



AWSLG JULY 2026

Welcome to your plot

July is the month of abundance. The plot is at its most generous — and its most demanding. Courgettes are producing faster than you can harvest them, the runner beans are in their stride, tomatoes are swelling on the vine, and the soft fruit is coming all at once. It is magnificent, and slightly overwhelming, in equal measure.

This is also the month when the question every experienced grower faces arrives: what on earth do you do with it all? Eating fresh is always the priority, but when the plot gives more than your kitchen can keep pace with, the answer is to preserve it. This month's newsletter carries a full guide to doing exactly that — transforming the summer glut into jams, chutneys, frozen portions, and pickles that will carry the flavour of your plot through the winter months. July is also when the Annual Show begins to feel real. The schedule will be published in August with full entry details — but the time to start selecting and nurturing your potential exhibit crops is right now. A little extra attention this month can make all the difference come September.



COMMITTEE CORNER

ANNUAL SHOW - SUN 6TH SEPTEMBER 2026

Please remember that our Annual Show will take place on Sunday, 6th September. This is a wonderful opportunity for us all to come together, display the fruit and vegetables we have grown, and enjoy an afternoon of community spirit. We will have tea, cakes, and apple pressing.

PLEASE KEEP MAIN PATHS CLEAR

A reminder that the main grassed paths **must always** be kept clear of objects, wheelbarrows, hoses, and other items. Children **must** play on your own plot and not run across or play in the path between your plot and your neighbours. This is especially important when volunteers are mowing the paths.

CFAGS COMPETITION - SAT 18TH & SUN 19TH JULY 2026

Each July, allotment sites across Croydon take part in the CFAGS Competition, which awards prizes for the Best Full Plot, Best Half Plot, and Best Newcomer Plot. There is also a category for the Best Site Amenities, an accolade AWSLG has proudly won several times. We will be entering again this year. Two members from our site will also be involved in judging across all participating allotments. We need your help to ensure the site — and your individual plots — look their best.

Addiscombe Woodside & Shirley Leisure Gardens Ltd

TIDY UP DAY

Saturday 11th July, 9.00am–12.00 midday

Please join us in supporting our Grounds Steward with a much-needed tidy of the site. Since the recent storm, everything has grown rapidly and we need extra hands to help cut back bushes, tidy the brook, paint, and sweep the car parks and roads.

A reminder that our regulations state each plot holder should volunteer at least four hours per year for the Society. This is an ideal opportunity to contribute those hours.

Please meet outside the canteen at 9.00am. Even if you can spare just an hour, it will make a real difference — many hands make light work.

Sunday 5th July 2026 | 1pm – 5pm

CHILDREN'S TREASURE HUNT — an exciting adventure to keep the little ones entertained

DOG COMPETITION — bring your four-legged family members along!

MUSIC — great sounds to set the atmosphere

Sizzling Barbecue featuring sausages, hamburgers, jerk chicken, and international side dishes reflecting our diversity.

FOOD AND DRINK FOR PURCHASE. All proceeds support AWSLG and the community!

TOGETHER WE KEEP OUR ALLOTMENTS THRIVING!

QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS?

Contact the Secretary or any Committee member **Email:** awslg.ltd@gmail.com

Members & Community News

WHO KNEW ALLOTMENTS COULD HAVE THIS MUCH RHYTHM?!

What an absolutely brilliant afternoon we had at our recent salsa dancing event! The music was infectious, the laughter was loud, and the moves — well, let's just say some of us surprised ourselves! From complete beginners to those who'd always fancied giving it a go, it was wonderful to see so many of our community step out of their comfort zone and onto the dancefloor. And the real star of the show? Our fantastic expert in the room, who had everyone spinning, stepping, and smiling in no time. The speed at which some people picked it up was honestly remarkable — proof that you're never too old, too busy, or too left-footed to learn something new!

Fun was most definitely had by all. 🎵 🌱

We are already looking forward to the next one — so watch this space! **Keep an eye out for future dates** and make sure you don't miss your chance to join us. Whether you came along last time or are yet to experience the magic, you will not want to sit this one out.

The AWSLG community — growing more than just vegetables!



