



Gardening News for Hopeman BALL Group

Introduction

Can you believe it is time to be cutting back some plants and removing those annuals which have now finished flowering? I keep my flowers and vegetables until the very last minute because I hate to remove anything with flower or even the sign of a bud. My Mange Tout have provided many meals and are now turning yellow but there are still some green shoots. Do I remove them or keep them a little while longer? What a quandary.

One reason for removing plants is to put more in and it will not be long until its planting time for bulbs. Once I have removed the Mange Tout, which I hope will have enriched the soil with their nitrogen fixing bacteria, I will be planting Daffodils and Tulips. At this point I may well add another bag of compost to my raised bed to make sure that the soil is enriched for the bulbs but I will come back to this in a later issue.

I continue to dead-head every plant with dead flowers or, if they escape my hands or scissors, seed heads. My husband reckons if he stands still too long, I may dead-head him. I think this is a sign that I may have become obsessive. I even want to dead-head plants in other gardens since I know plants will continue to flower for longer. After their first flourish, I dead-headed my Sweet peas until there were hardly any flowers left but the following week, they had blossomed again and the show was better than the first one. I know people say that you should continue to take cut flowers from Sweet peas but I prefer to leave them on their plants and dead-head them. The results are just the same.

When I was a young child, my mother would always cook me a special meal of broad beans and bacon in a white sauce. This always happened as soon as fresh broad beans became available. I have no idea of the origins of this meal but it is one I have continued to cook with my own broad beans. Tinned or frozen ones have never been used since only fresh will do. However, this year my broad bean plants did not do very well and I didn't have enough for my special meal.



As you know, it needs a lot of pods to produce a few beans. We did manage to have them as a side vegetable but it's not the same and hopefully I will be more successful next year. I will just have to wait.

The sprouting broccoli has also been limited but we have still managed two meals from it. I am going to leave it in over the winter to see if I get another crop in the spring.

My potatoes, in my raised beds and bags have been very abundant and quite a good size. They have however taken up a lot of room and I will go with fewer plants next year. My potato plants have even



Gardening News for Hopeman BALL Group

produced fruit this year which has happened before but is not a regular occurrence.



You don't really want them to produce fruit because this takes energy from your plant that is needed for the potato tubers.

A warning as well. These fruits are poisonous. They look like tomatoes because potatoes belong to the same family but they must not be eaten. The family is called solonacea, and also contains the nightshades.

It is time to start cutting back various fruit bushes but before you do make sure that you know which part of the stem will bear next year's fruit. The currant bushes produce their fruits on the old wood and I have already cut back my blackcurrant bush. The rule of thumb is to cut back the branches to about 1/3 of their length but make sure that you don't cut too far back or you will reduce your crop. Always cut out any dead branches or ones that look diseased in any way. I only had 21 Blueberries on my plant this year and I ate them as they ripened. Blueberries produce berries on new stems so cut the new grow back very sparingly.



I have continued to have problems with my Zinnia. I accidentally broke a stem with a bud. But look what happened. I placed it in a vase with water and it has grown roots. Although it is an annual, I am going to plant it in a pot and see what happens. I do think they are worth growing (see picture below) and next year I will try again.



only recently flowered.



Another of my favourites is my late flowering Lily. This is pure white and although it produces growth and leaves all summer, it has



A word of warning though, the pollen from lilies is poisonous to cats. The pollen is on the anthers (the male parts of the plants) which surround the pistil (the female part of the plant) in the middle of the anthers. The pollen also stains clothes if you accidentally brush past the flower.

Please keep the photos coming.