

# The Gala Garden

June – already! At the moment my garden is a riot of colour from the rhododendrons. Previously I had never liked them – their leaves are so straggly for my liking but now I am a huge fan. They are there all year round and at the moment they are stunning with large blooms full of colour. Most of mine are red but I do have a special variety that is white ( Sappho), I planted it next to a red Acer that has just come in to leaf . The contrast is amazing . If you see any azaleas or rhododendrons in the shops now you may get them a bit cheaper if they are just finishing flowering, they are worth it for next winter.

My pride and joy at the moment though is my one (!) Himalayan Blue Poppy. This has taken me 10 years. This year I managed to get 100 plus seedling plants to survive over the winter – but the slugs have already had half since I put them out. It is well worthwhile on a rainy day just popping out for a few minutes and 'hand picking' the pests!

The daffs are now going over so it's time to tidy up and fill in with summer bedding. Don't worry if you didn't buy them in May, you would have had to look after them for a few weeks anyway. Go and get them this month as soon as you can. Try and buy say 6 plants in a tray and pick the biggest. If you buy them in say 18's they tend to be smaller and most of the summer will be gone before they will be big enough to see them!

Plant them in groups together especially if they are the same colour. I used to buy 20 and dot them about - it looked rubbish!!! Now I put them in clumps where I can, it's hard but sometimes you may have to move things about to get it to look right. Plant up to the base of the first leaves, if you can buy some general compost to give them a bit of good soil around them.

Which bedding plants than – again try Nasturtiums for spreading – unless your garden is small, they can get everywhere. Geraniums are good for colour and have several flower heads. I love pansies – if you leave the heads on after flowering you can save seed for next year. African Daisy – wonderfully colourful and supposedly will come back next year. Begonias – I love these, lovely colours and you can get trailing versions for hanging baskets as well. Bizzy Lizzies – not my favourite – they seem a bit slimy to me, but they do last. Petunias - good variety of colour. There are loads more but I can't fit them all on this page – pop down to the garden centre and see for yourself, remember at LOWOOD - Holly and Barry will also be able to give you loads of help and advice.

*Debbie*

*x*