
38. Long narrow openings
39. A round handle
40. S
41. Throw something heavy
42. A silk fabric with a wavy pattern
43. Study of germs
45. Even though
48. Long-necked wading birds
49. Monarch

50. Volcanic islands in the south Pacific
53. Before
54. Transmit thoughts or feelings
60. Born
61. Submarine
62. Backs of necks
63. Viper
64. Taut
65. Master of Ceremonies

DOWN

1. Residue from a fire
2. Sound of displeasure
3. Identity cards
4. Point
5. Distinguished
6. A short theatrical episode
7. A pigeon shelter
8. A sudden short attack
9. Beer
10. One who massages
11. A group of insects
12. Prefix indicating "The sun"
13. Sharp high-pitched dog cries
18. Yearn
22. It is (poetic)
23. A magistrate of the Roman Republic
24. Queues
25. S S S S
26. Competes or strives
27. Accomplishes
29. Acclaim
30. Innocent
31. Express audibly
34. Negatively-charged atom
35. A deep ravine
36. Complies
38. A religious splinter group
39. A Chadic language
41. What you get at a barber shop
42. Earth and stones

- deposited by a glacier
43. Stinging insect
44. Symbol
45. Sporting venue
46. Enticements
47. A deleted expletive
50. Dirty air
51. Nursemaid
52. Mongrel
55. Japanese sash
56. A rotating mechanism
57. Armored Personnel Carrier
58. Golf-ball support
59. East southeast

Link to Brimsmore Garden Centre

We have a Gold Club discount deal with Brimsmore Garden Centre.

They offer all member's 25% discount on Spring bulbs for sale in October and then again a second deal for anything at the Centre that is not on special offer which can be used as many times as you want during January and February.

I have used it for compost in the past and the savings are quite good on your pocket. You can have the items delivered which is free within the Yeovil area or you can pick your items up at the Garden Centre.

Brimsmore Garden Centre website address :

<https://store.thegardensgroup.co.uk>

Email : brimsmore@thegardensgroup.co.uk

Telephone no. : 01935 411000

Address : Brimsmore Gardens
 Tintinhull Road
 Yeovil
 Somerset
 BA21 3NU

Where we meet

Johnson Park, Coronation Avenue, Yeovil. BA21 3DX

as well as

Brimsmore Gardens, Tintinhull Road, Yeovil, Somerset BA21 3NU

We generally meet twice a month. The last Thursday of the month is reserved for a committee meeting. We discuss all things related to the Association and deal with any matters arising.

We meet at 8pm on these nights in the lounge bar at Johnson Park Sports and Social Club. They have a car park

Minutes are recorded by our Secretary. The Chairman opens the meeting and directs us through the running order and as well as site supervisor's input there is a monthly Treasurer's report.

The other meeting night is a more social event and this takes place on the 1st Thursday of the month. We can invite a speaker, you can buy a drink at the bar and there is a raffle normally run by Phillip.

Three times a year on the 1st Wednesday of the month we meet at Brimsmore Garden Centre for our social. We meet in the Apple Tree restaurant at 6.30pm. Some tea and biscuits are available for free. We try to have a guest speaker at these events or a talk on a garden topic and a raffle run by Phillip's wife.

These three events replace our said Thursday social meetings at Johnson Park.

