

Jobs for the Month – January

- Continue to prune apple and pear trees if conditions allow; do not prune in freezing weather; ensure tools are sharp and cleaned after pruning each tree or bush to avoid spreading fungal or viral diseases;
- Plant lily bulbs if the ground is not frozen or waterlogged; bulbs can also be potted up now or existing bulbs split to ensure good growth and flowering in the coming season;
- Take root cuttings of phlox, Oriental poppies, verbascum, acanthus (bear's breeches), eryngium and clerodendrum;
- Sow seeds of sweet peas, begonia, lobelia, salvia and pelargoniums in a heated propagator to get an early start; grow the seedlings on in reduced heat on a sunny windowsill (not in direct sunlight) or heated greenhouse;
- Onion seeds can be sown now in gentle heat in pots or seed trays; prick the seedlings out into modules or individual pots when they reach the "crook" stage (i.e. they resemble a shepherd's crook);
- Indoor cyclamen that have finished flowering can be moved to a cool greenhouse; reduce watering but don't let the plants dry out completely;
- Poinsettias should be watered as normal until March if they are going to be kept for future years;
- Take hardwood cuttings of cornus (dogwood), salix, forsythia, weigela, escallonia, ribes and roses;
- Prune the sideshoots on wisteria back to 2 or 3 buds of the main stems to encourage flowering spurs for the coming season;
- Prune deciduous woody plants such as beech, hazel and Virginia creeper;
- Start chitting early potato varieties in a cool but frost-free, dry, bright place indoors; egg boxes or seed trays are useful receptacles for this task;
- Water and feed overwintering fuchsias and keep temperatures above 5 degrees Celsius to encourage them gently back into growth.