



# Newsletter



## Hello December!

Christmas wreaths, Christmas cards, Christmas wrapping paper, Christmas food specials, and delicious homemade Christmas cakes - be sure to visit Sooty's and Sweep's this December!

Don't forget to follow us on other socials too!

[www.sootysweeps.com](http://www.sootysweeps.com)

 @sweepscafeatsootyplants

 @sootyandsweeps

 @sootyplants



# Jobs to do in the garden this month



If you have a pond, cover it with netting to catch any falling leaves or debris. Additionally, remove filters to avoid damage from frost.



Stock up your bird feeders, to help migrating birds on their travels.



Clean your greenhouse pots and seed trays, ready for use next year. Add a layer of bubble film insulation to maximum heat inside the greenhouse too.



December is a fantastic time to plan your garden beds, borders, and vegetable patch for the year ahead.



Prune established blackcurrant plants to prevent disease. Leave the younger shoots to bear fruit next year.



Plant soft fruits (currants, gooseberries, berries) this month in their dormant state.



Move winter containers into positions of full sun in the garden. Keep watering winter flowering displays.



Rake and remove any leaves that have fallen onto the lawn.

# Have you heard?



# OUR SUNDAY CARVERY

## IS BACK

Sunday 27th  
November  
£13.95 pp

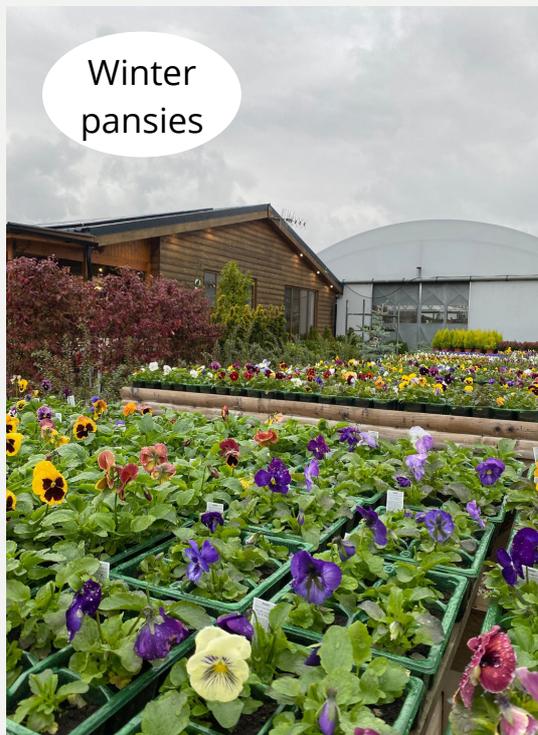
Call  
01772 812540

**BOOKING  
ESSENTIAL**

# Now on every Sunday!

# Festive gifts

At Sooty's garden centre we have huge range of plant options, all competitively priced and at the highest quality!  
Here are just a few of our staff favourites items for sale this month.



Winter pansies



Cards



Capsicula



Grave pots



Heathers



wrapping paper

# SALE SALE SALE



**30%  
OFF**

all our giftware products!  
So come in and check out  
the remaining stock  
today!

*Fancy a more unique gift? How about gifting a  
delicious grazing board.....*

# Looking for a last minute *Christmas gift?*



**BOOK TODAY**

**Sweeps' Cafe does outside catering!**

We provide **FOUR** different plans;

Cold Buffet

Kids Buffet

Afternoon Tea boxes to go

Grazing Board boxes (like the one pictured above) to go

To book or enquire about this please call us at 01772 812540,  
or contact us on [www.sootysweeps.com](http://www.sootysweeps.com)



# Brass Band Concert



**FREE EVENT**  
**SWEEP'S CAFE**  
**10TH & 17TH DECEMBER**  
**FROM 1PM TO 3PM**

*Music is  
performance by:*  
**The Marshside  
Brass Band**

To reserve a table call 01772 812540

**Booking  
Essential**

**Only 4  
tables  
left!**





# Do-It-Yourself Christmas Wreath

A Christmas wreath is a staple item during the festive season. Representing eternal life in various cultures, these beautiful decorations will add beauty and colour to any home. So, why not try and make your own! It's a fun and rewarding craft project, which gives you the chance to create something unique to you and your home!