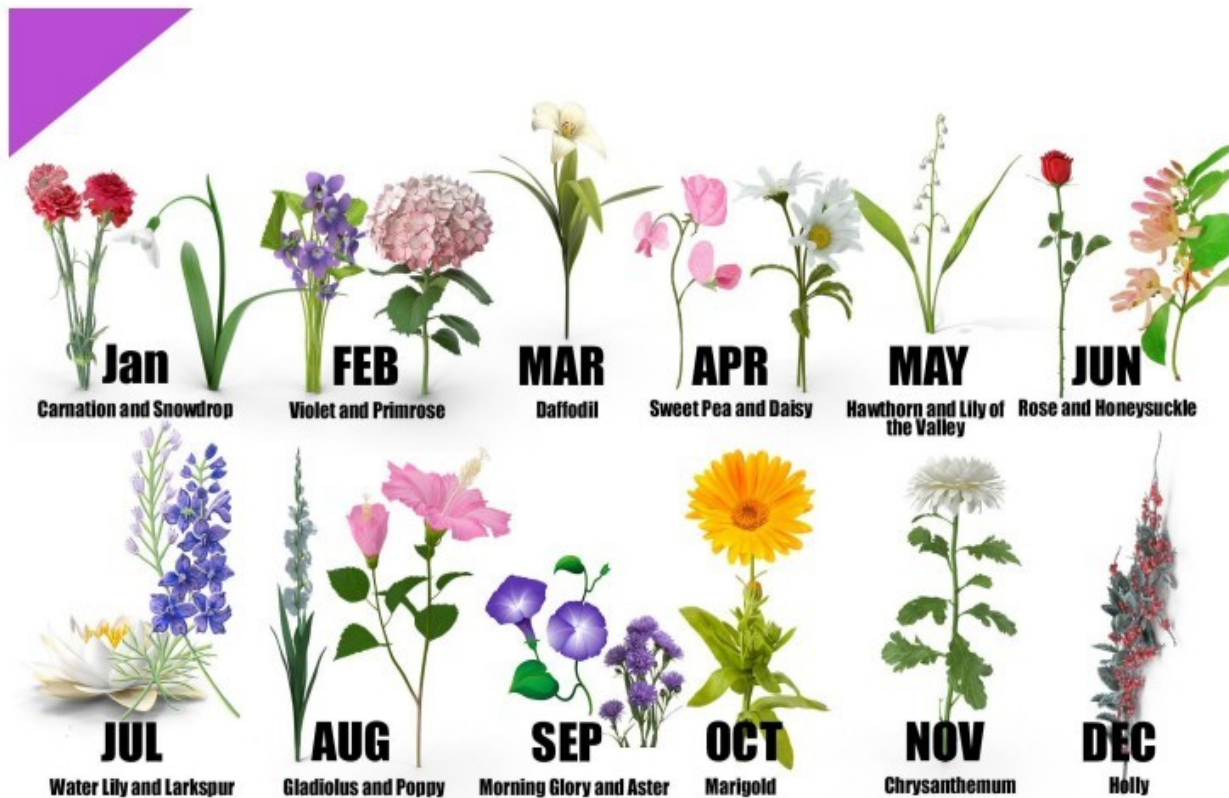
Your annual membership card gives you the time and dates of meetings for the year ahead. Our membership night for renewals is every March and again a discount night is offered for any garden centre items which are not on special offer.

King Seeds - Top Tips for Seed Sowing

- Use seed sowing compost, not multi-purpose. Multi-purpose compost often contains too much feed which can damage or kill young seedlings before they grow.
- Water with fresh tap water. Avoid using saved rainwater for seeds and young seedlings, as pathogens can build up in water butts and containers which can affect germination. Rainwater is fine to use on established plants.
- Maintain the correct temperature. Ensure the seeds are kept at their ideal germination temperature.
- Monitor the water levels. Some composts may appear dry on the surface but are moist beneath. Certain seeds such as peas and beans tend to rot off if they are overwatered, yet if they are too dry, their seed coats may not break down properly, preventing germination.
- Water the drill directly when sowing outside during a dry spell. It is important when sowing seeds direct into the allotment soil when the soil is dry, to always water the seed drill first before sowing. Draw out the seed drill, then give a thorough watering so the base of the drill is really wet, then leave to drain for a few minutes before sowing the seed onto the wet soil. Once sown, the seed is then covered over with the dry soil, which traps the moisture below where the seeds need it to germinate. This is a far better method than constantly watering overhead with a rose on a can, which will evaporate with the sun or drying winds and put a hard cap over the soil, making it much harder for the seedlings to push through.

