

## What to do in... September

The season is ending yet again, but the final flurry of life is there to behold and enjoy.... Weather permitting! The garden may well be receding from your thoughts but enjoy it while it lasts. The first frost is always possible so keep an eye out and have your protection in place just in case. The Greenhouse and conservatory should now start to come to life.

Flowers - Take cuttings from pansies and violas, Pot up tender perennials grown outside and bring under cover when cold nights are forecast, Prune rambling roses after flowering, Grow bulbs in aquatic baskets ready to drop into gaps in the border in spring, Rake autumn leaves from lawns and pick them out of borders, Plant new climbers and shrubs into soil that's well dug over and enriched with compost, Spray Michaelmas daisies with fungicide to prevent mildew, Cut down annuals when they've faded, adding them to the compost heap, Plant crocus, fritillaries and other dwarf bulbs to naturalise in lawns and under trees, Plant out spring bedding, including wallflowers, forget-me-nots and pansies, Buy tulips now while they're fresh in garden centres, but hold off planting till next month, Plant daffodils, hyacinths, spring crocus and fritillaries in pots, Lift and pot up tender perennials to protect over winter, Clear away faded summer bedding and annuals, composting the plants, Fork over bare patches ready for planting spring bulbs, Lift tubers of dahlias, gladioli, and begonias, clean them off and store them in dry compost in a cool, frost-proof place, Sow sweet peas in pots and protect the plants in a frame over winter, Sow hardy annuals in borders for earlier flowers next summer, Prune tall rose bushes and standard roses to reduce wind rock, Pinch out sweet pea seedling tips for bushier plants and more flowers next year, Take cuttings of your favourite roses, Tidy borders by cutting down perennials past their best, Prune out old stems of rambling roses that carried flowers, Plant new conifer hedges and evergreen shrubs, Clear away faded bedding plants from borders and containers, Plant wallflowers, pansies, forget-me-nots and other spring bedding, Lift and divide congested clumps of perennials, Lift gladioli and store their corms after the flowers have faded, Sow hardy annuals outside for early flowers next summer, Buy spring-flowering bulbs and plan where you're going to plant them

Allotment - Finish summer pruning trained forms of apple and pear trees, Harvest apples, pears, plums and gages as they ripen, Save seeds from good varieties of beans, herbs and tomatoes that you've enjoyed this year, Pot up herbs to use in winter, Prune out fruited blackberry stems and tie in new shoots to supports, Take hardwood cuttings from fruit bushes, Harvest haricot beans, Sow broad beans and hardy peas, Plant out garlic in mild areas, or start cloves in pots to transplant later, Vegetables to sow now include spring cabbages, Japanese onions, turnips for green tops, winter lettuces, spinach, endive, corn salad, land cress and baby salad leaves, Pick ripe apples and store the best in fruit crates, Dig up strawberry runners and pot them up, Net autumn raspberries and blackberries to protect them from birds, Lift and dry maincrop potatoes and store in paper sacks in a cool, dark place, Pot up a few herbs to bring into a porch or grow on the window sill, Sow broad beans and hardy peas for early crops next year, Check pears regularly to harvest when perfectly ripe, Vegetables to sow now include winter radishes, lettuce and salad leaves, spinach, spring onions, and turnip 'Tokyo Cross' for its green tops, Continue picking sweetcorn, beans and marrows, Prune out fruited blackberry stems and tie in new ones, Save seeds from favourite bean varieties to plant next spring, Harvest and store apples, wrapping them in newspaper for storage, Lift and store onions and maincrop potatoes, Sow turnips for spring greens in March and April, Clear crops once they've finished and fork over beds, Blanch endive by covering with a bucket or large plate to cut out light, Plant new strawberry beds, Cut down the ferny shoots of asparagus to soil level

Glasshouse and Conservatory - Line greenhouses with bubble polythene for insulation against falling night temperatures, Clean staging and capillary matting to use next year, Bring pots of tender agapanthus and eucomis under cover, Check all plants for signs of pests and treat immediately, Sow sweet peas in pots for early flowers next summer, Take cuttings of succulents such as sedums, Move potted peaches and nectarines under cover, Bring pots of late-flowering chrysanthemums into the greenhouse, Stop watering pots of achimenes, gloxinia and tuberous begonias to let them die down, Plant dwarf bulbs in pots including iris, crocus, chionodoxa and scilla, Scrub off shading paint and wash the glass thoroughly inside

and out, Listen out for weather forecasts of early frosts and be ready to bring tender potted plants under cover, Ventilate the greenhouse on warm days, but close doors and vents every evening to trap in the warmth, Water crops in pots and growing bags more sparingly, but continue feeding weekly, Stop watering gloxinias, begonias and achimenes to let their leaves die down completely before storing tubers in dry compost for winter, Pot up tender perennials, like fuchsias, from summer displays and bring into the greenhouse, Raise roller blinds, but roll them back down on very bright days, Let sweet peppers develop their full colour and size before picking, Look out for pests and diseases and treat any you find immediately, Check greenhouse heaters are working efficiently, Bring aeoniums and other tender plants under cover before they get frosted, Clear out exhausted crops and wash down glazing, staging and framework, Finish planting paperwhite narcissi and prepared hyacinths, Pick remaining outdoor green tomatoes and lay out on staging to ripen, Pay close attention to ventilation now, shutting vents on cool nights, Wash off greenhouse shading paint, Water dormant cyclamen houseplants to encourage them back into growth, Insulate your greenhouse with bubble polythene for winter insulation, Take final cuttings of tender plants as soon as possible

General - Bulk up the compost heap with spent flowerheads and stems from around the garden, Improve drainage on compacted lawns by spiking the ground with a fork or aerator, Cut everlasting flowers and ornamental grasses for drying, Put netting across ponds to stop autumn leaves falling into them and rotting down, Order new turf to lay during damper autumn weather, Choose your bare-root roses and bare-root shrubs for winter planting, Collect, wash and store away canes and plant supports, Check tree ties and plant supports are firmly in place, Trim hedges to keep them neat and to control their size, Blitz leatherjackets (crane-fly larvae), found now on lawns, with a suitable insecticide or biological control, Raise the cutting height of your lawn mower and continue composting clippings, Wash out and top up bird baths regularly, Stretch netting over ponds and water features to prevent autumn leaves blowing in, Water houseplants less frequently and move them off particularly cold window sills at night, Collect fallen leaves from around roses to reduce the risk of diseases carrying over to next season, Order bare-root fruit trees to plant later this year, Clean out water butts and check downpipe fittings, Collect leaves as they fall and store in a wire bin or plastic bag to make leaf-mould, Leave out sunflower seed heads for the birds to feed on, Collect sprinklers, drip-feed systems and other watering kit to store in the shed over winter, Sprinkle grass seed mixed with compost on to lawns to thicken growth, Prune suckers away from around the base of ornamental trees, Protect large ceramic or glazed pots from frost damage by wrapping them in bubble polythene, Order bare-rooted roses for planting in autumn, Wrap insulation foam around outdoor taps and pipes, Cut back plants overhanging pavements or boundaries.

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