KNIT AND NATTER GROUP

MONTHLY GATHERING: SECOND FRIDAY OF EACH MONTH



**NEXT MEET UP 10TH JULY
2PM UNTIL 4PM IN THE
HALL. ALL ARE WELCOME
TO JOIN FOR A NATTER
AND CAKE.
LOOKING FORWARD TO
SEEING YOU SOON.**

Addiscombe Woodside & Shirley Leasure Gardens

Allotment Shop Opening Hours:
From 1st March 2026

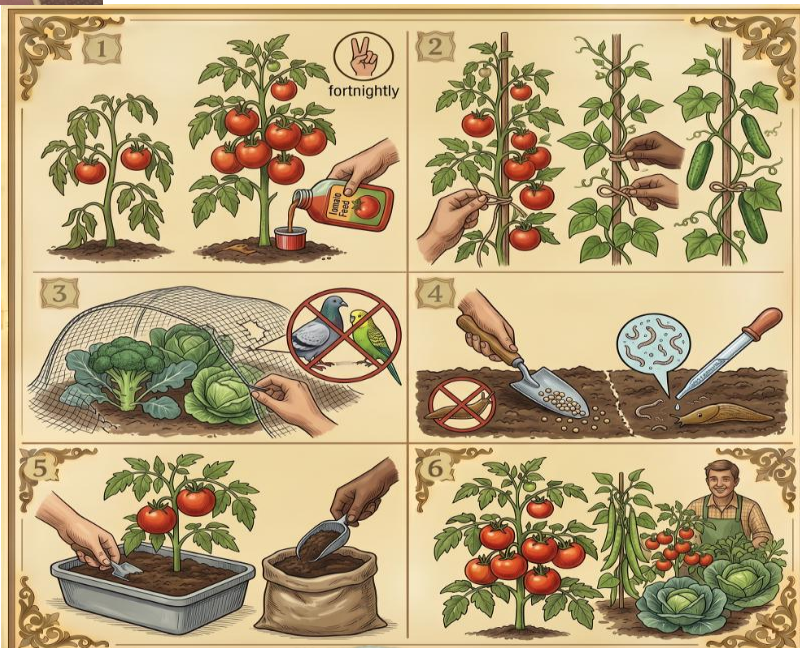
- ~ Saturday morning: 10.30 am–12.15 pm ~
- ~ Sunday morning: 10.30 am–12.15 pm ~
- ~ Saturday afternoon: 2.30 pm–4.15 pm ~

Allotment Address 56/58 Glenthorne Avenue CR0 7EZ
Visit our website: www.awslg.org.uk
Email Address: awslg.ltd@gmail.com

ALLOTMENT SHOP — JULY ESSENTIALS

Your shop is stocked with everything you need to keep the plot productive through peak summer. This month, make sure you have:

- Liquid tomato feed — cordon tomatoes need fortnightly feeding throughout July without exception
- Soft ties and garden twine — tomatoes, runner beans, and cucumbers all need tying in as they grow
- Netting — Squirrels, pigeons and parakeets are relentless on brassicas; replace any damaged sections now
- Slug controls — biological nematodes or approved pellets for peak slug pressure
- Compost — for topping up containers and growing bags which exhaust quickly in summer heat



Members & Community News continue

Help the Shrublands Food Bank

If you have surplus fresh produce this summer, please consider donating it to the Shrublands Food Bank and help individuals and families in our community who are in need. Fresh produce is most welcome. If you pick at the weekend and are not able to get to the collection point straight away, please bring your donation to the Allotment Shop where it can be stored in the cool until collection day. This prevents produce sitting in the summer heat and going to waste.

Collection point: the green wire container in the car park, next to the bridge nearest the Allotment Shop. Collection day is Wednesday — so please aim to place donations in the container on Tuesday or Wednesday morning if possible. They are also grateful for non-perishable food items.

For more details or to offer help, please email awslg.ltd@gmail.com.



This Month's Growing Guide

July is the most productive month of the allotment year. The priority is keeping pace with what the plot is giving you — harvesting regularly, feeding fruiting crops consistently, and sowing now for the autumn and winter crops that will carry your table through the leaner months ahead. Do not be deceived by the abundance into thinking July looks after itself. It needs you just as much as any other month.

★ THE GOLDEN RULE FOR JULY:

Harvest everything that is ready, every visit. Crops left on the plant past their best signal the plant to stop producing. Little and often — from picking to sowing — is what keeps a July plot thriving.

