



AWSLG OCTOBER 2026

Welcome to your plot

October arrives with the first proper chill of the year, and the plot changes character almost overnight. The clocks go back on the 25th, and the loss of that extra hour of evening light is the surest sign yet that the growing season, in all but the hardiest crops, has had its final word. Leaves are turning on the fruit trees, the first frosts are due any morning now, and there's a particular kind of October quiet that settles over the site once the last of the runner beans have been pulled.

It has been a memorable year on the plots, and nowhere more so than at last month's Annual Show, which brought out some of the finest produce we've seen in years — a fitting reward for a genuinely testing growing season. Committee Corner and Members & Community News have more on the Show, and a proper thank you to everyone involved.

October is a month of endings and beginnings at once: the last harvests coming in, the ground being turned and fed for next year, and — for many of us — the annual ritual of paying the plot rent. More on that below too. For now, wrap up, make the most of the dry spells, and enjoy watching the site settle into autumn.



COMMITTEE CORNER

A FRIENDLY REMINDER — PLEASE RESPECT EVERY PLOT HOLDER'S SPACE

A reminder to all members: please do not allow visitors to wander onto other plot holders' plots without permission. It can be genuinely unsettling to arrive at your own plot and find someone there you don't recognise, however innocent the reason.

If you invite a guest onto the site, they are your responsibility, and we'd ask that they stay with you, keep to the paths, and be mindful and respectful of other members' plots and property at all times. This isn't about being unfriendly — it's about every plot holder feeling safe and at ease on their own space, which matters just as much as the growing itself

A SPECIAL THANK YOU to everyone who came along and helped at last weekend's tidy-up morning. You all made an amazing effort, and we tackled a great many jobs together. The site had a real community buzz and spirit that day, and it was wonderful to see.



A HUGE THANK YOU — ANNUAL SHOW 2026

What a Show it was. Thank you to every single person who entered a vegetable, baked a cake, arranged a vase of flowers, brought along a child's wonky courgette animal, or simply came along on the day to look, buy and support. This year's entries were exceptional, and the hall looked wonderful.

Despite the challenges of this growing season, the Show proved that it is still possible to produce some outstanding crops. Over £700 was taken on the day, and the Apple Pressing alone raised £73.80 for St Christopher's Hospice — a fantastic achievement.

Thank you, too, to everyone who has given their time throughout the year to keep the site looking as good as it does — the working parties, the litter-picking, the strimming of shared paths, the quiet jobs nobody sees. A Show is only ever the visible tip of a year's work, and this Society runs entirely on members giving their time. We're genuinely grateful, and we know members appreciate seeing the site cared for. Thank you all

**Did you volunteer in 2026? Come Prepared to
Share What You Did or What You Will Do in 2027**

As part of this year's plot rental renewal process, the Committee will ask each member to confirm how they have volunteered over the past year and how they plan to volunteer in 2027. Our Regulations require a minimum of four hours per annum, and all forms of volunteering count. Examples include:

- Working Parties and Tidy-Up mornings — general site maintenance
- Annual Show support — set-up, stewarding, judging assistance, or clear-up
- Trading Hut or canteen shifts — serving or stocktaking
- Committee or admin support — minutes, emails, newsletter tasks
- Wildlife field or communal area maintenance
- Fundraising or community events — coffee mornings, the Artisan Fair, etc.

We recognise that not everyone can volunteer in the same way, and many of our long-serving members, in particular, have done more than their fair share of volunteering.

TOGETHER WE KEEP OUR ALLOTMENTS THRIVING!

QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS?

Contact the Secretary or any Committee member **Email:** awslg.ltd@gmail.com

COMMITTEE CORNER CONTINUED

Members & Community News

RENT FOR THE YEAR 2026/27

Running costs for the site (repairs and maintenance, insurance, heat and light, and so on) are predicted to be £24,000 for the year, or £75 per plot. In addition, our largest and most unpredictable bill — the water bill — is predicted to be £20,000, or £55 per plot. Together, that puts the predicted cost of running a plot for the next year at £130.

