

## Gardening tips for November

Last November I produced my first gardening tips for the Rudgwick Magazine. I was tempted to copy last year's article in the hope that nobody would notice. I haven't done that, but I will be making the previous articles available on our website ([www.gardenreg.org](http://www.gardenreg.org)) where you can also find membership details and events list for the Ellens Green and Rudgwick Gardening Association (EGRGA).

And now for something completely different (from last November's article).

### The Veg. Patch

How sharp are your secateurs, loppers and bow saw? They will get a lot of use in the coming months so keep them clean, sharp and oiled. This month pruning starts in earnest. Fruit trees and bushes having shed their leaves, are dormant and except for cherries and plums, now is a good time to prune them before winter sets in. It is also a good time to plant bare-root fruit trees while there is still some warmth left in the soil. Prepare a generous hole and add a good helping of compost or manure, the roots will get themselves established before winter. So, what about my cherry and plum trees – you can leave those until next summer.

Sow early overwintering varieties of broad beans, try planting in a pot if limited for space. If dry enough this is your last chance to plant garlic cloves until the spring.

You could instead give the veg plot a bit of TLC. Remove all old plant debris, including weeds and dig over the soil and work in as much compost or manure as you can lay your hands on. Next year's crop will love you for it.

### The Flower Garden

Do no feed plants this late in the season, they are no longer growing and any feed added will be washed away by the rain. Instead try adding a mulch to protect the plants from the worst of the winter weather. Various mulches are available in garden centres, such as cocoa shells for flowerbeds, or bark chippings. A layer about 5 cm (2 in) should do the job.

Prune roses, a general rule is to reduce the size of the shrub by a third.

Plant lilies and tulips for spring colour. Now is a good time to plant out winter bedding. You could try wallflowers, Bellis (daisy family), Primula, Viola (winter pansies) and other spring bedding plants, planting them into well-prepared ground, or pots of suitable compost.

## The Water Garden

If not already done so, remove decaying plant material and cover ponds with netting to keep leaves out of the water. If you used barley straw to reduce blanket weed during the summer months, these should be removed and added to the compost heap. Don't let them sit in the pond as they will break down and release nutrients into the water which will act as an excellent source of food for the blanket weed to re-establish itself next year.

## Lawns

If the weather is behaving, although a bit late in the season, this is your last chance to scarify the lawn and scare yourself because of the mess you have made, but don't worry, it will recover and look better than it has done for the past few years.

## Wildlife

Now I am repeating myself from last November but spare a thought for garden birds. Put out mixed seed, nuts and dried fruit. Keep an eye out for what is being eaten and only refill the bird feeder with what they like. And don't overdo it otherwise the mice and rats will become your friends. Lastly, don't poison your pets! Birds love dried fruit, but if you have a dog, don't put grapes, currants, raisins or sultanas within their reach. Vine fruits can be toxic to dogs.

Keep gardening.

Richard Haigh EGRGA Chairman