

The Gala Garden

Following the cold wintery conditions of the past couple of months, it's great to start sensing Spring in the air! February can be a tough month too weatherwise but the days are lengthening, bulbs are beginning to emerge and it's fun to plan what to grow in the coming season.

If you're interested in eating home-grown this year, lettuce, spinach, tomatoes, calabrese and broad beans can all be sown indoors now. A heated propagator is ideal for this but seeds can mostly be started off in a warm, dark place such as an airing cupboard provided you have a sunny windowsill to grow them on as soon as they sprout. Adequate light is very important to avoid weak, spindly specimens! You will need seed trays & clear lids (or plastic bags) labels and a basic sprayer for watering. It's too early to sow any seeds outdoors and bear in mind that we might still have frost in May so it's worth following guidelines on what's best to grow when. There will still be time to sow other seeds in March and April so don't worry if you're not ready yet !

If you're starting off a new vegetable bed in the garden, potatoes are a good crop to start with and they can be 'chitted' now. Placing your seed potatoes in a frost free place with indirect light so that they produce short strong shoots will get them away to a faster start when they're planted out.

Out in the garden, firm the soil around plants that's lifted with the frost. Clear away debris from the top of plants to avoid slug damage and rot. Fork out any perennial weeds, including the roots. Dig trenches in preparation for your potatoes and line with manure. If you intend growing carrots, dig the soil well and remove stones which will cause them to 'fork' and add sand to heavy clay soil. Fertiliser can now be added to the soil to ensure that there is enough NPK (Nitrogen, Phosphorus & Potassium) ~ essential ingredients for healthy growth which can be sourced organically from chicken manure or seaweed extract. Cloches, fleece or black polythene can also be put in place to warm the soil prior to planting.

Deciduous trees are still in their dormant period so can safely planted out now. This is an ideal time for installing a new hedge, fruit trees, raspberry canes, rhubarb or rose bushes.

If you'd like help with designing or planting your garden, even if it's just a bed or a border, please come and see us at the nursery. Just check the website or phone to see when we're open at this time of year.

Happy planning & preparing !

Holly

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