



# Into the garden

## January's quiet beginnings

Your seasonal sanctuary – part inspiration, part know-how, and a dash of dirt-under-the-nails wisdom. **Platinum's** monthly gardening pages are here to guide, cheer and prepare you for the year ahead.



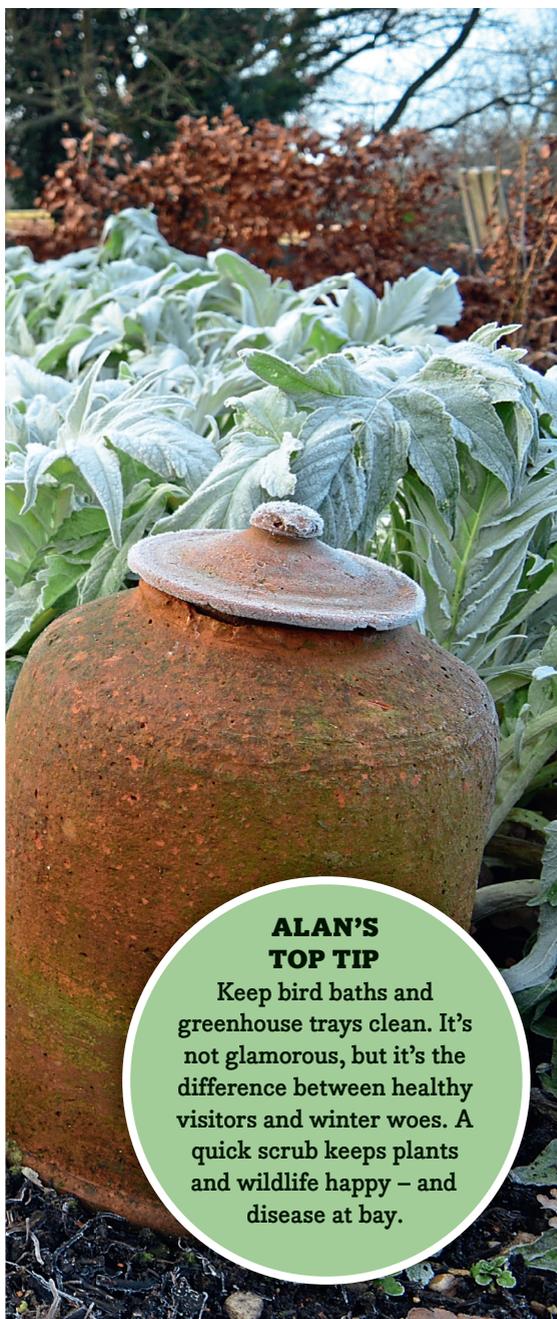
### Did you know?

- The word January comes from Janus – the Roman god with two faces, looking back and looking forward. Perfect for gardeners dreaming of past glories and future blooms.
- Snowdrops, often called “Fair Maids of February”, can bloom as early as January – the garden’s way of whispering hope.
- In old folklore, planting parsley on a Friday was bad luck... unless you were planning to give it away. (Gardeners have always loved a good superstition.)

### Old lore reminder

*“January’s frost is February’s bloom.”*  
Old wisdom says a crisp winter leads to a generous spring – proof that patience (and a good pair of gloves) pays off.





**ALAN'S TOP TIP**  
 Keep bird baths and greenhouse trays clean. It's not glamorous, but it's the difference between healthy visitors and winter woes. A quick scrub keeps plants and wildlife happy – and disease at bay.

*Alan says: 'January may be resting time for the garden, but it's a chance to prepare, plan and protect. Every small task now sets the stage for spring's flourish. Clean, sharpen and take stock – it's the gardener's way of turning hope into readiness.'*



## ALAN'S ALMANAC: JANUARY IN THE GARDEN & ALLOTMENT

Alan Coxon: food and heritage expert, lover of land and lore, and *Platinum's* very own garden sage. Whether it's heritage seeds or the secret to a perfect crumble, Alan brings a mix of ancient wisdom and modern mischief. Follow his year-round musings at [roaming-the-paths.co.uk](http://roaming-the-paths.co.uk) and [alans-almanac.co.uk](http://alans-almanac.co.uk).

● **Check stored fruit and veg**

Have a peek at those apples and potatoes in store – one bad one can ruin the lot. A few minutes' vigilance now saves a sorry mess later.

● **Rhubarb revival**

Divide and replant any overgrown crowns or start afresh with new ones while the soil's workable. For a head start, cover mature clumps with a forcer – that first pink crumble is always the sweetest.

● **Sow undercover**

Pop in early sweet peas and broad beans, and if you've got a heated propagator, sneak in leeks, onions or salad leaves too. You'll feel wildly productive while it's still frosty outside.

● **Plant for the future**

Bare-root trees and shrubs establish best while dormant – plant them now for years of reward.

● **Pamper your tools**

Sharpen blades, oil handles, and service the mower before the spring rush. It's strangely satisfying – and your future self will thank you.

● **Look after feathered friends**

Keep feeders filled and add a dash of chilli to deter mice (the birds won't notice!). Fresh water is just as vital as seed on frosty mornings, so top up bird baths.

● **Winter harvest**

Gather sprouts, kale, leeks, parsnips, carrots and celeriac – proof that the garden's still quietly generous, even in the chill.

And when you're done? Take a slow wander. The low sun, bare branches and silvery frost have their own quiet beauty – the bones of your garden revealed.



WORDS: EMMA COXON, ALAN COXON. IMAGES: SHUTTERSTOCK