PRIORITY JOBS THIS MONTH

Listed in order of importance — focus on the top jobs first.

1. **Harvest garlic and onions.** Lift garlic and onions when the leaves have turned yellow and begun to flop. Do not wait until they are completely dry on the plant — lift them once approximately half the foliage has yellowed, then lay them out in a single layer in a warm, dry, airy spot to cure for two to three weeks before storing. Under-cured onions and garlic do not store well and will rot. On Croydon's clay, dry weather for lifting is ideal — wet soil makes curing harder.



6. **Lift second early potatoes.** The second earlies planted in late March are now ready. Lift carefully with a fork, working from well outside the plant to avoid spearing tubers. Unlike first earlies, second earlies can be left in the ground for a week or two once ready, but check regularly for signs of blight. They do not store as well as maincrops, so eat within a few weeks of lifting.



2. **Keep runner beans and French beans picked.** This is non-negotiable in July. The RHS is clear that regular picking prolongs cropping — a pod left to mature and set seed signals the plant that its job is done and production slows or stops. Pick every two to three days without fail. Beans for the freezer? Pick them young and freeze them immediately — they are among the best vegetables to freeze.



This Month's Growing Guide Continued

PRIORITY JOBS THIS MONTH CONTINUED

4. **Stop your cordon tomatoes.** Outdoor cordon tomatoes should be stopped now by removing the growing tip two leaves above the fourth flower truss. This directs all remaining energy into ripening the fruit already set rather than producing new growth that will not ripen before autumn. Bush varieties need no stopping.



5. **Sow for winter and autumn.** This is the most important sowing month for the hungry gap. Sow outdoors now: spring cabbage, turnips, Oriental vegetables (pak choi, mustard greens), chicory, fennel, and autumn and winter salad leaves. Carrots can still be sown for an autumn harvest. These crops will carry your table from October into next spring.

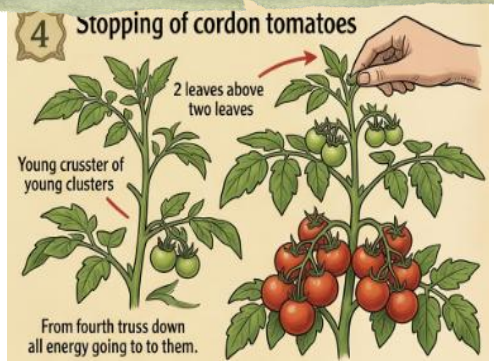
6. **Summer prune soft fruit.** Once you have finished harvesting redcurrants, white currants, and gooseberries, summer prune them now. Cut all the sideshoots back to five leaves from the main framework branches. This opens the plant up for next year's fruit buds to develop and reduces the risk of disease.



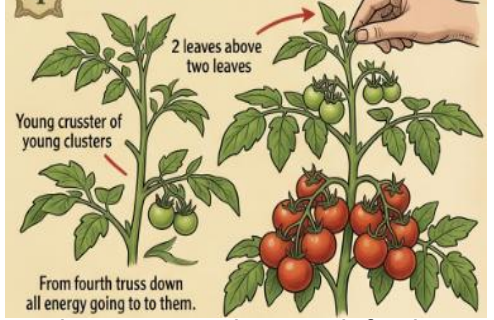
Spring cabbage — for harvesting next spring



Chicory and fennel



4 Stopping of cordon tomatoes



From fourth truss down all energy going to them.



WHAT TO SOW & PLANT NOW

Sow directly outdoors:

- Spring cabbage — for harvesting next spring
- Turnips — fast-growing and reliable
- Oriental vegetables: pak choi, mustard greens, mizuna
- Chicory and fennel
- Autumn and winter salad leaves: lamb's lettuce, land cress, endive
- Carrots — last chance for an autumn harvest; sow thinly under fleece
- Beetroot and radishes — continue succession sowings
- Spinach — sow now for autumn picking



Turnips — fast-growing and reliable

Continue through July: Keep succession sowing lettuce and salad leaves every two weeks. Spring onions — last sowing of the season for a late autumn harvest.

1 Blight (Potato and Tomato)

Monitor potato and tomato foliage after warm, humid nights. Dark patches with yellowing edges indicate blight. Remove and bin affected material; do not compost.

