



Pretoria Road allotments, Patchway, Bristol

## Autumn Colours

The lovely weather of late September has lulled us into a false sense of summer just `slipping away` when in reality, we were all on borrowed meteorological time. Autumn has now shown her true colours, literally and figuratively, with much cooler temperatures, rain and strong winds.

In between the showers and unpredictable weather, I've been dropping by the plot to do a few bits and pieces. A key signifier that the growing season has ended is the ritual dismantling of the runner beans poles. The foliage was beginning to turn yellow and there were only a few forlorn beans left so, it is time for them to come down. I find this a bit sad as the plot looks bare without them. The canes are now stored and the bean vines added to the compost bin—all done for another year.

I've been checking my Leeks weekly for leek moth and allium leaf miner. Both these pests have increased in recent years to the point where leeks only thrive on my plot when protected by enviro-mesh or horticultural fleece. Thankfully, by early to mid- November, the threat is over and the mesh can come off allowing the plants to benefit from a little extra light during the shorter days.

I sowed my leeks in a tray at the start of February and they were planted out in early July— quite a long process but, leeks are worth it. It's still a thrill to dig up my first leeks at this time of year and the plants will continue to stand well through the wet and cold of winter when there is little to take from the plot except brassicas.

The last thing to mention this time of year are pumpkins of course. There are a few varieties to try depending on what you want to achieve— Atlantic Giant if you want to try and grow mammoth squash to wow at your local show or, at the other end of the scale, the small and neat Mars F1, ideal for Roasting.

# Calendar of events 2014

<p><b>January 2014</b> Jan. Seed Potatoes sale— Bacon Butty morning</p> 	<p><b>February 2014</b></p>	<p><b>March 2014</b></p>
<p><b>April 2014</b></p> 	<p><b>May 2014</b> Bacon butty morning</p> 	<p><b>June 2014</b> National Allotments Week Animal homes and wildlife gardening workshop for children</p> <p><u>June 08th</u> <u>11.00am—3.00pm</u></p> 
<p><b>July 2014</b> Patchway Festival Lottie open to public – BBQ, table top activities and scare-crow competition</p>  <p>...Wotten Garden Club 16th July evening.....</p>	<p><b>August 2014</b> National Allotments Week Animal homes and wildlife gardening workshop for children</p>  <p><u>Wine &amp; Cheese evening 3rd- 5pm until late</u></p>	<p><b>September 2014</b></p>
<p><b>October 2014</b> Halloween Party. Fancy Dress. Best Pumpkin. Halloween</p> 	<p><b>November 2014</b></p>	<p><b>December 2014</b> Christmas Fayre at Lottie Sell Lottie Recipe book</p> 

Contact the committee: [growpretoria@gmail.com](mailto:growpretoria@gmail.com)

website: [growpretoria.org](http://growpretoria.org)

### **Other Allotment jobs now:**

**Finish clearing the spent crops from the green house like peppers, cucumbers and tomato plants.**

**The greenhouse usually needs a bit of a clean up; stack pots and seed trays for next season. If you've had a pest problem, consider using an appropriate disinfectant or sulphur candle.**

**Regularly check stored produce like potatoes, carrots, apples, onions and squashes ensuring you remove any that are rotten or are going soft.**

**Remove protective nets and fleece from brassicas and leeks, the threat is over now and plants will benefit from some extra light in the darker days of autumn and winter.**

**Store your bamboo canes off the ground where possible to stop them rotting.**

**Keep weeding, clearing and roughly digging over your plot when the ground conditions allow.**

**Take the opportunity to burn diseased plants and thicker stems. Add the ash to the compost bins.**

**Rough dig over heavy ground and leave it in lumps or ridges to be broken down gradually by the winter frosts and rain. Keep off the soil if it is wet and don't be tempted dig it if it is frozen. When the soil is frozen hard it is a good opportunity to cart barrows of manure or compost over it.**

**Stake Brussels sprouts and sprouting broccoli plants to prevent them from being blown over in strong winds, it is also worthwhile dragging soil up around the base of the plants to give them extra support.**

### **Sowing and Planting**

**Sow winter lettuce and a couple of short rows of winter hardy peas and broad beans towards the end of the month to provide you with an early crop next Spring.**

**Plant out Spring cabbage and over wintering types of onion and garlic. It is also a good time to plant rhubarb crowns.**

**Can member plot holders, please submit to me any ideas of any aspect of growing your own vegetables and these will be included in the future Newsletters.**