We continue to work hard to improve the site, and thanks to income from the Trading Hut and Canteen, we can subsidise the rent. In addition, because of water supply issues over the past year, we have not been charged as much as expected. As a result, we are able to keep rents at the same level as last year:
£108 per full plot £54 per half plot

MACMILLAN COFFEE MORNING — THANK YOU

Thank you to everyone who joined us in the canteen on Saturday 26th September for the Annual Macmillan Coffee Morning. Thanks for the cake donations and all the support on the day, with a special thank you to Victoria Steward and Beth Holmes for organising.



A PLOT HOLDER AND VOLUNTEER REMEMBERED

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to the relatives of Danny Sherriff, who in August placed a beautiful wooden seat on the canteen green in memory of his life and his happy years at the allotment. The seat features a lovely fishing-rod design — a warm tribute to Danny's love of local fishing and the peaceful hours he spent enjoying it.

Danny sadly passed away on 2nd March last year, and many of us still remember his kindness and steady presence around the site. He was a dedicated volunteer in the polytunnel, the Trading Hut, and around the grounds, and most Saturdays he made sure the canteen milk was delivered before opening. His reliability and gentle humour were appreciated by so many.

In loving memory of Danny Sherriff, forever in our hearts

15/06/1935 – 02/03/2025

"Take the time to stop, sit and enjoy the nature that surrounds us all."

The new seat is a wonderful reminder of Danny's spirit, and we hope you will take a moment to sit, reflect, and enjoy this thoughtful gift when you next visit the site.



SAVE THE DATES

- Every second Friday of the month — Knit and Natter, 2 pm–4 pm
 - Artisan fair – Saturday 14th November 2026
- Check your email for other events.

BONFIRES

As we enter autumn and begin clearing our plots, a reminder that bonfires cannot be lit until after the clocks change on 25th October. Fires may be lit from 2pm, but please be mindful of neighbours and have a bucket of water near by.

- ✓ Do not burn green vegetation.
- ✓ Ensure your fire is **fully extinguished** before leaving the site.



Members & Community News

continued

🍂 AUTUMN ONION SETS HAVE ARRIVED!

Senshyu Yellow, Autumn Champion and Red Winter onion sets are now in stock at the Trading Hut, £1.50 for 200g. These varieties are perfect for planting now through to November, giving you a big head start and an earlier harvest next summer.

- ✓ Senshyu Yellow — a popular, hardy Japanese variety producing semi-globe onions with crisp white flesh and excellent storage potential
- ✓ Autumn Champion — bred specifically for autumn planting; large, straw-coloured onions with strong disease resistance
- ✓ Red Winter — a mild-flavoured red onion that overwinters exceptionally well and adds welcome colour to plot and plate alike

🌱 BROAD BEANS — AQUADULCE CLAUDIA

Also in stock: Aquadulce Claudia broad beans, £1 for 100g. This is the classic variety for fully autumn sowing — hardy enough to overwinter outdoors and reward you with one of the earliest crops of next year, often weeks ahead of a spring-sown batch.

🌱 SPRING BULBS NOW IN STOCK

Spring bulbs are also on sale at the Trading Hut — a lovely, low-effort way to plant now for a welcome splash of colour in a few months' time. Pop in and see what's available.

SHRUBLANDS FOOD BANK DONATIONS

Gratefully received as always. Collection point: The Green Wire container in the community garden near the allotment shop. Collection day: Thursdays — please aim to have donations in by Wednesday. Surplus produce can also go straight to the harvest table or the allotment shop for cool storage

TRADING HUT OPENING HOURS

Saturday morning: 10.30am–12.15pm

Sunday morning: 10.30am–12.15pm

Remember: every purchase at the Trading Hut helps keep costs down for all members. Support your local shop and your fellow growers!

QUICK PLANTING TIPS

- ✓ Soil prep: Plant in well-drained soil in a sunny spot; clear weeds first
- ✓ Spacing: Space onion sets 10cm apart, in rows 20cm apart
- ✓ Depth: Push sets gently into loose soil until just the tips show
- ✓ Protection: Netting is well worth it early on — birds love to pull up newly planted sets



This Month's Growing Guide

October brings the last harvest and the first frost, often in the same week. The priority now shifts from growing to gathering in, protecting what's left, and putting the plot to bed for winter.

