

# Kinnesswood in bloom

## Handy Tips

- Planting**
- Tie up delicate climbers with old tights cut into strips.
  - To support herbaceous plants, pull a coat hanger into a square and hook onto supporting canes.
  - When tying canes together, secure them temporarily with an elastic band. Now your hands are free to tie the canes in position.
- Shrubs**
- When growing azaleas and rhododendrons, plant some foxgloves next to them. They help to keep the other plants healthy.
  - If your shrubs are getting too leggy, grow climbers like clematis over them.
  - After transplanting an evergreen shrub, spray the foliage every day for two weeks.
- Weeding**
- Don't throw away the salted boiling water that you've cooked your potatoes in. Use it as a weed killer on paths and drives.
  - Remember this rhyme:  
Thistles cut in May return next day  
Thistles cut in June come up soon  
but cut them in July and they are sure to die.
  - Use Epsom salts to kill weeds.
- Cut flowers**
- If the stem of a lily splits wrap it in sticky tape.
  - Cut flowers in the late evening and they'll last longer
  - May flowering peonies make beautiful cut flowers.

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- Compost**
- Natural fibre knitted items, such as jumpers and cardigans can be cut up and added to your compost.
  - Don't throw banana skins away; place them round the bottom of your roses for great fertilizer.
  - Perk up your plants by feeding them with half a can of non-diet Coca-Cola.
- Hanging Baskets**
- Alternative linings for hanging baskets are newspaper, knitwear or blanket weed.
  - When planting up hanging baskets, wrap plants in pieces of polythene shaped into a cone. This will protect the root ball when you pull it through the basket. Once the plant is in position, remove the polythene.
  - In winter, place an old plate on top of a hanging basket and use it as a bird table.
- Vegetables**
- Sunflowers, with running beans growing up their stems, make an attractive and effective screen.
  - Plant African marigolds alongside your tomatoes to keep greenfly away.
  - To water long rows of vegetables, lay plastic guttering between the rows. Put small holes along its length. Pour water into the guttering.
- Herbs**
- Prune rosemary lightly; it will not regrow from old wood
  - Plant mint in its own container to stop it spreading everywhere.
  - Create a herb garden using old bricks positioned like the spokes of a wheel.

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- Containers**
  - Containers are useful when it comes to filling in gaps in your borders.
  - When planting up a terracotta or stone container, water both it and the plants to stop the compost from drying out.
  - Weather a new terracotta pot by rubbing it with fresh parsley.
- Mulching**
  - Create a cheap mulch for the garden by shredding in left-over bits of wood.
  - In the summer, mulch rose beds after it has rained.
  - Use old carpets as mulch to kill weeds.
- Tools**
  - Make a kneeling mat out of an old hot water bottle.
  - To store garden tools over winter, grease lightly with cooking oil.
  - To prevent tools from rusting, store them in buckets of sand and oil.
- Pests**
  - Stop snails and slugs in their tracks. Smear petroleum jelly on the rim of flower pots to stop your plants getting attacked.
  - Mix up your own insect spray from a mixture of water and a little washing-up liquid.
  - Growing aliums and catmint next to your roses will help combat aphids.
  - Planting marigolds round the base of a rose bush can deter rose pests.

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### **Grass cutting**

- Don't have the blades of your mower set too low. If you do, you could weaken the grass and make it more vulnerable to weeds and moss.
- Keep grass cuttings. Throw them on to the compost heap (or into a black bag) and cover with a piece of carpet until they've mulched down.

### **Trees**

- When planting a tree, cut off a bit of old hose and place one end next to the roots. When you fill in the hole, leave the other end pointing out of the soil. When you water, it will go directly to the roots.
- Spank your trees to stimulate their growth!!
- If you have an old tree stump that you can't get rid of, grow a climber up it.

### **Fences**

- Stain your fences a variety of colours for a stunning effect.
- A cheap way to preserve your fence is to paint it with engine oil from your car.
- Don't creosote a fence if you want to grow climbers up it because it takes time for the fumes to die away.