Solution

A	B	I	D	E		S	C	R	A	M		S	H	Y
S	O	D	O	M		K	O	A	L	A		W	E	E
H	O	S	T	I	L	I	T	I	E	S		A	L	L
				N	O	T	E	D		S	T	R	I	P
E	L	E	V	E	N				D	E	I	M	O	S
D	I	S	I	N	G	E	N	U	O	U	S			
I	N	S	E	T		C	A	T	E	R		A	G	O
L	E	E	S		S	L	I	T	S		K	N	O	B
E	S	S		H	E	A	V	E		M	O	I	R	E
			B	A	C	T	E	R	I	O	L	O	G	Y
A	L	B	E	I	T				C	R	A	N	E	S
R	U	L	E	R		S	A	M	O	A				
E	R	E		C	O	M	M	U	N	I	C	A	T	E
N	E	E		U	B	O	A	T		N	A	P	E	S
A	S	P		T	I	G	H	T		E	M	C	E	E



12 Birth Month Flowers

The 12 Birth Month Flowers are something I have just found and I thought I would introduce it as a little homage to those associated to the birth of a baby.

The Birth Flower for October is the Marigold. Although most Allotmenters grow fruit and vegetables, some of you will grow flowers as well.



Marigold

Marigolds

Marigolds (*Tagetes*) are cheerful, brilliantly coloured half-hardy annual flowers that are long-standing favourites for summer borders and pots, blooming profusely for months through summer and into autumn. There are several different types, including French marigolds (*Tagetes patula*), which are compact and bear many small blooms up to 5cm across, and African marigolds (*Tagetes erecta*), which are taller and produce fewer, but larger, blooms, up to 10cm across.

Flower colours range from single shades of orange or yellow to a variety of contrasting markings of red, brown, yellow, or orange. All have finely divided foliage, which is strongly aromatic and can be useful to deter insect pests from other plants. Marigolds are also excellent for attracting pollinating insects.

Marigolds can be annual or perennial, but in the UK they don't survive frost, so are grown as half-hardy annuals.

Where to grow marigolds

Plant marigolds where you can enjoy their colourful displays, such as around patios, seating areas, or in window boxes. Smaller marigolds make good edging plants for borders and do well in pots, while taller or larger-flowered marigolds can be grown in large pots or

in borders. Marigolds thrive in a sheltered site, and shelter is particularly important for African marigolds as the big blooms can be easily damaged by wind.

Marigolds need full sun to encourage plenty of flowers and do best in a reasonably fertile, but well-drained soil.

In borders, improve poor soil with well-rotted compost or soil conditioner in advance of planting. Use peat-free, multi-purpose potting compost for pots.

When to plant marigolds

Tagetes marigolds flower within a few weeks of sowing and can either be sown indoors in early spring to flower from early summer, or sown outside in late spring, for later blooms. For early sowings indoors, sow seed in a warm place, transplant the seedlings into small pots or modular trays, and grow on in a warm, well-lit place. Plant marigolds outside after all danger of frost has passed. Depending on your region, this is usually between early May and early June. Harden the plants off by gently acclimatising them to outside conditions, over a couple of weeks.

Alternatively, sow outside in late spring directly where plants are to flower. Sow the seed thinly into moist, well-prepared soil and thin the seedlings to 10-20cm apart, depending on variety size.

How to care for marigolds

Keep marigolds watered regularly for the first few weeks until plants have established. Thereafter, little care is needed apart from an occasional thorough watering during long dry spells. Water pot-grown marigolds more regularly. You can boost flowering potential by applying a liquid fertiliser every fortnight in summer, but it isn't necessary.

Removing dead and faded flower heads keeps plants looking good and encourages more flowers to develop. On taller varieties, pinch out long shoots to encourage bushy growth. Once marigolds have finished blooming or have been killed by frost, pull up plants and add to the compost bin.

How to propagate marigolds

Tagetes marigolds are tender and will die during the first frosts of autumn. But it's easy to save seed from the

spent flowers, simply cut the flowerheads into a paper bag and keep in a cool, dry place before sowing again the following spring.

