

OLD LORE
REMINDER

*'September blow soft,
till fruit be in loft'*



Dahlias are at
their peak this
month

September's final flourish

This is the garden's great pay-off, a time to take pleasure in a season well spent.

September is the month that makes all the effort worthwhile. The garden is at its most generous, the colours are beginning to turn, and there's real satisfaction in taking stock of what worked. Start thinking about spring, too. The best gardeners are always one season ahead.

● Harvest the last of summer

Tomatoes, sweetcorn, marrows and climbing beans are all reaching

their finale. Pick tomatoes as they ripen and bring green ones indoors to finish on a windowsill; they'll turn in their own time. Leave nothing on the vine, because once a plant thinks the job is done, it stops producing.

● Prune rambling roses

Ramblers flower once, on growth made the previous year, so they're pruned immediately after flowering – usually late August into

PLATINUM EXPERT



Alan Coxon

Food and heritage expert, and curator of projects from *Roaming the Paths* to *Alan's Almanac*, Alan is *Platinum's* gardening voice. With a passion for the land and a gift for unearthing timeless wisdom, Alan is our guide through the year – sharing know-how, inspiration and a few winks of humour along the way. Find out more at roaming-the-paths.co.uk and alans-almanac.co.uk.

September. Cut out the stems that have just flowered at the base, tie in the new, flexible growth that has come through this season, and trim any side shoots back by about a third. Next summer's display is already in the making.

● Bring in tender perennials

Pelargoniums, fuchsias, osteospermums and salvias won't survive a frost outside. Before the first cold nights arrive, bring them under cover and cut back by about a third to keep them manageable. Keep them on the dry side over winter, water sparingly and resist the urge to feed. They'll be raring to go again in spring.

● Sow a green manure

Bare soil over winter loses nutrients and structure. Sow a green manure, phacelia, mustard or grazing rye, on to cleared ground now and it will protect the soil, suppress weeds and dig in come spring to add fertility. It takes 10 minutes and costs almost nothing.



ALAN'S TOP TIP

September is the best month to scarify and aerate your lawn. Rake out the thatch, spike the surface, then brush in sharp sand and compost. Follow with an autumn lawn feed, low in nitrogen.

Did you know?

● The autumn equinox falls on September 22, when day and night are almost exactly equal. After that, darkness gains the upper hand; the garden's signal to slow down – and yours to start planting for spring.

● Robin song returns in September, after near-silence through the later summer months. Their autumn song is softer and more melancholy than the spring version, and deliberately so: it's thought to be territorial rather than a mating call. Either way, it's

one of the most comforting sounds in the autumn garden.

● Apples were considered sacred in many ancient cultures; the Norse believed the gods ate them to stay young. Britain has over 2,000 named varieties, which is a legacy worth celebrating at harvest time.

● Hedgehogs are at their most active this month, fattening up before hibernation. A garden with a log pile, a gap in the fence and a bowl of water is an open invitation, and they'll return the favour by eating slugs all summer.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

● Yeo Valley Organic Garden Festival, Holt Farm, near Bristol

17-19 September 2026

A sell-out in its first year, this three-day Somerset festival is back with talks, panels and workshops exploring soil health, biodiversity and climate-resilient gardening, set within six-and-a-half acres of organic-certified gardens. yvogardenfestival.co.uk.

● Malvern Autumn Show, Three Counties Showground, Worcestershire

25-27 September 2026

The UK's biggest harvest festival, staged beneath the Malvern Hills, with the legendary CANNA UK Giant Vegetables Championship, dazzling RHS floral displays, talks from Monty

Marvellous marrows
at Malvern



Don, Adam Frost and Manoj Maldé, plus artisan food, countryside shopping and family entertainment. A very good way to close the season. malvernautumn.co.uk

Book of the month

In Nature's Slipstream
by Carol Bruce (DK)

Self-taught gardener Carol Bruce has spent over 20 years developing her approach to working with nature rather than against it, resulting in her award-winning Kent garden – free from irrigation, pesticides and fertilisers. This beautiful book shares her sustainable methods, transferable to any plot, large or small.

