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time to

DIG IN



with DAVID DOMONEY

Q&A



When is the best time of year to plant garlic?

Can you please tell me when is the best time to plant garlic? Dylan, Sittingbourne, Kent
Garlic is best planted in late autumn or early winter. It will grow well in a sunny, well-drained spot with some well-rotted organic matter. Cover any newly planted cloves with horticultural fleece to keep the birds at bay. Garlic bulbs will be ready when the leaves turn yellow.



I need some shady characters to add drama to garden

What can I grow in a garden that is mainly shady? Matt, via email
There are plenty of camellias to choose from, such as 'Adelina Patti' and 'Black Lace', which both do well in full or partial shade. For an evergreen that has beautiful blooms in spring and summer, mountain laurel is a good option. It's also great for pollinators. Ferns and hostas are good for shade too.

TIP of the week

Once you've switched on your central heating, put any indoor plants on a shelf or windowsill in a saucer filled with wet gravel above a radiator to create a humid microclimate for them.

KID ABOUT Valerij pumpskins at Tinsley



CORE VALUE Applies to share with neighbours

It has been a challenging year but our gardens have helped us keep it together. And our Cultivation Street 2020 competition is a shining example.

The entries have been simply inspirational, and over the past three weeks, I have been announcing the incredible winners.

And today I can reveal the overall champion – and why the judges were so impressed.

I could not be prouder of the amount of work and dedication communities across the UK have been putting into their projects and the stories behind them. This year we have given away £13,000 in cash prizes, along with hampers of products from our brilliant sponsor Miracle-Gro.

Emma Pryer, head of features at the Sunday Mirror and one of my fellow judges, said: "During such an incredibly challenging year, and despite lockdown, it is wonderfully heart-warming to see the joy that the great outdoors is bringing to communities across Britain."

"The finalists in this year's Cultivation Street competition aren't only transforming open spaces into stunning havens for wildlife, they are also bringing people together from different generations, and offering a lifeline for people with illness, disability or overcoming grief."

"They are so much more than just communal spaces – they have the ability to change lives and spread happiness across neighbourhoods."

"Many of these gardening groups have also delivered food parcels in the pandemic from produce they've grown. These communities, and gardeners, are truly inspirational."

Thanks, Emma – and hear, hear! We have already revealed the regional winners and today I'm delighted to announce our overall community champion.

Congratulations go to Tinsley Allotment project in Sheffield, whose volunteers will be taking home our top prize of £2,000 and a hamper of Miracle-Gro products.



The garden was started four years ago – and they had a mountain to climb. Originally filled with rubbish and overgrown with weeds, the allotment is now home to a 10-metre raised bed and six other smaller raised beds for growing vegetables.

Five further beds are used to grow flowers and herbs, plus, there is a forest garden filled with perennial herbs and soft fruit, as well as a polytunnel for tender crops. Not only is the space used for growing crops, an amazing community has grown around it. Women and children who were new to the area and had been feeling lonely and isolated have found joy in socialising with locals. Its open sessions for residents have

also helped to bring people from different backgrounds together.

With a lack of local fresh food shops, it has become a hub where visitors can take home fruit, veg, herbs or cuttings, encouraging people to grow their own.

Head volunteer Jacqui Dace said: "We are absolutely delighted to be chosen as winners."

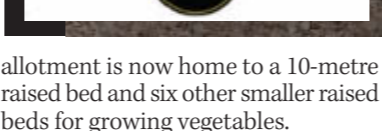
"We are so pleased our volunteers and visitors have seen their hard work recognised with this award. We are still shocked that our small project was chosen from all the wonderful community gardens out there."

They have yet to decide what they will spend the prize money on but say the win "opens up all kinds of possibilities" for them, including installing a solar-powered irrigation system for their polytunnel.

There is also a potential redesign for the wildlife pond on the cards.

These changes will help their garden develop and continue to support their community for years to come.

Judges' verdict
The entries were nothing but inspiring. Although this year could have brought much negativity, the opposite was true because they have shown what we can overcome together in trying times.



WINNERS David, next to Jacqui, and volunteers at Tinsley Allotment

An allotment that rose from a rubbish dump is our inspirational winner after volunteers helped a community grow and flourish

Aces of spades



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Tackle trimming jobs effortlessly with this 20V hedge trimmer from Garden Gear. The cordless feature puts an end to worrying about being near a power source, allowing complete freedom and makes it easy to manoeuvre without worrying about potentially hazardous wires.

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D9532 Cordless Hedge Trimmer

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OFFER OF THE WEEK

An RHS award-winning shrub, Caryopteris 'Pink Perfection' produces aromatic grey-green leaves accompanied by clusters of pink flowers from August to September.

It's a perfect choice for those looking to attract butterflies and bees. We recommend planting this charming shrub in patio containers or at the front of garden borders. Height 80-90cm – 9cm pot plants supplied.

Buy one Caryopteris Pink Perfection for £9.99, or order four for only £19.98, half-price. Allow up to 28 days for delivery. To order by debit/credit card, call **0843 922 5000**, quoting **SMTG164**, or send a cheque payable, using blue or black ink, to 'Garden Offers' to Caryopteris Pink Perfection Offer (SMTG164), PO Box 64, South West District Office, Manchester, M16 9HY or visit **mirrorgardenoffers.co.uk**.

GADGET



Early autumn is a fine time to take cuttings from favourite shrubs – and it's easy. Prepare pots using coarse horticultural grit and multipurpose compost.

Choose young growth that hasn't flowered this year, snip the stem below a leaf joint to make a cutting 5-10cm long. Strip off leaves from the lower stem, dip in hormone rooting powder, then pop a few centimetres deep in the pot. Place in a propagator or push wooden coffee sticks into the soil and cover with a plastic bag. Buy Miracle-Gro FastRoot via **amazon.co.uk** for £22.84.

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THIRD City of Talgarth in Wales



SECOND Oasis community garden



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