## What You'll Need

- A pair of gloves
- A foam wreath ring
- A small pieces of rope/wire to hang with
- Evergreen foliage (We recommend ivy, conifers and spruce, but get creative!)
- Additionally decorative berries, flowers, pine cones, extra foliage like moss, and even Christmas bells or Christmas lights! and that's it!

## What To Do

- Soak your foam ring in water for about 10 minutes - you can add a floral preservative to help give your wreath an extra boost throughout the colder months.
- Once the ring wreath has soaked, wrap around your rope/wire several times, as this will be your hanging hook once the wreath is finished.
- Take your evergreen foliage and cut them to your desired length.
- Separate your prepared foliage into piles.
- Now, there are two ways to build your wreath.
  - The first method is to select a piece of each of your material and build a bunch which is pretty and visually balanced. We recommend to keep the larger pieces at the base, and the smaller pieces, like the berries towards the top. Once they are in a desired position, you can not attach and add to your foam ring. We recommend designing your bundles before added them to the ring to avoid any unnecessary damage to the ring. Simply repeat this process, until the wreath is full to your desired style.
  - The second method, is to simply add the larger foliage pieces into the wreath at an angle, and add in a circular pattern, working your way around the wreath. Then simply add more foliage gradually, and add any decorative pieces at the end, until you have a finished design!
  - Now all you need to do is find your perfect spot to hang your new wreath! Hanging outside will help keep it fresher for longer (for about 4 weeks), but it all depends on the foliage used.

# Do-It-Yourself Christmas Wreath



*Sooty's latest update*  
**Our cosy winter chalet**



It's the time of year again!

When Sweep's Cafe's summer room transforms into a cosy chalet, fitted with two fireplaces, blankets, and a brand new carpet to keep in the warmth even more! Come down to Sweep's Cafe today to check it out!

**to book a table please call 01772 812540**

# Treat yourself this December

ALL OF THIS FOR ONLY  
**£6\***



\*WEEKDAYS ONLY, FROM OPEN UNTIL 12 (NOON) THROUGHOUT DECEMBER



# A perfect gift...

*What's the ideal plant to gift over the festive period?*

*Question for you, why would you give a friend or family member fresh flowers, that could die within a week, when you can gift a plant (or two!). Plants make for a perfect gift, for many occasions, and they have their benefits too!*

*From the increase in tranquillity and ambience to any home, to improving air-quality, to having a calming and stress-relieving effect - a plant truly is a gift that keeps giving.*

Swing into Sooty's Plants Garden Centre today and choose from our huge range of plants - indoor and outdoor.

**As a seasonal bonus too, we're offering 10% off all houseplants - so grab one while you can!**



# Winter Wildlife

*Although Winter is known as a time for hibernation, many forms of wildlife can still be seen! Your outdoor space can offer essential food, shelter and habitat to these creatures, from colourful birds to mischievous mammals.*

## Birds

During the winter season, birds will visit your garden for much-needed food, water and shelter.

Trees and shrubs are great for our feathery guests as they provide nesting areas, while some species produce winter berries and fruit that birds can eat. These fruit-bearing plants also add a pop of colour to your winter garden, such as holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*), juniper (*Juniperus communis*) and blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*).

As natural food sources are diminished in the colder months, adding a bird feeder with seeds and fats to your garden is also a brilliant help for these winged winter visitors.

If you want to go the extra mile to help attract more birds to your garden, add a water feature! Something as large as a pond, or as small as a bird bath, will help attract birds and other wildlife to your garden, providing them with a vital place to drink and wash.

One of the most iconic winter birds to watch and listen out for is the robin (*Erithacus rubecula*) with its famous bright red breast. Robins sing all year round, one of the few birds in the UK that do, so enjoy this musical treat (Pictured on the left).

Additionally, look out for other native birds in your garden, such as the chaffinch, the blue tit, blackbird, and the goldcrest!

You should also keep your eyes peeled for migratory birds that travel to Britain throughout the winter in search for food and a place to temporarily rest. These include the redwing, and waxwings!



