



Preparing the greenhouse for autumn and winter

Before you begin moving plants to safety for the colder months it pays to give your greenhouse a thorough clean. You really need a good day for the task, ideally in dry, calm weather. If you have any delicate plants inside then make sure you remove them to a sheltered area while the job is in hand. I tend to brush, or sometimes vacuum, to remove all the debris. Next up you need to have a go at cleaning the structural parts with disinfectant or detergent (hot solutions are often best but consult manufacturers' directions for use). You could use garden disinfectants or a specialist greenhouse cleaner. Make sure you wash the glazing material inside and out as well, but for plastic materials, test on a small inconspicuous area first to be sure the cleaning material does not damage the surface. If you have used shade paint through the summer, then that needs to be scrubbed off too. It can be difficult to ease out dirt trapped between the panes but try using a flexible scraper such as a plastic plant label to get in the grooves. Check the space for broken parts such as vent controllers and draught excluders as well.

If you propagate your own plants, then pay special attention to those areas and the equipment you use as young plants are especially vulnerable to diseases. Once complete you can restock the greenhouse for the oncoming colder months. I mostly use mine for storage of plants that don't like the cold, as mine is heated too.

Read more of Geoff's garden at www.driftwoodbysea.co.uk