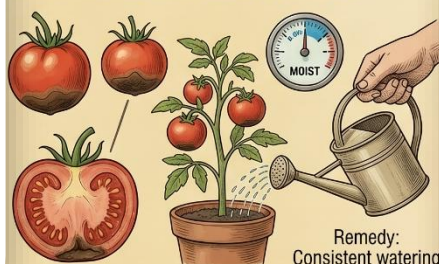


Winter brassica seedlings

Pest & Disease Watch

2 Blossom End Rot (Tomatoes)

Sunken, dark, leathery patches at the base of fruit indicate irregular watering (calcium deficiency), not disease. Keep soil evenly moist. Affected fruit cannot be saved.



Remedy: Consistent watering

3 Persistent Pigeons and Parakeets

Pigeons and parakeets target brassica seedlings in July. Net all brassicas without exception; check for gaps. A single morning's



A single morning's damage can destroy an entire seedbed.

New to Your Plot

Welcome to your first July! This is when newer plot holders often feel a mix of excitement and slight panic. The plot is generous beyond what you expected, and the list of things to do never quite shortens. The key is to stay calm, harvest consistently, and remember that a slightly imperfect but well-harvested plot outperforms a beautifully planned one where things are left too long.

★ THE GOLDEN RULE FOR JULY:

If it looks ready, pick it. If you are not sure, pick it anyway. You can always use slightly underripe produce. You cannot undo a courgette that has become a marrow or a runner bean that has gone stringy.

YOUR JULY JOBS (IN ORDER)

1. **Harvest every visit.** Courgettes every two to three days. Runner beans every two to three days. Tomatoes as they colour. Lettuce before it bolts. Regular harvesting is the single most important habit in July.
2. **Keep watering consistently.** Tomatoes in particular need even moisture — wildly varying wet and dry periods cause blossom end rot and split fruit. Water the root zone in the morning or evening, and check the soil before you water.
3. **Feed your tomatoes.** Fortnightly liquid tomato feed without fail. If you have not started yet, start now.
4. **Sow something for winter.** Even a small row of spring cabbage or a packet of winter salad leaves sown this month gives you something to harvest from October. It takes ten minutes and pays dividends.
5. **Visit the Allotment Shop.** Stock up on ties for your tomatoes and beans, replacement netting for brassicas, and liquid tomato feed. The team can advise on exactly what your crops need right now.



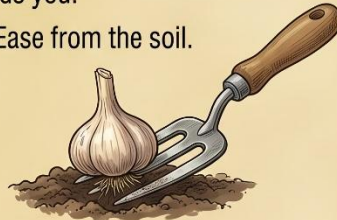
Lift your garlic. If you planted garlic in autumn or winter, July is when it rewards you.

1 Recognize the time.



When the leaves start to yellow and flop...

2 Ease from the soil.



...ease a bulb out of the ground with a fork.

3 Clean the bulb.

Brush off the soil...



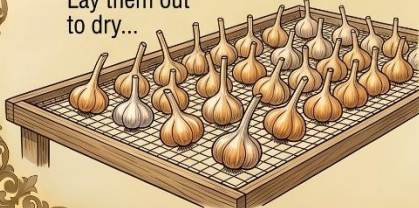
Brush off the soil...

4 Appreciate the crop.

...and look at what you have made — a whole bulb of proper homegrown garlic, far more pungent and flavoursome than anything from a supermarket.



5 Prepare for drying. Lay them out to dry...



6 The finished string.

...and in two weeks you will have a string of cured garlic to hang in your kitchen. Few things feel more satisfying on an allotment.



YOUR FIRST BIG SUCCESS THIS MONTH

Lift your garlic. If you planted garlic in autumn or winter, July is when it rewards you. When the leaves start to yellow and flop, ease a bulb out of the ground with a fork. Brush off the soil and look at what you have made — a whole bulb of proper homegrown garlic, far more pungent and flavoursome than anything from a supermarket. Lay them out to dry, and in two weeks you will have a string of cured garlic to hang in your kitchen. Few things feel more satisfying on an allotment.

WHAT NOT TO DO IN JULY

- Do not stop watering during a dry spell — inconsistent moisture is the main cause of blossom end rot, split tomatoes, and poor fruit set.
- Do not let runner beans or courgettes go unchecked for more than three days.
- Do not leave garlic and onions in the ground once they have yellowed — they will rot if left in wet soil.
- Do not skip the winter sowing jobs — July is your last reliable opportunity for spring cabbage and many winter salads.

