

Gardening tips for September

Gardenbot forgot to recharge its batteries so normality is resumed!

The long hot summer of 2023 started and finished in June. A wet July followed and so far, a wet August; at least the lawns have recovered.

The Kitchen Garden

Weeds seem to enjoy a rainy summer, their abundance in the kitchen garden hides the produce of your efforts. Pick crops often to encourage repeat flowering. Try cutting the flowering heads of the broccoli but leave the plant in the ground, side shoots will produce new flowering heads.

Onions can be lifted when the stems have fallen over but if storing, they need to be dry. The traditional method is to lift them from the soil and leave on the soil surface until dry. Mine usually end up on the garden bench being careful to leave enough space to sit down. Do much the same for garlic if your garden bench is big enough.

Harvest main crop potatoes and store somewhere dry and dark. Potatoes go green very quickly in daylight therefore dry somewhere dark and store in a cool dark spot such as the garage. Use a natural fibre bag for storage, hessian if you can find it, anything really but not sweaty plastic or polythene.

The Flower Garden

September is when the garden starts to slow down, some of the herbaceous perennials and annuals may have stopped flowering, however there are ways to extend the summer colour for a few more weeks. Roses may still be flowering but extra help may be needed to add colour. An easy cheat is to go to the garden centre for late flowering pot plants that you can add to spaces appearing in the borders. Dahlias must be one of the finest flowering plants for autumn colour and fine examples always look brilliant at the Autumn Show, why not challenge yourself and enter your best blooms (see page xx).

Now is a good time to prune lavender. Although it has stopped flowering, the dead flowers remain on the plant. Prune off the flower stems as far as the leafy growth of the plant but try not to cut into woody stems. A light trim in September will leave a compact shape ready for next year.

It is up to the individual how tidy they want their borders over winter, cutting back the messy plant such as hostas and crocosmia then a bit of weeding and finally a mulch, more structural plants can be left in place for shape and wildlife.

Wisteria pruning always sound complicated however I have a simple approach which works for me. I regard the late summer early autumn prune to be the first prune where side shoots are cut to 6 leaves. If you are growing the plant tie in the long shoots to the framework, also prune out anything you don't want. That is it until the second cut next February when the pruned shoots are again trimmed to 2 buds.

The Water Garden

Give your water pump filter a good clean before it clogs up and the motor burns out. If falling leaves are a problem, net the pond and remove dead leaves from aquatic plants.

Lawns

The lawns appear to have benefitted from a wetter summer. Depending on the type of lawn you are creating, keep cutting to a minimum of about 35 mm or if you have let you lawn turn into a wilderness, all the seed heads from the various plants will have now dispersed so a good time to cut it back leaving the seed to germinate next year.

And finally, don't forget the Autumn Show on Saturday 9th September, Rudgwick Village Hall starting at 2.30 pm. For more details on this and for membership details and to ask garden related questions please go to our website www.gardenreg.org.

Keep gardening.

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