

JOBS TO DO IN NOVEMBER

VEGETABLE CARE:

Harvest cauliflowers or leave in situ with the leaves snapped and folded down over the curds to protect them.

Celeriac can also be left in the ground for a bit longer but protect them from the cold with a thick mulch of straw or other suitable material.

If you have Brussels sprouts ready for harvesting, pick the largest sprouts from the bottom of the stalk first. Stake any Brussels sprouts stalks that look leggy and vulnerable to wind rock.

Dig up chicory roots to be forced. Pot them up after removing foliage and position them in a dark warm place. The tasty chicons will appear in three to six weeks.

Garlic can still be planted in free-draining soil but be careful if the weather has turned too wet. Otherwise it can be started in containers or modules, and planted out in the spring when more mature.

Continue winter digging as the approaching cold weather may help to improve the soil structure by breaking down large clumps into crumbly particles. If plenty of well-rotted organic matter is incorporated in the soil then you will be off to a flying start next year.

Alternatively cover with **black polythene ground cover** to prevent re-colonisation by weeds and save yourself a back-breaking task in the spring.

Remove yellowing leaves on brassicas to prevent grey mould from becoming troublesome.

To keep your bamboo canes in tip top shape store in the shed or other dry place, preferably elevated from the floor. Make sure the canes are clean and dry. Apply an outdoor sealant if needed and consider treating the ends with a diluted solution of Jeyes fluid or a copper based preservative to kill off any fungal spores, this will ensure they're still in good condition for next year.

Place **mouse controls** near stored vegetables and fruit. Clear up fallen apples and pears from the base of trees as this can be a source of brown rot infection for next year.

Sweet peas are easy to grow from seed but you must ensure you have the room to grow them on in a frost-free place until spring. They germinate relatively easily, you can help activate germination by nicking the seed coat with a knife, avoiding the 'eye' area. Using a good quality peat free compost either sow seed in 9cm pots (3 to a pot), in root trainers or trays.

FRUIT CARE:

Remove any mummified fruit where they touch the bark as they cause small infections (cankers) from the branches but do not compost, burn or bin instead. Cankers are round or oval areas

Plant any cane, bush and tree fruit ordered last month. Do not plant if the ground is frozen or waterlogged. If the planting site is not ready when plants arrive, then heel in the bare-root ones in a spare piece of ground, and leave containerised ones standing.

Strawberry runners that have been potted up for forcing in February and March next year, should now be turned on their sides, or placed in a well-ventilated cold frame. Beware of excess moisture or warmth as this could cause rot or precipitate premature growth.

Hardwood cuttings can be taken this month, this is a great way to propagate blackcurrants, redcurrants, white currants, gooseberries and grape vines - providing they are disease (especially virus) free.

Begin your winter pruning of established, open-grown, apple and pear trees (not cordons, espaliers, pyramids or fans) at the end of the month, inspecting the trees carefully. Any sign of canker you should remove all brown, infected bark and wood, cutting back to fresh green tissues. Paint immediately with a protective wound paint such as Medo, Prune & Seal or Arbrex Seal and Heal, to prevent the wounds becoming reinfected.

Mulch fruit trees and bushes around the base as this helps to keep the weeds down and can stop damage when using a strimmer.

From late October to December wingless female moths climb fruit tree trunks to lay their eggs. Winter moth is the most frequent. The caterpillars emerge as adults during November to mid-January on developing fruit buds of fruit trees such as apple, plum, pear and cherry reducing the amount of fruit. Use **grease bands** or Vaseline which can be used as a barrier. Apply around the base approximately 45cm above ground level. This pesticide-free barrier also protects against the March moth in early spring. It is important to remove the bands or grease after April to reduce any damage to the tree bark.