PRIORITY JOBS THIS MONTH

Listed in order of importance — focus on the top jobs first.

- 1. Lift the last maincrop potatoes.** Choose a dry day, let them dry on the surface for an hour or two before storing, and check carefully for slug damage before putting any away.
- 2. Bring in green tomatoes before the first frost.** Ripen them indoors on a sunny windowsill, or in a drawer with a ripe banana, or turn them into chutney while they're still firm.
- 3. Plant garlic and overwintering broad beans.** Both need the cold of winter to establish properly, so don't leave this too late in the month.
- 4. Clear and compost spent crops.** Pull out anything that has finished, add healthy material to the compost heap, and either sow a green manure or cover bare soil with mulch or cardboard.
- 5. Raise pots and clear gutters.** Stand containers on pot feet to stop them waterlogging over winter, and give greenhouse gutters and downpipes a clear-out ahead of the wetter weather.

WHAT TO HARVEST NOW

Maincrop potatoes should be lifted before the ground turns cold and wet. Pumpkins and winter squash are ready once the skin resists a thumbnail and the stem has started to dry and harden — leave them a week or two in the sun if you can, to cure the skin for storing. Apples and pears continue, and the last of the outdoor tomatoes, courgettes and French beans should be brought in before the first hard frost finishes them off.

WHAT TO SOW & PLANT NOW

- ✓ Garlic cloves — separate and plant individually
- ✓ Overwintering broad beans
- ✓ Onion sets, if not already in
- ✓ Green manures on any bare beds



New to Your Plot

Welcome if this is your first October on the plot! Don't be discouraged by the slowing pace — this is one of the most useful months of the year to set yourself up properly for next spring, and there's real satisfaction in a plot that's been put to bed well.

YOUR OCTOBER JOBS (IN ORDER)

- 1. Harvest what's left.** Bring in the last of your tender crops before the first frost — better a fortnight early than a day too late.
- 2. Clear and cover.** As beds empty, don't leave soil bare all winter — a green manure, a layer of compost, or even cardboard weighed down with stones will all protect and improve it.
- 3. Plant garlic.** It's one of the easiest and most forgiving crops for a new plot holder — plant now, largely forget about it, and harvest next summer.
- 4. Give your tools some care.** Clean, dry and lightly oil hand tools before you put them away for winter — they'll thank you for it in spring.
- 5. Come to the Committee with your volunteering.** If you've helped out at all this year — even informally — do come along prepared to mention it when plot rents are renewed this month. It all counts, and nobody expects a long list.



WHAT NOT TO DO IN OCTOBER

- ✓ Do not leave tender crops in the ground gambling on 'one more week' — the first frost can arrive with very little warning.
- ✓ Do not leave cleared beds bare over winter — weeds will happily fill any gap you leave them.
- ✓ Do not put diseased material on the compost heap — bag and dispose of it instead.
- ✓ Do not assume the plot can be left untouched until spring — a monthly visit through winter saves a great deal of work later.



Grower's Tips

A few less obvious October jobs worth fitting in, alongside a note on curing and storing this month's harvest.

MAKING THE MOST OF A GLUT

If green tomatoes, apples or the last of the runner beans are piling up faster than you can eat them, this is the month for chutney, jam or simply freezing what you can — blanched beans and stewed apple both freeze well and take the pressure off using everything fresh at once.



