



garden4me

BRINGING THE JOY OF GARDENING TO EVERYBODY

Winter gardening in your garden4me raised planter

Winter can be a challenge for gardeners with our outdoor spaces devoid of colour – however our garden4me raised planters can provide a beautiful display all year round so this is a good time to add some winter flowering plants to keep your outdoor space looking beautiful during the darker days.

Thankfully our planters have a double-walled construction to keep soil warm so roots are protected – so you can keep spirits raised by planting a great winter display – and if it's positioned by the door then it will greet you and your visitors on even the coldest day.

With the passing of the Winter Solstice on December 21st the days have started to get longer, you may not notice this yourself but your plants will. From this point on the plants in the garden will try to increase their growth rate in proportion to the amount of light they receive.

And as we move through February we do start to see some chinks of sunshine and the days becoming just that bit longer – the garden seems to slowly start coming to life again as plants start to increase their growth rate. Spring is definitely around the corner!

Handy seasonal tips

There are many plants and shrubs suitable for your garden4me raised planter that are hardy and will look good for weeks on end. The benefit of cooler weather is that blooms last longer (if sheltered from wind and rain) and so a little goes a long way. On a bright day, leaves fringed with frost, even simple evergreens such as bay, laurel, viburnum and holly are transformed into objects of great beauty.

Some more of our favourite plants for this time of year include skimmia, violas, ivies, Christmas rose, winter flowering heathers, ornamental cabbage and grasses. Ornamental grasses and more structured plants like hardy yuccas, can give shape and add height while pretty, trailing ivies will soften the edges of your container. Add Heucheras for spots of colour and depth.

If you're planting cyclamen, violas and other winter bedding, avoid burying the plants too deeply otherwise they might rot.

Don't forget that structure and garden ornaments can play a key part in your winter display – especially now when there's less foliage about. At your local garden centre you'll find a variety of ornamental objects sculptures that can add interest to your container - and for extra brightness you can also add some outdoor lights.



Plant heathers for a colourful winter display. Heathers are easy to grow, manageable and long-flowering, and are the ideal low-maintenance plant. Winter-flowering heathers have another great attribute - they are bee-friendly – they are a lifeline for bumblebees and solitary bees, which do not store food and emerge in mild spells in winter and early spring. Don't forget heathers need ericaceous compost – if you're using our growing pockets then it's easy to make sure you have the right compost for the right plant.

You can find ornamental kale and cabbages in the garden centres now with beautiful shades from deep purple to white, brilliant greens, mauves and pink. They make a wonderful addition to your raised planter.



For a Christmas display then plant up red and white cyclamens and mix with pretty winter-flowering pansies and violas for colour and for texture, evergreen ferns.

A winter display has to rely on foliage rather than flowers so opt for a theme – if your planter is in the shade then golden foliage will add extra radiance to a dark corner – and looks very effective with blue and yellow flowers. Silver variegation is cooler in tone but blends beautifully with pinks and purples. And green foliage is perfect with white flowers and red berries for a festive display.

Bulbs can also be planted as a base layer – they won't appear till spring but will be worth the wait and give you a lovely display.

Remove faded flowers from winter pansies and violas. This will encourage more flowers during spring and prevent them going to seed. Early flowering primulas should be deadheaded regularly to encourage fresh flowers.

Even though it's winter, plants still need to be watered – especially if you've planted Spring bulbs - so check the reservoir in your planter. The double-walled construction will stop the water from freezing during periods of frost.

Vegetables

Sow cut-and-come-again salads and hardy herbs – you can sow and then pick directly from these – so if your planter is outside your kitchen door then you'll have an ongoing supply to hand whenever you need it.

You can start growing potatoes in your raised planter for a very early crop – Charlotte are a good variety for this. They should be covered though – and we do supply a polytunnel kit which you can find on our website.

If you've been growing sprouts, kale, leeks and parsnips then these will be ready in time for Christmas lunch – and rosemary, sage and thyme can be cut too to add to the festive food.