Pests and diseases

Marigolds are not susceptible to pests and diseases when grown in their favoured conditions of sun and well-drained soil. If grown in ground that is heavy and poorly drained, plants may develop grey mould or root rot.

During wet summers, the large flower heads of African marigolds (*Tagetes erecta*) can hold moisture and rot. In areas prone to damp weather, grow other varieties of marigold with smaller flowers.

French marigolds, ***Tagetes patula*** – these bear double flowers to 5cm across, on short plants to 30cm high. 'Durango' series bears extra-large blooms in a range of yellow, orange and red shades. 'Naughty Marietta' has single yellow blooms prettily blotched with maroon. 'Crackerjack' has tall double blooms in shades of orange and yellow. Height x Spread: 30cm x 15cm

African marigolds, ***Tagetes erecta*** – these are taller than French marigolds and are more substantial, with large double blooms up to 10cm across. Varieties include 'Vanilla', which has frilly, fully double, creamy yellow flowers. 'Marvel Mixed' is short, with big pompon-like blooms. 'Dune Mixed' is a mix of yellow, gold and orange pompons. H x S: 45cm x 20cm

Afro-French marigolds – these bear smaller blooms, 3-5cm across. 'Zenith Mixed' is a robust grower that stands up well to wet weather, with brilliant yellow or orange flowers. H x S: 40cm x 20cm

Signet marigolds, ***Tagetes tenuifolia*** – signet marigolds bear masses of small single blooms, growing up to 45cm high. Varieties include 'Lemon Gem', with pale yellow flowers and 'Golden Gem' is a rich golden yellow. H x S: 45cm x 20cm

Outreach Project Update

We are just about to come to the end of this years Library display windows. I have had fun doing so and will do more of them next year. The remaining dates are on the website.

This years show went well and with as much enthusiasm as last years has now become a real fine event. Our judges this year were Manny, Roger (our Dahlia man) and David Recardo and his wife Yvonne who judged the Home Produce.

I invited Mr Christopher Pinney along from Fairmead Special School who Is a class room teacher. I wanted him to have a look at the Show and give him some insight into how it looks and feels. Unfortunately he did not turn up. I Think he might have been otherwise engaged.

I have promised him some regular insights and to keep in touch over the rest of this year and next.

The pictures on the website show some of our outreach boards and posters. It is their first outing and looked quite good on display.

I would like to say well done to this years winners and a very warm hand for the volunteers and committee members who made it all worthwhile.

Best wishes,
Gareth Richards
Treasurer
,

Spotlight on Fruit and Vegetables

On these next few pages I will be spotlighting fruit and vegetables and with this in mind I have chosen a vegetable. For this magazine issue, I have picked the Sprouts and Shallots.

Just to re-iterate all my work is taken off gardening websites and allotments magazines. I have only had an allotment for three years so bringing knowledge to the readers is wholly an exercise in already published work.

I have used a lot of the Gardener's World website and the RHS website and NAS magazines to bring all of their printed wisdom onto these pages.

The more experienced of you will probably already know the words written or will know their meaning in practice.

So let's start the ball rolling with the Sprouts and Shallots.

Brussel Sprout

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Sow			S	S	S							
Plant					P	P						
Harvest	H	H	H					H	H	H	H	H

Brussels sprouts are a popular vegetable in the cabbage (Brassica) family, and a staple part of the traditional Christmas lunch. Named after their popularity in Belgium, they are an excellent source of vitamins C and D, along with folic acid and dietary fibre. The vegetable also contains anti-cancer compounds called glucosinolates, which makes them a 'super food'.

Brussels sprouts are slow-growing, and can take up to 31 weeks to produce a crop. However, they crop from autumn through to spring, providing a valuable source of food in winter, when little else is available.

How to grow Brussels sprouts

Sow seeds in spring and plant out into fertile soil after all risk of frost has passed. Water regularly, feed with an organic nitrogen-rich fertiliser and stake in autumn to prevent wind rock. Harvest the sprouts as and when they are produced.

