

Gardening tips for December

Winter is the best time of year for pruning lots of plants.

Fruit bushes

Including currants, blackberries and gooseberries should be pruned in winter. Cut out some of the old branches each year to create a goblet shape. This will leave the healthy young branches to produce crops next year.

Apple and Pear trees

These should be pruned from now until mid March. Remove any dead, diseased or crossing branches.

Deciduous shrubs

Some may need a tidy now they have lost their leaves but don't cut back any that flower in the spring as you will lose the flower buds.

Other jobs to be getting on with

- Plant broad beans out, salad leaves in pots indoors, spring onions under glass, early peas in covered containers, chillies on a light and warm windowsill, herbs indoors or greenhouse.
- Plant garlic, rhubarb and new, bare-rooted fruit trees
- Check nets covering brassicas. Ensure they are still tight with no gaps.
- Dig over veg plot and add plenty of well-rotted organic matter such as composted bark.
- Continue to keep the lawn clear of leaves, give it a cut if needed but keep off if frosty. If waterlogged prick the surface with a garden fork and lift slightly to aid drainage.
- Continue removing fallen leaves from ponds. Place an old tennis ball or 2 in the water, these can be lifted when there is ice to give a breather whole, alternatively melt a hole using the base of a hot saucepan. Do not crack the ice as it can harm the fish.
- Reduce watering of house plants until the compost surface is dry, water from the bottom but do not let them sit in water.

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

May I take this opportunity to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and let us all hope for a Happy New Year.

And remember, keep gardening.

Richard Haigh EGRGA Chairman