

September checklist

Seeds to sow

HARDY ANNUALS

Towards the end of the month is the perfect time to start sowing hardy annuals for early flowers next year.

- / Agrostemma (corncockle)
- / Ammi majus
- / Bells of Ireland
- / Bladder campion
- / Borage
- / Chicory
- / Cornflowers
- / Cerinthe
- / Coreopsis
- / Dill
- / Dog daisy
- / Grasses (all of them!)
- / Larkspur
- / Marigolds
- / Nigellas
- / Opium poppy
- / Orlaya grandiflora
- / Scabiosa
- / Viola tricolor
- / Wild carrot

STARTING PERENNIALS

My flower field, Malus Farm, is being guided more and more by regenerative principles and that means the surface of the soil should be covered, and the underneath of the soil should be as undisturbed as possible. & that means as much permanent planting - perennials - as possible.

It is starting to get late in the season so I would recommend starting under glass if you possibly can, unless your climate is exceptionally mild. Some perennials will like a period of cold before bursting into life in the spring, so do some research on those which will need to feel the winter.

- / Achillea
- / Verbascum
- / Cephalaria gigantea
- / Hollyhocks
- / Dianthus (Try *D.carthusianorum*)
- / Echinaceas (I favour *E.pallida*)
- / The big textural plants such as Echinops and Eryngium
- / Baptisia
- / Bupleurum
- / All the heucharas

Flowers to harvest

GOLDS & RUSTS

- / Lots and lots of dahlias
- / The last roses
- / Sweet peas (if you've kept cutting)
- / Achillea
- / Hydrangeas
- / Sunflowers
- / Rudbeckia
- / Echinacea
- / Cosmos
- / Strawflowers
- / Delphiniums
- / Asters
- / Eryngium
- / Sanguisorba
- / Verbena (I grow *V. officinalis* 'Bampton' rather than *V. bonariensis*)
- / The first branches of turning foliage
- / Amelanchier leaves & berries
- / Crab apples
- / Rose hips
- / Thalictrum
- / Scabious
- / Grass seed heads
- / Perennial phlox

The hedgerows are full of glorious bounty for foraging. I have been known to bring branches of sloes into the cottage. Their smoky purple tones are unlike anything else. Pair with sprigs of blackberries for an autumnal display. Mind the thorns on both though.

Other jobs for this month

/ Now is the time for collecting ripe seed. Pick a dry day, store in paper bags or envelopes, and remember to label.

/ If you have beds where flowers have finished and nothing to go into them for the winter, scatter a cover crop of phacelia over the bare earth to protect the soil.

/ Keep adding to and turning your compost heap. Aim to have some ready for top-dressing your beds before the cold weather sets in.

/ Plant out the biennials you sowed in July (you can source plug plants if you didn't) into the spaces left when the early summer annuals have finished.

/ Look out for self-sown annual seedlings popping up. Carefully dig them and move them if they would do better in another position, or over-winter in pots.

/ Divide your herbaceous perennials. You can be surprisingly brutal with this although the chunks should be big enough to give flowers soon (think a minimum of a 9cm pot; if you wouldn't buy it in a garden centre then it's probably too small).