Where to grow Brussels sprouts

Brussels sprouts do best in moist but well-drained, fertile soil, ideally which has been enhanced with well-rotted manure or compost. Grow in full sun for best results.

How to plant Brussels sprouts

For a successive harvest, sow seeds every fortnight from March to May, in pots or modular seed trays – one seed per module or small pot – and keep them in an unheated greenhouse or cold frame. After around four weeks (or when seedlings are large enough to handle), transplant them into individual pots of peat-free compost. Then, from May onwards, when plants are 10-15cm tall, [harden](#) them off before planting out into well-prepared soil enriched with well-rotted [horse manure](#). Space plants 60cm apart with 75cm between rows. Firm the soil around the plants thoroughly, as Brussels sprouts do best in firm soil. Water well and continue to water throughout the growing season, particularly in periods of drought. If cabbage root fly is a problem in your area, fix cabbage collars around the base of the stems.

How to care for Brussels sprouts

Feed fortnightly with an organic nitrogen-rich fertiliser. Prevent weeds from competing with the plants by hoeing regularly. Stake plants in autumn and earth up around the roots to prevent them rocking in high winds. Remove any yellowing leaves from the plants as they can harbour disease.

Growing Brussels sprouts: pests and diseases

Blueish leaves that wilt in sunlight: are likely to be cabbage root fly. Look out for white maggots around the roots. Use cabbage collars around the base of the stems to prevent further attack.

Caterpillars eating the leaves: these are most likely the larvae of the large and small white butterfly (known as cabbage white butterflies). Gently transfer caterpillars to a sacrificial crop of nasturtiums, which are in the same family and will be readily eaten by both butterfly species.

Stunted growth: this is most likely caused by clubroot, a fungal disease that thrives in acid soil and can remain in the soil for several years, reinfecting newly planted plants. Adding ground limestone or calcified seaweed can help prevent its spread, however if you do find clubroot in your garden or allotment it's best to avoid growing brassicas for up to nine years.

Blown sprouts: these are open sprouts as opposed to the tight 'buttons' you expect. Causes include poor and infirm soil.

How to harvest Brussels sprouts

Brussels sprouts ripen from the base of the stalk, so harvest them from the bottom as and when they are ready to pick. You can also cut the whole stalk as this will ensure the sprouts will keep for longer.

Advice on buying Brussels sprouts

- There's a huge variety of Brussels sprouts to choose from, with early varieties ready from August and later varieties cropping until March
- Ensure you have the right growing conditions for the plants, and remember they need rich, fertile soil to grow well

Varieties of Brussels sprout to grow

Brussels Sprout 'Brodie' F1 Hybrid - the supermarket Brussels sprout, with no bitterness. **Height x Spread:** 75cm x 50cm

Brussels Sprout 'Brilliant' F1 Hybrid - firm buttons cropping from early autumn. **H x S:** 75cm x 50cm

Brussels Sprout 'Bedford Fillbasket' - bears large, firm sprouts with a good flavour. **H x S:** 75cm x 50cm

Shallots

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Plant	P	P	P	P							P	P
Harvest							H	H				

Mild-tasting shallots are one of the easiest crops you can grow. You can raise them from seed, but it's so much simpler and quicker starting with sets (small shallots) that you grow on to cooking size.

Shallots have a milder flavour than onions and are used in a variety of dishes, particularly in French cooking, where onions would be too over-powering.

How to grow shallots

Grow [shallots](#) in moist but well-drained soil in full sun. Water in dry conditions and keep the area around them weed free. Harvest when the foliage starts to die down.

To help prevent fungal diseases like onion white rot, try to avoid getting the foliage wet when watering. Water plants at their base, which will also help to ensure it reaches the roots and isn't lost to evaporation.

How to plant shallots

You can plant shallot sets in early spring or autumn. From an autumn planting you'll get earlier, heavier crops. Like [onions](#), shallots prefer sun and a moisture-retentive, fertile soil, ideally with plenty of well-rotted organic matter such as garden compost added.

