

# Ascott Friends

**November 2019**

It's Autumn! We thought it would be good to put up a monthly list of things we could keep ourselves busy with over the months to come. Here are some activities ideas for November

## Leaves!

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*How to make a simple  
leaf mould cage*

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Take advantage of the council leaf collection and grab those green bags, barrow them over onto your allotment, poke them full of holes and wait 1-2 years for them to break down for mulching and adding organic matter to your beds.

Better yet make a leaf mold cage: Take 3-4m (yards) of chicken wire (how big do you want it?), get 4 substantial poles from B&Q/Wickes/rubbish skips. Bang in each pole at least 30cm/12 in about  $\frac{3}{4}$ -1m (yard) apart to make a square, nail on the chicken wire and voila! Empty those bags out into your new long-lasting cage and watch them melt into leaf mould chocolate! Here's a rough idea -

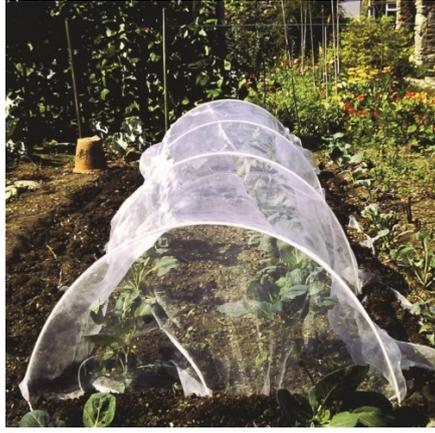


There is one on plot 253N – take a look. It's worked brilliantly so far.

## Onions! Garlic!

Are you a first timer? Or have you vowed never to sow anything before March? Well think again! With a bit of protection from our feral friends (I mention no names Ratty!) we can get the garden working through the winter. The earlier we plant garlic the bigger it will be at harvest. Get them in asap though.

- GARLIC: 2.5cm (1 in) deep 18cm (7 in) apart
- ONIONS: sow sets (baby onions) asap – should be in Oct really; 2cm (3/4 in) deep; 7cm (3 in) apart. Might be worth a go if weather holds fair. Otherwise hold off until March/April
- SHALLOTS: NOT YET! Best sown in Feb/March, so hold fire.



Protect against squirrels and other fiends with any netting that you can pin down around the edges. Enviromesh from [www.agralan.co.uk](http://www.agralan.co.uk) is pretty tough but there are other options out there (debris netting from building sites that are finishing up is worth a look). Just don't expect mother nature to be on your side with bean seeds and bulbs – they will be whipped out as soon as your back is turned.

## Broad Beans

Broad beans can be planted now – check you have an overwintering variety such as Aquadulce Claudia – or Jan/Feb. Sow 5cm (2 in) deep 23cm (9in) apart, rows 45 cm (18 in) apart for single rows; 60 cm (24in) for staggered double rows. Cover from furry friends! Check the Trading Hut for seeds or join the Hanwell and Ealing Allotment Association at the trading hut (£2 per year) and get a discount from Dobies seed suppliers

## Trees

Bare rooted fruit trees, can be ordered for planting now. November is the best month! Make sure you get trees on a **mini root stock to keep size manageable**. Plant sufficiently inside your border so your tree will not overgrow its boundary and you will be obliged to prune it back.

Here are some root stock codes – I found these on [www.frankpmatthews.com](http://www.frankpmatthews.com)

M.27 - Very Dwarf.

M.9 - Dwarf

G.11- Dwarf but a bit more robust

M.26 - Semi Dwarf

## JOBS for November

- Clear away the summer! Get rid of old plants, chop/shred healthy plant material into your compost heap
- Take down support structures – and protect from the weather if possible
- **Get digging!** Some of us love this the best. Easy to pull weeds, getting on top of the perennial weeds that have deep roots, tracking down the bindweed that's been plaguing you all summer. Get stuck in! Hours invested now will pay you back in the spring.
- Cover large areas you are not planting in. **Heavy Duty Landscape Fabric from Buckingham Nursery is ideal for this as it keeps the light out but lets the rain through.** Come spring, or whenever you need the area for

planting, it will be weed free. Attach the fabric to two battens and it will last you for years.

- Dig in manure and compost
- Lime your soil if necessary
- Protect cauliflowers – bend top leaves over to protect from frost
- Prune gooseberries and currants when leaves all gone – get rid of Dead Diseased and Damaged branches (the 3 D's)
- Prune blackcurrants- 25-30% of old wood should come out. Cut to 2.5cm (1 in) above soil
- Start pruning apples and pears when leaves are off and trees are dormant. Get advice if you need it. Contact Friends via [ascottfriends@gmail.com](mailto:ascottfriends@gmail.com) if you need us to find someone who may be able to help. **Pruning apples and pears in winter applies only to the forms of bush, half standard or standard.** Restricted forms, such as cordons, espalier, fan, etc. are pruned end of July/start of August.
- Remove unripened figs – you lucky sods with fig trees should know what to do. If you need help you can also try <http://www.rhs.org.uk> for help here.
- Prune vines – come and help us in the community vineyard if you don't have your own! Take time over this, no rush, but needs to be done once grapes all picked
- Remove **yellow** leaves from your Christmas Brussels sprouts, cabbages, caulis and other green brassicas.
- Net your winter cabbages against birds. Try **Oaklandgardens.co.uk** for widths 2m up to 20m. Really good price and think a bit about how you can make extra width work as a length on your plot. Talk to your plot neighbours about getting a big order and splitting it up. Keep the birds off those greens!
- We will talk about the Ratty problem another time. Please keep the site free of meat and other rat friendly foods.
- **Fruit cages:** with predictions of snow it would be SUPER SAVVY to remove the roof from your fruit cage as any decent amount of snow will likely destroy the roof. Also, please **leave open the door to any cage** to prevent animals from getting trapped inside – there are not enough people around to let them out in a timely way.

That's enough to keep you all busy. I have relied heavily on my lovely Allotment Month by Month book by Alan Buckingham (it's published DK and I picked it up at Wyevale (RIP)). Great guide. There are others available!

Enjoy autumn and keep your garden ticking over. Get to the allotment when you can and just dig a little. So good for the soul!

Will be back in January for another update on ideas to keep us motivated. Any suggestions welcome. Contact Ascott Friends. Tips for newbies most welcome!

All the best!

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