

Winter Jobs in the Fruit & Vegetable Garden

This period covers the months of December, January and February.

Dig up & store any crops that may well start to deteriorate in the ground from November onwards, e.g. potatoes and carrots.

Clear the plot of any remaining summer crops that are now finished.

Digging. If you are a digger (some people manage without digging) then by the end of November the weeds have invariably stopped growing, and so this can be a good time to commence winter digging. However, some growers prefer to leave this task until early Spring. This is perfectly acceptable as typically we do not have clay soil in Sunningdale and hence we have no need to rely on frosts to break down any clods.

Fruit pruning. Carry out winter pruning on cane fruit such as blackberries and autumn raspberries, gooseberries, currants and hard fruit.

Planting. The dormant season is the time to plant any new bare-rooted fruit bushes / trees / plants. Garlic and onion sets can be planted in February (weather conditions willing).

Fruit cage roof. Beware that any roof with a small mesh may suffer irreparable damage from heavy snow. Use a larger mesh in the winter or simply remove the roof netting if there is nothing inside for the birds to feast on.

Clean plant pots, seed trays *et cetera* with a solution that contains some disinfectant, e.g. Jeyes Fluid or Armillatox.

Harvest winter crops - leeks, parsnips, sprouts, winter cabbage, kale *et cetera*.

Monitor stored produce such as potatoes, carrots, squashes, onions and apples regularly to ensure that any rot is contained and does not spread to adjacent items.

Plan for next season; review the previous growing season, decide what to grow next year, where it will go & order seeds and plants.

Early outdoor sowing / planting can commence in mid-February, depending on the weather conditions. Garlic, onion sets and broad beans are the usual candidates.