It's worth looking for heat-treated shallot sets, as the resulting plants are less prone to bolting (producing flowers). Bolting reduces the quality of the crop.

Rake over the soil to break down any large lumps. Plant sets with the tips showing. Space your shallots, which produce multiple bulbs, 15-20cm apart. Allow 30cm between rows.

Cover with fleece or netting to stop birds pulling up the bulbs.

How to care for shallots

In spring, apply a nitrogen-rich fertiliser to autumn-planted bulbs to give them a boost. Water well during dry spells.

Shallots (like onions) are shallow rooting, so hand weed rather hoe between the rows.

How to harvest shallots

Autumn-planted sets are ready after 36 weeks, spring-planted sets after 20 weeks, but as soon as your shallots are big enough to use you can harvest them. The leaves will droop over and turn brown when they've stopped growing.

Growing shallots: problem solving

Shallots are usually trouble free, though they can be affected by onion white rot – a fungal disease found in soil that causes the foliage to yellow and wilt.

Cooking with shallots

Cut off the tops and peel, then slice or chop finely. Shallots are excellent roasted and they're delicious braised whole in casseroles.

How to store shallots

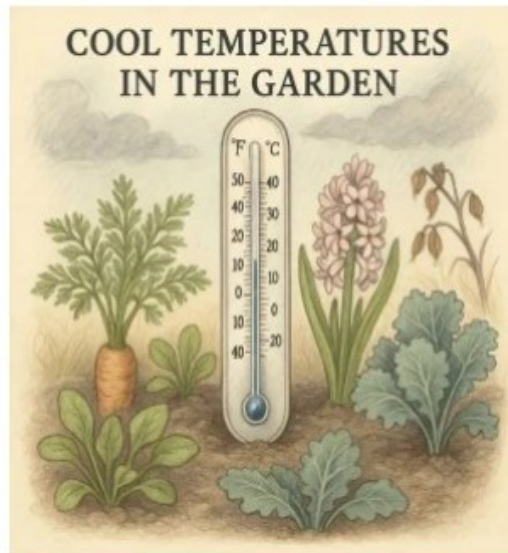
Spread shallots out on newspaper or racks to dry. They're ready when their outer skins rustle when you touch them. Hang them in nets in a cool, dark, dry place. They should store well for months.

Shallot varieties to grow

'Golden Gourmet' – a heavy cropper with good flavour. It keeps well

- 'Red Gourmet' – early maturing with red flesh. The spicy taste is great in salads and cooking
- 'Red Sun' – good yields of large, red-tinged bulbs with crisp, spicy, white flesh. Stores well. Plant in spring

Cool Temperatures in the Garden – What Really Happens When Things Chill Down



When the air turns crisp and the soil loses its summer warmth, gardeners can feel the change long before frost arrives. Cool temperatures reshape nearly every process in the garden, from how fast plants grow to which insects stick around. Understanding what really happens when things cool down can help you plan, protect, and even make the most of this slower season.

Slowing Growth and Sweetening Flavor

As temperatures drop, plants slow their metabolism. Photosynthesis, nutrient uptake, and root expansion all ease back into a gentler rhythm. For cool-season vegetables such as lettuce, spinach, kale, peas, and broccoli, that slower pace is perfect. The chill encourages compact, tender leaves and concentrates sugars, producing sweeter harvests. Warm-season favorites like tomatoes, peppers, and basil, however, dislike the chill. Their roots become sluggish and their fruit set can stall completely.

Flowering and Bloom Delays

Many flowering plants rely on warmth to trigger blooms. When cool weather lingers, blossoms appear later, and in some cases buds may drop before opening. Yet bulbs and certain perennials depend on this cooling period to bloom the following spring. Tulips, daffodils, hyacinths, and peonies all need a stretch of chilly weather to complete a process called vernalization. Without it, they fail to flower properly the next year.