Grower's Tips

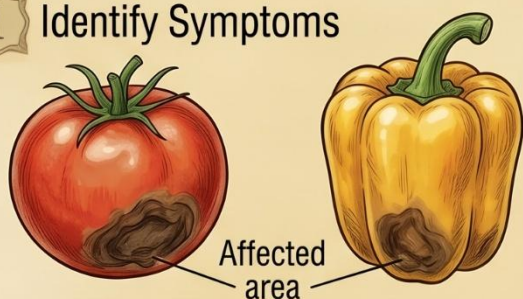
GETTING THE MOST FROM YOUR GARLIC AND ONION HARVEST

Curing is the step most plot holders underestimate. Garlic and onions lifted in good condition will rot within weeks if not properly cured before storage. The ideal is two to three weeks in warm, dry, airy conditions — a well-ventilated shed or a sheltered spot under an overhang works well. Lay them in a single layer, never piled. Once the necks are completely dry and papery, they can be plaited, netted, or stored in a cool, dark, well-ventilated place. Properly cured, good allotment onions keep until March. Soft-neck garlic keeps even longer.

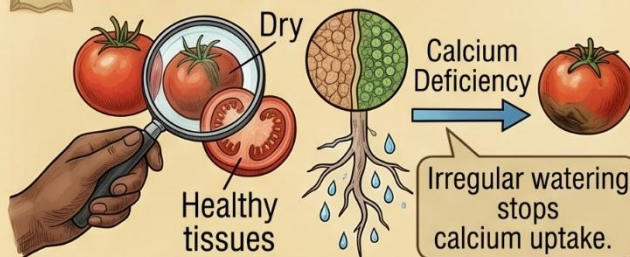
Blossom End Rot: Prevention and Management

A physiological disorder, not a disease. Appears as dark, leathery patches on the fruit base (tomatoes, peppers, courgettes), caused by irregular watering disrupting calcium uptake.

1 Identify Symptoms



2 Understand the Cause



3 Key: Consistent Moisture



4 Monitoring in Containers



5 Do Not Recover Affected Fruit Cannot be rescued.



6 Long-Term Health



Blossom end rot appears as sunken, dark, leathery patches on the base of tomatoes, peppers, and occasionally courgettes. It looks like a disease but is a physiological disorder caused by calcium deficiency — not because the soil lacks calcium (it almost certainly does not) but because irregular watering prevents the plant from taking up what is there. The treatment is consistency: keep the growing medium evenly moist at all times. Never allow it to dry out completely between waterings. In containers and growing bags especially, where compost dries out rapidly, this means checking daily in hot weather. Once a fruit is affected it cannot be rescued, but correcting the watering regime stops new fruit from developing the problem.

Grower's Tips Continued

PREPARING SHOW ENTRIES

Most successful show exhibitors are thinking about their entries from now.

If you have tomatoes, courgettes, onions, or beans that are performing exceptionally well, note them and give them a little extra attention.

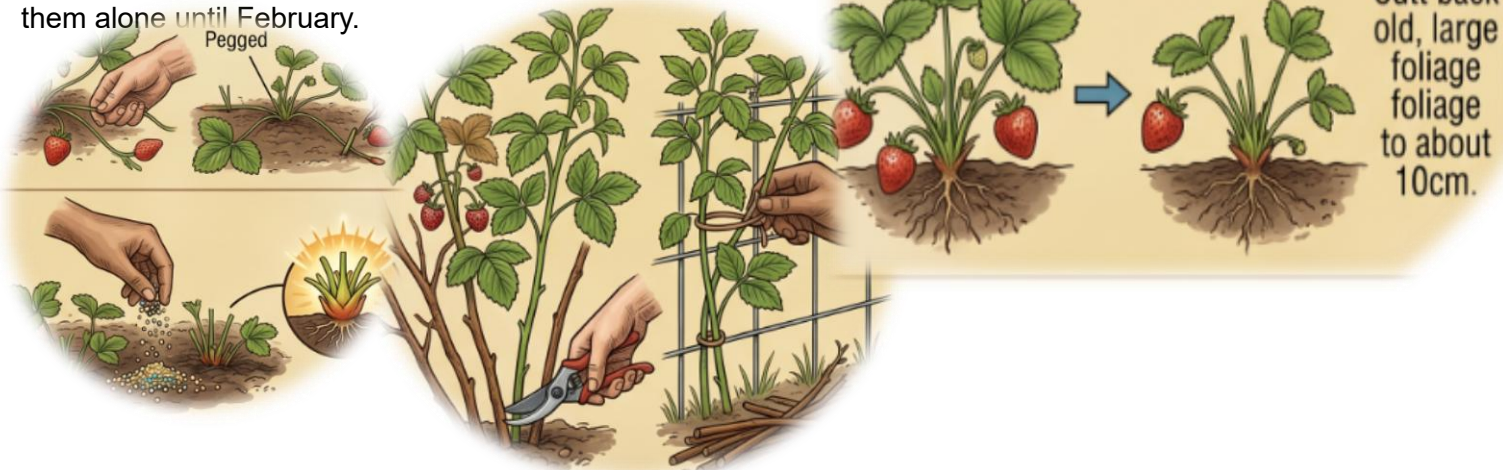
For the domestic classes, any jam or chutney you make from your July glut is a potential prizewinner in September. The preserving guide in this issue is your starting point.

