

GLOSSARY

Blanching

Excluding light from growth to produce tender, usually less bitter and pale coloured growth, e.g. celery.

Bolting

To produce flowers prematurely, usually leafy crops; resistant varieties available.

Bud

Immature/condensed shoots containing leaves or flowers ready to grow.

Bulb

Compressed leaves acting as a storage organ for a developing plant, e.g. onion.

Cane (fruit context)

Fruiting stem, e.g. raspberry.

Cloche

Portable structure for protecting plants from cold weather, advancing growth and warming up the soil. Useful for early and late season sowing. Made from glass or plastic covering over a framework or steel hoop tunnel.

Compost

Material from decomposed organic materials, eg plant remains. Used for potting and improving soil

Earthing up

Pulling soil around the base of the plants and stems to encourage rooting, blanch stems and prevent wind-rock (destabilisation of roots).

Edible flower

Edible blossom of certain plants (always check).

Established

When plants have grown roots and top growth after sowing/transplanting and are less dependent.

Fruit

Mature ovary of a plant, e.g. apples with seeds, but classification often reflects longstanding associations, e.g. rhubarb is a vegetable known as a fruit; pumpkin is a fruit known as a vegetable.

Feeding

Supplying plant nutrients for healthy and vigorous growth, e.g. adding compost. Can also add 'concentrated' fertilisers, e.g. organic tomato feed.

Forcing

Inducing plant growth by changing growing conditions, e.g. rhubarb under pots for early stems and Witloof chicory indoors for early leaves.

Fruiting stems

Growth that bears fruits, eg blackberry plants fruit on one-year-old wood. This is pruned to soil level after fruiting in its second year. Meanwhile, the plant produces new one-year-wood that fruits the year afterwards, and so on.

Greenhouse/polytunnel

Protected growing environment for plants. Greenhouses have glass or plastic glazing over a framework; polytunnels have plastic sheet covering over metal hoops.

Green manure

Plants grown to improve soil, add nutrients and suppress weeds. They are cut down and dug into soil before the space is needed for a crop.

Harden off

Acclimatising plants to a new growing environment, e.g. moving plants from a greenhouse to a sheltered place outdoors during the day and returning at night. Repeat for two weeks, gradually leaving plants outside all the time, e.g. before planting.

Head

Dense group of flowers (e.g. cauliflower) or inner compact leaves (e.g. cabbage). Latter also known as 'hearts'.

Herb

Plants grown for their medicinal, culinary and/or aromatic qualities.

Horticultural fleece

Light fabric for protecting plants against frost and some pests by providing a physical barrier. Available in different grades.

Humidity

Amount of water vapour in the air. Important to increase for some crops by spraying water over the floor which then evaporates, e.g. for tomatoes growing in a greenhouse or polytunnel.

Long term crop/perennial

Plants that live for more than three years, e.g. asparagus, fruit bushes, etc.

Mulching

Laying material over the soil surface to conserve moisture, suppress weeds and insulate roots, e.g. 2-5cm of compost or well-rotted manure around fruit trees, vegetables, etc.

Pinching out

Removing the growing tip of a plant shoot, i.e. where new leaves are produced. Useful for stopping growth, removing pest populations and prompting bushy growth with multiple stems.

Planting/transplanting

Putting something in the soil, eg tuber, fruit bush. Includes moving plants from one location to another, usually where they can grow to maturity, eg from a pot or seedbed into the soil or container.

Pot on/re-pot

Moving plants into larger pots or trays to give them more space to continue growing.

Pruning

Cutting off or shortening unwanted growth, e.g. removing diseased material, reducing length of side shoots and encouraging fruiting stems/canes.

Rootstock

Plant used to supply roots for chosen variety, e.g. 'Golden Delicious' on 'M26'.

Row

Lines in the soil for sowing seeds or transplanting. Seeds are sown in narrow channels at the right depth for the seed, called a 'drill'.

Sets

Small bulbs planted for an earlier crop, /e.g. shallot.

Seedbed

Area of soil for sowing seed. After thinning in situ, young plants are transplanted at final spacing, e.g. leeks.

Side shoot

Growth arising from a plant stem. Also known as 'laterals'.

Sowing

Planting seed in a pot or row and giving it the right conditions to germinate (start growing).

Spur (fruit context)

A short stem that flowers and produces fruit, e.g. on apple trees.

Taking cuttings

Removing pieces of plant to use for increasing numbers, e.g. stems

Thinning

Removing crowded seedlings to give room for remainder to grow on. In rows, thin alternate plants in stages until final spacing. In pots, remove weakest seedlings.

Tuber

Swollen underground food storage organ, e.g. potato.

Vegetable

Edible plant part that isn't the fruit, i.e. 'vegetative'/non-flowering, e.g. roots like carrots, stems like celery.

Weeding

Removing plants growing where you don't want them and that can otherwise take nutrients, water, space and light from crops, reducing harvests.