### **Watering**

- A sign of over watering is moss starting to grow on top of the potting compost.
- Water plants in the evening so that moisture has time to soak in overnight and not get burnt off by the sun.
- Get a water butt. Rain water is soft and much better for your plants.

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## Be prepared listings - Spring

- Feed any plants that have been heavily pruned over winter and apply a generous layer of mulch.
- When the soil is moist and weed free, mulch borders and beds.
- When the soil is not too wet, prepare it for planting by digging appropriately, removing and disposing of perennial weeds.
- Clear weeds from driveways and paths.
- When the weather warms up, be vigilant with watering requirements throughout this important growth period.
- When the soil has warmed sufficiently, sow seeds of hardy annuals such as sunflowers directly into their planting sites.
- Sow biennials in a seed bed, ready for next spring.
- When the threat of frost has passed, plant out half-hardy annuals such as busy Lizzies.
- Plant out sweet pea seedlings that were sown last autumn.
- Apply slow-release fertiliser to flowerbeds and borders and rake in.
- When the weather and soil conditions allow, plant perennials.
- Deadhead tulips and narcissus when they have gone over, removing the flower head only, not the whole stalk. Leave the foliage to die down naturally.
- Divide perennials as soon as new growth begins.
- Stake tall perennials such as delphiniums.
- Plant summer-flowering bulbs and dahlia tubers.
- Divide summer-flowering alpines.
- Protect plants from slugs.
- Weed.

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## Be prepared listings - Summer

- Plant up containers in early summer. Move containers prepared in the greenhouse outside.
- If not using a slow-release fertiliser, feed your containers regularly.
- Deadhead spent blooms regularly.
- During prolonged dry spells, water plants that have not yet become established.
- In early summer, sow a second batch of annuals in the form of plug plants, to ensure a good display once the first sowings have started to fade.
- Weed.
- Plant geraniums for summer bedding.
- Collect seeds.
- Remove yellowing foliage from perennials.
- Take softwood cutting from plants that may be under threat during winter, such as penstemons.
- Order spring-flowering bulbs.
- Prune late spring and early summer-flowering climbers and shrubs when they have finished flowering.
- Check climbers regularly and tie in any straggly growth.
- Trim evergreens and remove dead or damaged shoots.

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## Be prepared listings - Autumn

- Turn the compost heap.
- Spread well-rotted compost over beds and borders for winter protection.
- Dig any heavy, clay soil and leave the clods unbroken.
- Collect fallen leaves for making leaf mould.
- Clear summer bedding from containers and plant up winter containers.
- When annuals have finished flowering, clear them away, leaving ornamental seed heads in place.
- When perennials become straggly and unsightly, cut them back. Lift, divide and replant perennials.
- After the first frost has blackened the foliage of dahlias and other tender, bulbous plants, trim back the stems to 15cm and gently lift the tubers. Discard damaged roots and excess soil. Invert the tubers for a week or so to drain away excess moisture. Store them upright on a layer of peat that covers the roots, not the crowns, in a dry, cool, frost-free environment.
- Plant spring-flowering bulbs in pots or in the garden.
- As the dormant season begins, plant trees and shrubs.

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## Be prepared listings - Winter

- Take root cuttings off fleshy-rooted perennials.
- Replace faded, broken and absent plant labels.
- Prepare for spring sowing. Clean propagators, pots and seed trays.
- While plants are dormant, maintain paths, trellis, fences and other garden structures.
- Tidy up flower beds and borders.
- Continue to collect fallen leaves.
- Plan any major changes to the garden.
- Check stored bulbs for rot and mould.  
Discard affected bulbs.
- Even if the weather is slightly frosty, prune roses, shrubs, trees and climbers.
- Inspect woody plants for diseased and dead wood. Remove and destroy infected or dead branches and stems.
- Knock heavy snow from conifers and hedges before it turns to ice and breaks or distorts branches.