

The Gala Garden

Summer is here and this is a great time to enjoy the garden ! If you're making the most of being at home, July and August are the best months for the colour and scent of annuals ~ you can still buy dahlias, chrysanthemums, rudbeckias and others to plant out in your beds or pots. They will reward you with an abundance of flowers in the weeks to come. Keep cutting your sweet peas and deadhead your roses to encourage further flowering, remembering to feed your plants on a regular basis at this time, following the product guidelines. Maxicrop seaweed extract works wonders if you prefer a natural product. Shrubs such as buddleia (butterfly bush), escallonia, hebe and hydrangea are coming into flower. Many shrubs are evergreen and can be selected for winter colour. As for herbaceous perennials, these are a wonderful range of plants which give great value for money. A treasure trove of different leaf forms, colours, sizes and flowers can be planted at any time between spring and autumn as long as they can be kept watered in very dry weather until their roots establish. You can check at the nursery which ones would best suit your situation. They will disappear in winter to reappear next year as if by magic !

On the vegetable front, you could be eating your own early potatoes, peas, broad beans, lettuces, radishes etc and, if you didn't manage much home-growing, there's still time to sow salad veg, especially the hardier oriental varieties. Winter or spring veg can be planted out now, such as January King cabbage, broccoli and late leeks. You can also grow tomatoes outdoors on the patio. These can be sourced in larger pots if you didn't raise your own.

If you're going on holiday and don't want your garden to suffer, check whether a friend or neighbour can water any newly established or potted plants. Applying a mulch around (not touching) the plants will keep the soil moist. This can be anything from compost, grass cuttings or chipped bark to newspaper covered with soil. Taking time to deadhead and feed will also conserve your plants' energy for a couple of weeks. If you're concerned about your houseplants, you could leave them in shallow water in the bath for about a week or better still set up a simple watering system such as a reservoir, valve & large tray which would release water as and when the plants required it over a 2-3 week period. This could also be used later for growing herbs, salad leaves, tomatoes or whatever else, as an elementary hydroponic system and nutrients could be added to the water reservoir, making growth very efficient.

HAVE A WONDERFUL SUMMER !

*Holly
Lowood Nursery*