Keep a jar back from each batch, label it, store it in a cool dark place, and it will be beautifully matured by the time the show comes around.



MAXIMISING SOFT FRUIT PRODUCTION

Once you have finished harvesting strawberries, immediately prune them: cut back all the old foliage to about 10cm, remove the runners unless you want new plants, and apply a balanced fertiliser. This allows the crowns to build strength for next year's crop. For raspberries, remove all the canes that have fruited this year (summer-fruiting varieties) right to the ground. Tie in the new green canes that have grown this season — these are next year's fruiting canes. Autumn-fruiting varieties (such as Autumn Bliss) fruit on this year's growth, so leave them alone until February.



Preserving the Glut: A Practical Guide

In June we promised a full guide to dealing with the summer glut. Here it is. July is when the abundance tips from exciting into overwhelming, and the growers who handle it best are the ones who preserve as they go rather than watching produce deteriorate on the kitchen counter.

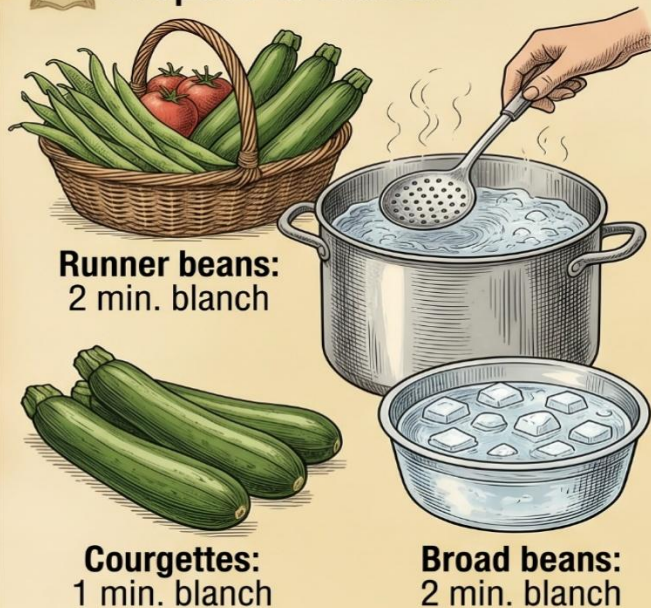
There is also a compelling community reason to preserve: whatever you genuinely cannot use yourself has a home at the Shrublands Food Bank (see the box in Plot News). Fresh produce is most welcome — and as the box explains, picking at the weekend and dropping it into the Allotment Shop to keep cool until collection day is the best way to ensure it arrives in good condition. Nothing from your plot need go to waste.

