A FREE PRINTABLE GUIDE FROM GARDENS & GARDENING

A Beginner's Month-by-Month *Garden Calendar*

Twelve simple, no-jargon checklists — one for every month of the year — so you always know what your garden needs next. Print it, pin it up, and tick jobs off as you go.

01 · January
02 · February
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WINTER

January

01/12

The quiet season. There's little new growth yet, so this month is about protecting what you've already got and getting organised for the year ahead.

- [ ] Check stored dahlia, begonia and canna tubers — remove any that have gone soft or mouldy
- [ ] Prune apple and pear trees while they're bare and dormant
- [ ] Wash out old pots and seed trays ready for spring sowing
- [ ] Keep bird feeders topped up — birds repay you by eating pests later in the year
- [ ] Avoid walking on frosted or waterlogged lawns; it damages the grass
- [ ] Start planning this year's veg patch, and order seed catalogues

> **BEGINNER TIP**
>
> Nothing to lose by being organised now — a 10-minute sketch of where you'll plant veg saves hours of head-scratching in spring.

WINTER

February

02/12

Days are slowly lengthening. It's time to prepare seed beds and give spring bulbs some attention before things properly wake up.

- [ ] Prepare vegetable beds and sow a few hardy crops under cover
- [ ] “Chit” seed potatoes — stand them in a light, cool spot to sprout before planting
- [ ] Net fruit trees and vegetable beds to keep hungry birds off emerging buds
- [ ] Prune winter-flowering shrubs once their flowers have faded
- [ ] Divide clumps of snowdrops once they've finished flowering
- [ ] Trim evergreen hedges, and cut back any overgrown deciduous ones

> **BEGINNER TIP**
>
> Chitting just means letting potatoes grow short, sturdy sprouts before you plant them — it gives them a real head start.

SPRING

March

03/12

The growing season properly begins. New shoots are tender and tasty — to slugs as well as you — so keep a close eye out.

- [ ] Protect new shoots from slugs and snails (copper tape or beer traps both work)
- [ ] Plant shallots, onion sets and early potatoes
- [ ] Lift and divide overcrowded perennial clumps
- [ ] Top up containers with a fresh layer of compost
- [ ] Start mowing the lawn on dry days, on a high blade setting
- [ ] Hoe off young weeds before they get a chance to establish

> **BEGINNER TIP**
>
> A late frost can still catch you out in March — keep some fleece handy for a cold snap overnight.

SPRING

April

04/12

Growth speeds up fast this month. Weeds grow just as eagerly as everything else, so little and often is the way to stay ahead.

- [ ] Keep on top of weeds while they're small and easy to pull
- [ ] Watch the forecast and cover blossom overnight if frost threatens
- [ ] Tie in climbing and rambling roses as new growth appears
- [ ] Sow hardy annuals, herbs and wildflowers straight into the ground
- [ ] Start watering houseplants a little more as they wake up
- [ ] Feed shrubs and roses, and sow a new lawn or patch up bare areas

BEGINNER TIP

A warm April day fools a lot of new gardeners into planting out tender crops too soon — the last frost date for most of the UK is still weeks away.

SPRING

May

05/12

Often the most rewarding month in the garden, but late frosts can still catch tender plants out, especially in the first couple of weeks.

- [ ] Keep protecting tender plants if a late frost is forecast
- [ ] Earth up potatoes by mounding soil around the stems
- [ ] Plant out summer bedding — but wait until the end of the month in colder areas
- [ ] Water in the morning or evening, not the heat of the day
- [ ] Hoe off weeds regularly, before they flower and seed
- [ ] Mow weekly, but leave one patch uncut for wildlife

BEGINNER TIP

Check hedges for nesting birds before you trim them this month — it's an offence to disturb an active nest.

SUMMER

June

06/12

Everything is growing fast now. The main jobs shift towards keeping plants watered, supported and tidy as they put on their best show.

- [ ] Move hanging baskets and containers outside for good
- [ ] Water thoughtfully — collect rainwater in a butt where you can
- [ ] Pinch out side shoots on tomato plants
- [ ] Harvest early salad crops like lettuce and radishes while young
- [ ] Hoe borders regularly to keep weeds from establishing
- [ ] Stake tall or floppy plants before they flop over

BEGINNER TIP

Mow a little higher in dry spells — longer grass shades its own roots and copes with drought much better.