# Winter Wildlife



## Hedgehogs

To escape the chill, Hedgehogs hibernate during the colder winter months – So they will likely still be in your garden but hidden away. They tend to hibernate in nests made of fallen leaves, or find a sheltered spot underneath logs, compost heaps, or garden sheds – or hedgehog house (which we sell at Sooty's, along with hedgehog specific food to help attract and support these beautiful animals).

## Miniscule Hazel Dormouse

Additionally to the hedgehog, dormice hibernate too! These adorable creatures nest on the ground, curling up in a ball, and wrap their tails around themselves for warmth. These species live mainly in woodland or farmland, so are likely to be found in country gardens.

Check out the National Dormouse Monitoring Programme (NDMP) to help with the monitoring and conservation of this rare species.



## Fox

Winter berries are a food source for many animals this season, including the omnivorous fox (*Vulpes vulpes*). As well as fruit, foxes have a varied diet and eat rabbits, rodents, insects, birds and scavenge in rubbish bins. You're more likely to spot a fox in your garden around dawn and dusk when they are most active. Foxes mate in winter so are particularly noisy with their barks, screeches and howls. So even if you don't see one, you may still hear them.

# Winter Wildlife

## Grey Squirrel

One common visitor to British gardens is the grey squirrel.

In winter, these non-native rodents are less active but don't hibernate and will use their bushy tails as a cosy wraparound blanket when sleeping. Grey squirrels will collect nuts, acorns and seeds in autumn and bury them in preparation for the colder season when food is less available. These sneaky mammals are easy to spot in your garden and you may catch them stealing food left out for birds. So keep an eye out for these cheeky visitors!



## Badgers

Though a badger's ideal habitat is woodland and countryside, these nocturnal animals can survive in urban environments and may visit your garden during their hunt for food. *Did you know?* Badgers are the biggest land predator in the UK.

These black-and-white mammals are less active in winter but look out for signs of their presence, such as paw prints and claw marks in the soil.



## Rabbits

Rabbits are not native to the UK but are now common and widespread here. During winter, they feast on bark, bulbs and grass. You may notice strips of bark removed from the lower parts of certain trees.

Rabbits shelter in underground warrens but you might spot their fluffy white tails as they hop about above ground in search of food.



After the temperature drops, frogs, toads and grass snakes may be hiding in your garden, nestled up in compost heaps or other warm secluded spots. Keep an eye out!



# Christmas Celebrations



# December Planting/Harvest Guide

December is a quieter month regarding harvesting - However, it's the perfect time to reflect and plan for the new year!

## Sow Outdoors

Due to the cold, December is probably one of the quietest months on the allotment.

If the weather is mild, and not frozen or waterlogged, you can still **sow garlic** outside. If the conditions are not right, just wait until February or March.



## Harvest

- Brussels Spouts
- Carrots
- Cauliflowers
- Celeriac
- Celery
- Jerusalem Artichokes
- Kale
- Kohl Rabi
- Leeks
- Parsnips
- Savoy Cabbages
- Swedes
- Turnips

## Fruit trees

The main job during this period would be winter pruning trees.

- Bare Root Plants
- Blackberries
- Grapes
- Pruning
- Raspberries
- Rhubarb
- Weed

## General Jobs

- Cleaning: Pots, tools, seed trays using a disinfectant.
- Compost: Keep turning the compost to encourage breakdown.
- Digging: Avoid digging if the soil is waterlogged or frozen.
- Soil improvement: Add organic matter
- Cover beds: Cover any beds not being used to keep weeds out.

# Gardener's Quiz

Good luck!

For how long can seeds remain dormant for?  
a. A few days  
b. A few months  
c. Years



The love apple is the original name for what?

- a. Chilli
- b. Tomato
- c. Potato

How many fountain-type statuaries are there in the Versailles gardens?

- a. 4
- b. 11
- c. 41



In what season should you plant daffodil bulbs?

- a. Spring
- b. Summer
- c. Fall

True or false? Chelsea is Britain's largest flower show.

- a. True
- b. False



*We can't wait to  
welcome you!*

