



Into the garden

November's quiet magic

Your new 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 occasionally tease you through the year ahead.

Dates for your diary

● **National Garden Scheme Winter Openings:**

November-December. There are still beautiful gardens opening their gates: evergreens, elegant structure, and cake by a crackling fire await. ngs.org.uk

● **National Tree Week:** 22-30 November. NTW turns 50 this year with the theme A Future Full of Trees. Expect free online talks, craft workshops, forest bathing, and more than 100 events across the UK. Even the libraries are in on it, serving up tree-themed packs and reading lists – proof that branches really do reach everywhere. Find your nearest event at treecouncil.org.uk.

● **Norfolk & Norwich Horticultural Society's**

Late Autumn Show: Sunday 8 November. A low-key showcase of chrysanthemums, flowers, fruit, veg, and homegrown creations – perfect for pottering, picking up ideas, and plotting next year's patch. nnhs.org.uk

● **The Garden House, Devon – Winter Opening Season:**

1 November 2025 – 29 March 2026. A horticultural haven open in winter, with romantic walled gardens, vivid autumn colour in the Acer Glade, and soulful views by the cottage and Jubilee Arboretum. Plus, legendary Garden House scones – for when the damp creeps in. thegardenhouse.org.uk



Did you know?

- Robins sing right through winter – not for romance, but to shout “mine” at other robins.
- Tulip bulbs were once worth more than a townhouse in Amsterdam. Your packet from the garden centre? Practically free by comparison.
- Darwin once timed worms pulling a whole beech leaf underground in under 90 seconds. They're nature's original weightlifters.



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ALAN'S ALMANAC: NOVEMBER IN THE GARDEN & ALLOTMENT



Meet Alan Coxon: food and heritage expert, curator of projects from *Roaming the Paths* to *Alan's Almanac*, and now *Platinum's* very own gardening voice. With a passion for the land and a gift for unearthing timeless wisdom, Alan will be our guide through the gardening year – sharing know-how, inspiration, and a few winks of humour along the way. And where better to begin than November – the month of mist, mulch and muddy boots?

ALAN'S TOP TIP

'Leave seed heads standing – echinacea, fennel, alliums. They look like sculptures dusted in frost and double up as bird feeders. Beauty with a purpose.'

Alan says: 'November is when the garden starts pulling up its duvet. There's less show, more substance – but don't be fooled, these jobs matter. Think of it as tucking your garden in before its winter nap.'

● Clear old vegetation.

Chop back what's done, compost the good stuff, and burn or bin anything diseased. Shred woody bits if you can. It's recycling at its most satisfying.

● **Create a haven.** Build a hedgehog house out of the leftover trimmings or pile up branches for insects. Untidy? Maybe. Essential? Absolutely.

● **Prune fruit trees.** Apples and pears get their haircut now. Remove old raspberry and blackberry stems too, and cut rose stems back by a third so they don't thrash about in the wind.



● **Leaves:** friend, not foe. Clear them from paths so you don't end up skating to the compost bin, but

otherwise let them lie. Worms love them, soil loves them. Got too many? Bag them up to make leaf mould – next year's black gold.

● **Tidy and store.** Take down plant supports, dry and stash them. Check young tree ties before winter winds test their patience.

● **Greenhouse TLC.** Evict the ghosts of summer – old tomato and cucumber plants, out! Disinfect surfaces, clean the glass, and add insulation if needed. This is also the month to tuck in your tender treasures: geraniums, fuchsias, dahlias.

● **Dig and dream.** Turn over empty beds, add compost or lime, and let the winter rains do their work. A smugly satisfying job.



● **Plant ahead.** This is prime time for tulips, daffodils, crocus, and hyacinths. Pop in garlic and broad beans for early crops. New shrubs, hedges, and bare-root trees settle beautifully in the winter damp.

● **Pause and plan.** Once the spade is down, grab a mug of tea, crack open the seed catalogues, and dream big. The garden may be sleeping, but your imagination doesn't have to.

Find out more at roaming-the-paths.co.uk and alans-almanac.co.uk.