SUMMER

July

07/12

Peak summer. Deadheading and watering are the two jobs that make the biggest difference to how the garden looks right through to autumn.

- [ ] Check clematis for sudden wilting or blackened stems (clematis wilt)
- [ ] Arrange for someone to water houseplants if you're away
- [ ] Water new plants and containers deeply, rather than little and often
- [ ] Deadhead bedding plants and repeat-flowering perennials to keep them blooming
- [ ] Pick courgettes while they're still small and tender
- [ ] Clear algae and debris from ponds, and top up the water level

BEGINNER TIP

One long, deep soak a week does far more good than a daily light sprinkle — it encourages roots to grow downward.

SUMMER

August

08/12

Harvest season is well under way. This is also a good month to start collecting seed and taking stock of what grew well.

- [ ] Keep deadheading flowers to extend the display
- [ ] Water containers and new plants, ideally with saved rainwater
- [ ] Collect and save seed from your favourite plants
- [ ] Harvest sweetcorn, beans and other vegetables as they ripen
- [ ] Cut out old, fruited canes on raspberry plants
- [ ] Pot up rooted strawberry runners to make new plants for free

BEGINNER TIP

Label saved seed with the plant name and date straight away — it's easy to forget by sowing time next spring.

AUTUMN

September

09/12

A turning point: the pace slows, but there's still plenty to harvest and it's the best month of the year for planting spring bulbs.

- [ ] Divide overgrown clumps of herbaceous perennials
- [ ] Collect and sow seed from hardy annuals and perennials
- [ ] Lift any remaining potatoes before slugs find them
- [ ] Net ponds to catch falling leaves before they sink and rot
- [ ] Water houseplants less often as growth slows
- [ ] Plant spring-flowering bulbs — daffodils, crocus and snowdrops

BEGINNER TIP

Plant spring bulbs as soon as you can get them — the earlier they go in, the stronger the roots before winter.

AUTUMN

October

10/12

The first proper frosts arrive in many areas this month. Tender plants need to come indoors, and it's time to put the garden to bed.

- [ ] Divide rhubarb crowns to make new plants for next year
- [ ] Cut back perennials once their foliage has died down
- [ ] Move tender and frost-sensitive plants under cover
- [ ] Harvest apples, pears and any remaining grapes
- [ ] Prune climbing roses and tie in new growth
- [ ] Give the lawn one last cut and a tidy edge before growth stops

BEGINNER TIP

Don't bin fallen leaves — pile them up in a wire cage or bin bag with a few air holes, and in a year you'll have free, crumbly leaf mould.

AUTUMN

November

Most growth has stopped for the year. The focus now is protecting containers, borders and wildlife from the coldest months ahead.

- [ ] Rake up fallen leaves, especially from lawns and ponds
- [ ] Raise containers onto pot feet so they drain properly over winter
- [ ] Plant tulip bulbs — the one bulb best left until November
- [ ] Prune roses lightly so winter winds don't rock the roots loose
- [ ] Wrap vulnerable pots in bubble wrap or horticultural fleece
- [ ] Put out food for garden birds as natural sources dry up

BEGINNER TIP

Tulips are the exception to “plant bulbs early” — planting in November, once the soil has cooled, helps prevent tulip fire disease.

WINTER

December

12/12

The shortest days of the year. Garden jobs are few, but a little protection now pays off when the hardest frosts arrive.

- [ ] Check winter protection — fleece, cloches, bubble wrap — is still firmly in place
- [ ] Insulate outdoor taps and stop ponds from freezing completely
- [ ] Prune apple and pear trees that aren't trained flat against a wall
- [ ] Prune acers, birches and vines now, before Christmas, so they don't "bleed" sap
- [ ] Harvest leeks, parsnips and other hardy veg — frost improves their flavour
- [ ] Plant bare-root trees and shrubs while they're dormant

> **BEGINNER TIP**
>
> A sheet of bubble wrap tucked inside a pot, against the inner wall, insulates roots almost as well as a far more expensive frost jacket.

Keep your garden on track all year round

Tick off jobs as you finish them, then log what you planted, fed and pruned in your free Gardens & Gardening journal — so next year is even easier than this one.

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