

Things to do - March

You could be picking

- Over wintered spinach, leeks and kale. Old Brussels sprouts stalks will give a late head of greens that are good to eat.
- If you still have parsnips they will be beginning to sprout so lift and store if you want to eat. Keep cold and dry.
- Lift covers from forced rhubarb. Pull rather than cut to reduce infection. Once picked leave cover off so plant recovers.
- Lambs lettuce and corn salad leaves if you kept them from getting too wet

You could still be digging and clearing

- If you dig get as much done as possible but try to do it when the soil is dry. Do not dig if the soil is clagging your boots or when frozen as you will bury wet and cold soil. If you are digging try to add some organic matter (compost or manure) to make it worth while.
- Build a compost heap.
- To reduce digging - look up 'bed systems'.
- Try to keep soil covered when not being used to keep clear of annual weeds.
- You should have cleared and stored any Jerusalem artichokes soon as they will start to sprout.
- Cut autumn fruiting raspberry canes to the ground
- Clear and cover strawberry bed for an earlier crop.
- If you didn't do it in October cut back vines to 1 year old wood for fruiting this year. The later you leave it the more the vines will bleed as sap rises.
- Divide clumps of mint/ chives to rejuvenate. Plant mint in a sunken bucket to prevent invasion.
- Cut back shrubby herbs like lavender, thyme and sage

You could be sowing and planting

- If you have some fleece or polythene cover the soil to warm it up for first sowings.
- When the soil is warmed, (weeds start) it is worth trying some early sowings of peas, broad beans, beetroot, radish, cauliflowers, spinach, spring onion and possibly some early lettuce and carrots under cover. Fleece is effective cover and gives some protection from bird damage.
- Onion in warm sunny spots. Cover to protect from birds
- Feed over wintered brassicas like spring cabbage and sprouting broccoli and kale
- Early potatoes that you chitted in January in Late March. If you have trouble with scab on your potatoes try a layer of grass cuttings in the bottom of the trench to keep in moisture.
- Buy and plant fruit trees and bushes (You need to write to committee re trees)
- Late march direct sow hardy annuals like cornflower, nigella, Californian poppy, poached egg plant (all easy to grow and seed and bird friendly. Liked by hoverflies which eat aphids

Other Jobs

- Continue chitting early potatoes. Put them in trays in a light frost free place to develop little buds.
- If frost is forecast protect early fruit blossom with fleece. Uncover on frost free days
- Erect pea/ bean poles.
- Cover strawberry plants for earlier fruits Cut autumn fruiting raspberry canes down if not done already tie in summer ones if come lose from supports.