CURING & STORING SQUASH

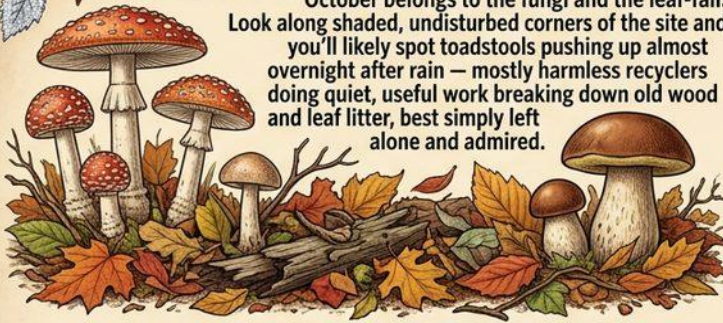
Winter squash and pumpkins keep far longer if cured properly before storing. Leave them somewhere warm, dry and sunny — a greenhouse windowsill works well — for seven to ten days after picking. This hardens the skin and heals over the stem, and a well-cured squash can easily keep for several months in a cool, frost-free shed.



NATURE & WILDLIFE GARDEN WATCH

FUNGI & THE LEAF-FALL

October belongs to the fungi and the leaf-fall. Look along shaded, undisturbed corners of the site and you'll likely spot toadstools pushing up almost overnight after rain — mostly harmless recyclers doing quiet, useful work breaking down old wood and leaf litter, best simply left alone and admired.



Redwings and fieldfares — winter thrushes arriving from Scandinavia — start turning up towards the end of the month, often in noisy flocks stripping the last berries from hedges.

Hedgehogs are still active and hunting for a final feed before finding



Check Before

somewhere to hibernate, so if you're building a bonfire or clearing a woodpile, please check underneath before you start.

Squirrels will be busy burying stores of nuts and seed across the site — you may well find a stray potato or bulb dug up as a result.



OCTOBER WILDLIFE WATCH

♥ NATURE NOTE:

Leave seed heads and a pile of leaves in an untidy corner rather than clearing everything away. It's one of the simplest, lowest-effort things any plot holder can do for overwintering wildlife, and costs you nothing but a tidy conscience.

FROM PLOT TO PLATE

END-OF-SEASON TOMATO, BEAN & POTATO STEW



Ingredients (serves 4):

- 500g tomatoes, chopped (slightly under-ripe is fine)
- 300g runner or French beans, sliced
- 400g new or salad potatoes, halved if large
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 400ml vegetable stock
- A handful of fresh herbs (thyme or parsley)
- A handful of fresh (thyme or parsley)
- Salt and pepper

Method:

Heat the olive oil in a large pan and soften the onion and garlic for a few minutes. Add the potatoes and stock, bring to a simmer, and cook for 10 minutes. Add the tomatoes and beans, and continue to simmer gently for a further 15-20 minutes, until the potatoes are tender and the tomatoes have broken down into a rich sauce. Season well, scatter over the fresh herbs, and serve in bowls with crusty bread. A properly satisfying way to use up the last of the summer glut before the frost takes it.

Photos Reflecting Life at AWSLG Allotment

🪄 WHAT A SHOW! A DAY TO REMEMBER

If you were there, you'll already know: this year's Annual Show was something special. The turnout was wonderful — young and old, seasoned growers and complete newcomers, all wandering the hall together, admiring what the site had produced over a genuinely testing year.

There's something lovely about watching people find themselves, quite literally, in the photographs on display — a laugh of recognition on spotting their own garden bird or their own plot in someone else's wildlife shot. The photography table was a particular joy this year, filled with entries that ranged from playful to genuinely striking.



THE CHILDREN'S SECTION BROUGHT ITS USUAL MAGIC.

One moment in particular stayed with everyone who saw it: a little one, having never won anything before, bursting into tears of pure joy on discovering they'd won a prize. It's a small thing on paper, but for a child it can be the moment that plants a genuine love of growing — and everyone around them on the day felt the warmth of it too. The Apple pressing did brisk business all afternoon, with tea and cake purchased and consumed in the sunshine in equal measure. It was, from start to finish, simply a joyful day — the kind that reminds you why this Society exists in the first place.

ALREADY THINKING ABOUT NEXT YEAR?

Now is really the moment to start thinking about what you'll enter next year. Whether it's finally having a go at the photography categories, encouraging a child to enter something of their own, or simply growing one thing especially well with the Show in mind — a year goes quickly, and the best entries are rarely a last-minute decision.