

reduce heating bills and help tender plants survive the winter. Bubble wrap, 1.5metres wide, is available from the Trading Hut in any length that you may require to complete the insulation of the greenhouse or also to wrap around pots and containers which may need some protection from the cold in the winter months.

Now is a good time for soft fruits such as raspberries, gooseberries, blackberries and currants. Plant them in well prepared soil, enriched with plenty of compost and some bonemeal to the depth that they were growing before. However blackcurrants should be planted lower than usual in the planting hole, with about 5cms of the stem below soil level, as this encourages new growth from the base of the plants.

Bonemeal - this is an excellent source of slow release phosphorous which is needed by plants to promote strong and healthy growth. It contains some nitrogen, a vital plant nutrient and some calcium, another essential element for plant growth.

When you plant new plants in the soil, especially trees and shrubs that need an extensive root system to support them, incorporate some bonemeal into the planting hole as an extra tonic for the roots. Existing plants can be improved by working some bonemeal into the soil close to the root ball, but take care not to damage the roots.



Pot up some chives and mint roots to grow inside on a sunny windowsill over the winter. The warmth will encourage them to grow and you will be able to cut some small quantities of fresh herbs during the winter months.

Regularly remove fallen leaves and other debris from around winter flowering pansies and winter flowering heathers to prevent pests from taking up residence under these plants, especially slugs and snails this year.

Also remove leaves that accumulate around alpine plants as these plants will easily die off if left in the damp for too long. Some grit and gritty compost covering bare patches around these plants will encourage new growth.

There will be leaves falling from all the trees now, so why not make some use of them. Leaf-mould is made of leaves that have rotted down over time and end up as a good soil conditioner. So when you're continually sweeping up leaves, don't look on it as a chore but as a real benefit for your garden. Continue to rake fallen leaves off the lawn before they block out light and moisture from the grass. It's not too late to apply Autumn lawn fertiliser, if you have not had time to apply it so far. This fertiliser has less nitrogen than summer feed and more potash and phosphate and will encourage root development and strengthen and harden the growth. This will help the lawn to retain colour during the winter months and give a good foundation for next summer.

Finally the leaves - if you have the room a container of chicken wire can be made to contain the leaves in a heap, or else place them in a bin liner and leave them to rot for about a year. The leaves need to be wet and if mixed with lawn grass cuttings will rot quicker. When rotted sufficiently they can be added to the soil or applied as a mulch. After about 2 years you should have a fine leaf mould that can be used with potting compost. Leaves of oak, beech and hornbeam will rot quicker than tougher leaves of sycamore and chestnut. Conifer and evergreen leaves need to be shredded before they will rot down in a reasonable time.



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**WESTON-SUPER-MARE
HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY**
www.wsmhorticultural.org.uk

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MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR

A MESSAGE FROM CHAIRMAN BERT.

It does seem very strange to be wishing you all a happy Christmas in October, but this is the last newsletter of 2017. I hope you have a wonderful time and good gardening in 2018. Regrettably, I have decided to stand-down as Chairman of the society at the next AGM. My health is not as good as it was and I need to slow down my activities. You won't be getting rid of me completely as I would still like to have an interest in the plant sale and flower show. As Cynthia has now arranged the 2018 programme, she will see this through and then stand down the following year. During this time she will be able to assist the person who takes over to arrange the 2019 programme and be on hand to offer any assistance. I would particularly like to thank John Chapman for organising a super Flower Show this year and look forward to enjoying the show in 2018.

MEETINGS The next meeting will be on 9th November at St Peter's Church Hall, Baytree Road at 7.30pm. The Speaker will be Robert Harvey who is a renowned photographer and has won awards throughout Europe for his work. The talk will be called "Tropical Wild Flowers in Nature and in the Garden" this will include wonderful photos of orchids, passion vines, tree ferns and carnivorous pitcher plants and provide insights into successful cultivation in our homes, conservatories and gardens. Please note this talk replaces the Gardeners Question Time as we mentioned in the last Newsletter. Our Social Evening this year is on 14th December at 7.30 and will be an evening of fun with quizzes and games organised by the ladies of the Social Committee to get us all into the festive spirit. We did this 2 years ago and members enjoyed it so much they would like it repeated (with different content, of course!). There will be a Christmas Raffle organised by Sue who would appreciate any Christmas Prizes donated. Georgina will be doing the refreshments with Christmas goodies to eat and a glass of wine. So come along and enjoy yourselves.



