

Gardening tips for October

I've been asked to do a simple list of gardening jobs by one of my readers so that is what I have done for October. If my other reader would like to suggest their preference I can always accommodate.

Before my list, how many time did we hear the phrase "Indian Summer" in September? The media usually starts talking about such things when the sun comes out after the first of the autumn rain. It can still be very warm in September hence the misuse of the phrase Indian Summer, but have you ever wondered what an Indian summer is?

September is not the month for an Indian Summer, the correct time is October or November, it is an unusual period of dry and warm weather occurring after the first frost and the central heating is back on. The phrase is believed to come from North America, the misty autumn hunting season for native Americans and first described by European settlers in 1778 although they made no reference to central heating.

And now to my list...

The Veg Patch

- Divide established rhubarb to create new plants.
- Harvest apples and pears
- Dig over beds as their contents goes over adding compost and/or manure
- Plant onion sets and garlic
- Plant winter lettuce
- Plant broad beans
- Earth up leaks to balance stems
- Earth up and firm the ground around large brassicas to stop them falling over

The Flower Garden

Tidying up time in the garden.

- Pick up leaves and dead head flowering plants
- Clean the greenhouse, the glass should be clear not green
- Clean out gutters wherever they are in the garden

- Clean wooden furniture ready for storage, it isn't too late to give it a quick wipe with Teak oil.
- Move terracotta pots to shelter from frost damage. If large and heavy, they should be big enough to withstand the winter weather.
- Split spring flowering perennials such as primroses, hellebores and bearded Iris if you can remember where they are
- There is still time to plant spring bulbs, plant them at a depth equal to twice the height of the bulb
- Collect seeds from the garden for sowing next year
- Prune climbing roses

The Water Garden

- Remove dead leaves especially those than have sunk or better still...
- Net the pond to keep the leaves out in the first place
- Leave anything removed from the pond in a heap next to the pond for 2 days to allow any wildlife to return home.

Lawns

- Clear leaves off what is left of the lawn and give a light trim, leaving the grass about 40 mm to cope with the winter weather.
- If applying a lawn feed, ensure you use an autumn feed which is low in nitrogen; you don't want the lawn looking like a forest and having to get the mower out of the shed in the middle of winter.

For membership details and to ask garden related questions please go to our website www.gardenreg.org.

Keep gardening.

Richard Haigh EGRGA Chairman