★ THE GOLDEN PRINCIPLE OF PRESERVING ★

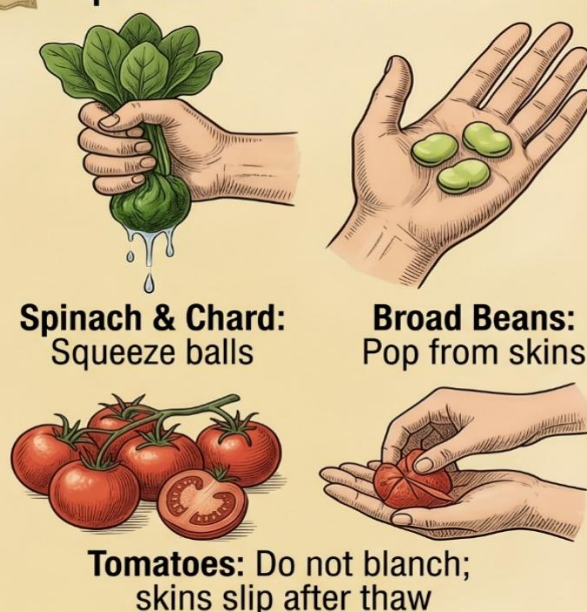
Use your best produce. Blemished, damaged, or overripe fruit and vegetables make poor preserves. The quality of what goes in determines the quality of what comes out. Your slightly soft tomato is a soup ingredient — your firm, unblemished one makes excellent chutney.

Method 1: Freezing — The Quickest Solution

1 Prepare & Blanch



2 Squeeze & Portion



4 Final Steps

Freeze in meal portions



Use within 12 months for best quality

3 Process & Prep

Courgettes: Freeze as slices or soup/fritters



Preserving the Glut: A Practical Guide

Method 2: Jams & Jellies — Soft Fruit at Its Best

July's soft fruit (raspberries, redcurrants, blackcurrants, strawberries) make the finest jams. Fruits like redcurrants have high pectin and set readily; lower pectin fruits like strawberries benefit from lemon juice or pectin.

1 Key Principles for Successful Jam

- Use unblemished fruit at peak ripeness.



2



- Sterilise jars: 140°C for 15 mins. Fill hot.

3



- Use a thermometer: setting point is 105°C.

4

- Standard ratio: equal weights of fruit & sugar.
(Redcurrant jelly: 450g sugar / 600ml juice)



5



- Seal hot. Label when cooled. Keeps for a year.

Method 3: Chutneys — The Versatile Glut-Buster

Chutney is the most forgiving of all preservation methods and the most useful for the vegetable plot holder. Almost any combination of courgettes, green tomatoes, onions, runner beans, and stone fruit can be transformed into an excellent chutney.



Key principles

1 FULL STRENGTH VINEGAR



2 COOK LOW AND SLOW



3 STERILISED JARS & VINEGAR-PROOF LIDS



4 STERILISED PLASTIC LINED



MATURATION TIME



5

CLASSIC COMBINATIONS



Preserving the Glut: A Practical Guide

Method 4: Pickling — Quick and Satisfying

1 Make the Brine

Combine 300ml
300ml water,
2 tbsp sugar,
1 tbsp salt.



Combine 300ml white wine vinegar, 300ml water,
2 tbsp sugar, 1 tbsp salt. Heat until dissolved.



Blanch runner beans (1 min)

2 Prepare Vegetables

Runner beans, beetroot, cucumbers
pickle beautifully.



Blanch runner beans
(1 min)



Roast or boil beetroot
until tender. Peetrot.



Roast or boil beetroot until
tender. Pack into jars.



3 Quick Pickle Method



Pour hot brine,
seal, and cool.
Refrigerate.
Ready next day.

4 For Long-Term Storage

Use sterilised jars and process in a
boiling water bath for 10 minutes.



Ready in 24 hrs,
keeps 2-4 wks in
fridge; long-term
up to a year.



Nature & Wildlife Garden Watch



NATURE & WILDLIFE GARDEN WATCH

July is high summer in the Wildlife Field and across the whole site. The wildflower areas are humming with pollinators, the swifts and house martins are still feeding young, and the meadow grasses are full of grasshoppers, beetles, and moths. Take a slow walk through the wildlife area on a warm evening this month — the soundscape alone is extraordinary.

Wildlife to Watch For

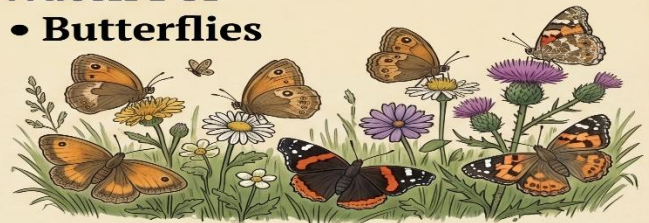
• Swifts and house martins



• Hedgehogs



• Butterflies



• Moths

