

Jobs to do... February

PLANT OF THE MONTH - HEATHERS

Heathers can be described as the ultimate evergreen ground cover shrub, but are more versatile in that they can be grown in containers and baskets for great effect right across the year. The range of foliage colour complements the flower colours that are bright and vibrant.



SIX MUST-DO JOBS THIS MONTH

- 1 Sprout early potatoes by laying them out 'eye' end uppermost in a cool light, frost-free place. Okells have a wide range of popular varieties, and all you need for a successful crop.
- 2 Prune roses to promote the growth of strong, young flowering stems
- 3 Cut down ornamental grasses and herbaceous perennials that were left for winter stem and seedhead interest
- 4 Put up nesting boxes for birds before nesting gets underway in earnest. Visit our bird area for boxes and feeders
- 5 Plant roses, shrubs, fruit bushes, raspberry canes, trees and climbers
- 6 Complete pruning of apple and pear trees, gooseberries and redcurrants

KITCHEN GARDEN

- Sow onions, early leeks, cabbage, peas and lettuce under cover now. Broad beans can only be sown indoors up here in Cheshire.
- At the end of the month, sow tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers and chillies in heated propagators or on sunny windowsills.
- Plant shallots and garlic.
- Cover beds with polythene sheeting to warm the soil before early sowings.

ORNAMENTAL GARDEN

- Hard prune Buddleja Davidii, Leycestria, hardy fuschias, Lavatera and Caryopteris and other summer-flowering shrubs that flower on current year's growth.
- Check and water as appropriate evergreens permanently planted in containers.
- Divide herbaceous perennials such as Astilbe, Iris and Hemerocallis.

PEST AND DISEASE WATCH

- Promptly remove leaves with grey mould on overwintering glasshouse plants.
- Protect young growth of herbaceous plants from slug and snail damage.

LAWNS AND MEADOWS

- If necessary, mow the lawn at a high cutting height on dry days.
- Prepare the ground for sowing new lawns in March or April.

GLASSHOUSE & INDOORS

- Dahlia tubers can be started into growth by placing them in compost and keeping above 10 °C (50 °F).
- Pot on overwintered cuttings of tender perennials. Keep in good light.
- Prick out seedlings sown last month and make sure they get enough light to prevent the becoming drawn or leggy.