Changes Beneath the Surface

Cool air eventually seeps into the soil. Once soil temperatures fall below roughly 50°F (10°C), microbial life slows. Earthworms burrow deeper, bacteria rest, and organic matter breaks down more gradually. Nutrients become less available, and roots respond by pausing growth. For gardeners, this means it's best to plant perennials or trees well before soil temperatures dip too low, allowing roots time to establish before winter sets in.

Pest and Disease Shifts

The silver lining to cool weather is fewer chewing and sucking pests. Aphids, beetles, and mites retreat as the days shorten. Unfortunately, damp and cool conditions can also favor fungal diseases, especially on decaying leaves or crowded plants. Clearing plant debris and improving airflow now can prevent spring problems later.

Using Cool Weather to Your Advantage

Rather than seeing cooler temperatures as the end of the gardening season, think of them as a pause. It's the perfect time to clean beds, add compost, spread mulch, and plan for next year. Mulch stabilizes soil temperatures and protects roots from freeze-thaw

cycles. Cold frames or simple row covers can extend the harvest well into fall by trapping just enough warmth for hardy greens and herbs.

Master Gardener Tips

Cool temperatures are nature's pause button. Instead of fighting them, work with them.

- Build soil health while microbial life rests – add compost, manure, or leaf mold to feed spring growth.
- Water deeply before the first hard freeze so roots enter winter hydrated.
- Protect tender perennials with a blanket of straw or shredded leaves.
- Use this quiet time to review what thrived and what struggled this year, setting the stage for a stronger season ahead.

Cool weather doesn't mean your garden is shutting down – it's preparing. With a little planning and protection, you'll greet spring with healthy soil, rested plants, and a garden ready to wake up refreshed.

Autumnal Shifts – Watering Wisely



As autumn settles in and the sun sits lower in the sky, your garden begins a subtle but powerful transition. The blazing days of summer fade into crisp mornings and cooler nights, changing not just the color of your leaves—but the way your garden drinks. Understanding how to water wisely in autumn can mean the difference between plants that merely survive the winter and those that thrive when spring returns.

The Changing Needs of Plants in Fall

With shorter days and lower temperatures, plants naturally slow their growth. Their roots still work beneath the soil, but not with the same intensity as during summer's heat. Less sunlight means less photosynthesis, and therefore, less demand for water.

The key is balance. Too little moisture and your plants may go into winter stressed and dehydrated. Too much, and soggy soil suffocates roots, inviting rot and fungal disease. The goal of

autumn watering is to **maintain consistent, moderate moisture** while avoiding waterlogged conditions.

The Difference Between Summer and Fall Watering

During summer, heat and long daylight hours cause water to evaporate quickly, often requiring daily or near-daily watering. But as temperatures drop, evaporation slows dramatically. The soil stays moist longer, and plants' root systems don't need the same constant supply.

Here's how to adjust:

- **Frequency** – Water less often but more deeply. This encourages roots to grow downward, anchoring the plant and improving cold tolerance.
- **Timing** – Water in the morning so plants can absorb moisture before cooler nighttime temperatures set in.
- **Monitoring** – Check the soil before watering. If it's still moist 2–3 inches below the surface, hold off another day or two.

This simple shift prevents overwatering, which is the most common mistake gardeners make in fall.

Adjusting Irrigation Systems for Autumn

If you use drip irrigation or sprinklers on a timer, now is the time to update your schedule. Systems set for July's heat can quietly overwater in October's chill. Consider these adjustments:

- Reduce frequency to once every 7–10 days for most perennials and shrubs.
- Check for leaks or clogs caused by fallen leaves or sediment.
- Shorten watering durations as rainfall becomes more frequent.

- For containers and raised beds, reduce watering even more—these hold moisture longer as temperatures drop.

Smart irrigation controllers that adjust based on temperature and rainfall can be an excellent investment to take the guesswork out of seasonal changes.

