



SEPTEMBER–NOVEMBER / KEEP WHAT IS USEFUL

Clear with care.

An autumn tidy-up for UK vegetable plots, beds and containers

Clear in stages as crops finish. A productive autumn plot can still hold winter vegetables, flowering plants and shelter for wildlife. Start with one bed and leave yourself an easy route to the crops you are still picking.

Keep, clear or set aside?

WHAT YOU FIND	YOUR NEXT MOVE
Crops still producing	Keep harvesting while quality holds. Check your local frost forecast before leaving tender crops out. Use the vegetable-storage guide to sort the final harvest.
Established winter crops	Leave healthy leeks, kale, sprouts and winter cabbage in place. Remove fallen, rotting leaves and check supports. These crops should already be established; most are not September sowings for this winter.
Finished, healthy annuals	Remove ties and labels, then cut up bulky stems for the compost heap. Healthy pea and bean roots can stay in the soil; they are not a complete feed for the next crop.
Weeds and suspect plants	Remove weeds before they shed seed. Keep persistent roots and suspect diseased material separate from ordinary compost until you know how to handle them.
Seedheads and quiet corners	Retain some healthy standing stems and leaf litter away from crop rows and paths. Check for wildlife before moving piles or cutting long growth.

Let the ground decide

Work from paths. If soil sticks heavily to your boots or tools, postpone digging and clearing that needs you to stand on it. Choose a dry-storage or tool-cleaning job instead.



AUTUMN PLOT / SORT, RECORD, COVER

One bed at a time.

A manageable checklist for the end of a growing season

Sort the clear-up as you go

For the compost heap

Mix soft crop remains with dry, woody material or torn plain cardboard. Chop tough stems. Remove plastic twine, clips and labels before adding anything.

Keep separate

A cool home heap may not destroy weed seeds, persistent roots or every disease. Identify the problem and check disease-specific advice and your council's green-waste rules.

If roots look diseased

Unusual swollen brassica roots or rotting allium roots need a closer look. Do not spread suspect roots or their soil around the plot. Record the bed and crop before removing material; an ordinary rotation may not control a persistent soil disease.

Your next plot visit

- ☐ Pick what is ready and separate produce for immediate use from sound crops suitable for storage.
- ☐ Mark the crops staying through winter. Take a photo of the bed and note any disease or poor growth.
- ☐ Clear one finished section, collecting supports and sorting the plant material.
- ☐ Remove weeds, then choose a suitable surface mulch or timely green manure for the empty area.
- ☐ Clear the access path; leave a quiet wildlife corner undisturbed.

My next bed: _____ Next visit: _____

Next: Vegetable storage – keep more of your harvest