Why Autumn Watering Matters for Spring Growth

Proper watering in autumn does more than sustain plants through the colder months—it sets the stage for next season's success.

Moist but not saturated soil encourages root growth, helping plants establish stronger systems that draw in nutrients efficiently once growth resumes.

Watering deeply before the first freeze is particularly beneficial. Moist soil holds heat better than dry soil, insulating roots and protecting them from temperature swings that can cause frost heave or root damage. Think of autumn watering as a long-term investment in spring vitality.

Special Considerations by Plant Type

- **Perennials and Shrubs** – These benefit from deep, infrequent watering through mid-fall, tapering off as leaves drop.
- **Evergreens** – Continue watering until the ground freezes, as they lose moisture through their needles even in winter.
- **Container Plants** – Reduce watering significantly and move pots closer to the house or under cover to prevent saturation.
- **Newly Planted Trees** – Keep watering regularly until the soil freezes, as young roots are especially vulnerable to drying out.

The Role of Mulch in Autumn Moisture Management

A layer of mulch—2 to 3 inches thick—helps regulate soil temperature, reduces evaporation, and minimizes the frequency of watering. As leaves fall, use them to your advantage: shredded leaves make an excellent, free mulch that breaks down to enrich your soil through the winter.

Just remember to keep mulch a few inches away from stems and trunks to prevent rot.

Master Gardener Tip

Before a hard freeze, give your garden one final deep soak if the soil is dry. Moist soil acts like a thermal blanket, helping roots retain warmth and survive the winter intact. This simple act can make a world of difference when spring arrives and growth resumes.

Piccalilli



Prepare : overnight

Cook : 10 to 30 mins

Serve : Makes 3-4 x 450g/1 lb jars

Ingredients

- 450g/1lb each pickling onions, peeled, cauliflower florets and de-seeded cucumber and topped and tailed French Beans, all chopped into bite-sized pieces
- 340g/12oz coarse **rock salt**
- 750ml/1¼ pint white malt **vinegar**, cider [vinegar](#) or white wine **vinegar**
- 1 tbsp each [English mustard](#) powder, ground ginger and ground turmeric
- 1 tbsp whole yellow **mustard seeds**
- 2 cloves **garlic**, chopped
- 175g/6oz light muscovado **sugar**
- 2-3 tbsp **cornflour**
- warm large sterilised jam jars with screw tops

Method

- 1.Put the vegetables into a non-metallic bowl. Sprinkle the salt over the top, toss together, cover and leave in a cool place for 12 hours.
- 2.The next day put the vinegar into a large saucepan or preserving pan, add the spices and bring to the boil.
- 3.Drain the vegetables and rinse well under running water for 3-5 minutes. Add to the simmering vinegar,

- 1.cook over a low heat for 20-25 minutes or until the vegetables are tender. Add the sugar and continue to simmer for a further 1-2 minutes.
- 2.Mix 2 tbsp of cornflour with a little water and blend into the hot vegetables. Bring back to the boil and cook for a further minute, the mixture should be glossy and thick. Add the remaining cornflour in the same way if necessary.
- 3.Remove the piccalilli from the heat and leave to cool for 15 minutes. Spoon into the hot jars and cover with a disc of wax paper and a screw top lid, wipe the jars and label. Store in a cool dark place for 3-4 weeks before eating.

Recipe tips

Prepare jars by washing in hot soapy water and leaving to dry and warm in a cool oven - 130C/250F/Gas½ for 10-15 minutes.

How to Contact the Editor

If you have comments or you know I have given wrong advice then please contact me by email at

info@yeovil-allotments-association.co.uk

If you have something to contribute or have a say on allotment life, then please use my email to send your contributions.

I am going to process the magazine issue once a month, so if there are comments you would like to make they can be answered in future editions.

I would like to add that most of the articles are taken off the web and some well known gardening and allotments magazines have been read in the making of our magazine content.

We also have our own website at :

www.yeovil-allotments-association.co.uk

where you can find this magazine as well as a catalogue

Happy Allotmenting and best wishes,

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