



Gardening News for Hopeman BALL Group

Introduction

It is very much the case of keeping everything going at the moment. With sandy soil and dry weather I have been watering at least once everyday outside and the greenhouse has needed watering twice a day most days. I never thought I would want to see rain but garden plants do seem to enjoy it much more than the water I give them. I have however overwatered some of my geraniums and a few of the cuttings have died off. However, some of the cuttings you saw me planting in an earlier Gardening News have grown to maturity and are now flowering. The main plants from which I took the cuttings have also recovered and I now am back to having an over sufficiency of plants in the greenhouse.

I spend a considerable amount of time removing yellowing leaves from my plants. If you look up the cause of this you will see that the books suggest that you are over watering, under watering, giving too little feed or over feeding. I have tried everything and still the leaves turn yellow. There is also a lot of dead heading to be done. Again, this applies to the greenhouse and the garden. Some plants in the garden, which have finished flowering, now require cutting down. I have already cut off the stems of the Foxgloves and saved a few of the seed pods ready for planting for next year. These plants will come again so there is no need to remove them. My Wigella has also finished flowering but I am not cutting it back until the Perpetual Pea, which is growing through it, has also finished flowering. I find that Lathyrus, which is its other name, is unwieldy and very difficult to stake but it will grow through other plants which support it successfully, something like Clematis.

Some of my most favourite plants are orchids, so much so that I even had them in my wedding bouquet. Over the years many people have given me gifts of these plants and as you well know now, I cant let anything die. I have 7 orchid plants at the last count, 5 in my bathroom and 4 elsewhere. They really like the steamy bathroom and bloom every year.



This orchid, which is flowering in my bathroom at the present time is a 'daughter' of the 'mother' plant. It is not a cutting, but the new plant has grown and is still attached to the 'mother' plant. This same plant has produced two such 'daughters'. Once it has finished flowering, I will remove it and pot it up. None of my other orchids have ever done this and I am not sure why this has happened with this plant.

I have been lucky enough to see orchids in their truly wild habitat in South America. In one case a man had grown his own 7 acre jungle and the miniature orchids were growing from the trees. The flowers were so tiny in some cases that they had to be viewed



Gardening News for Hopeman BALL Group

through a hand lens. One tip I learned was to only cut the old stems off if they turn brown. The green stems will often flower again.



Do you remember my disaster with Zinnias? I thought you might like to see one of the hundred or so I pricked out months ago. What a pity I only have five plants since I am sure they would have made a beautiful display. I will try again next year and be sure to read the instructions before I throw away the seed packet.

We have been eating home grown potatoes this week and we even ate the carrots which I had grown in pots. The problem is that the carrots were not the normal shape, some had two legs and some had three!



I have named them 'lumpy carrots'. They were edible but I must learn to do better. I suspect my compost was not sandy enough. At least they didn't get carrot fly.

My potatoes in bags have been much more successful though. So far I have only lifted the earlies and I still have the main crop to go. I plan to leave one bag until Christmas, something I have done before, and hope that it doesn't get frosted.



Here you can see the bag and its contents from which we have had 4 meals. I still have one early bag to empty.

My tomatoes, which were given to me as seeds are doing well. The problem is that I don't know what kind of tomatoes they are but I suspect they may be cherry tomatoes since they are not very big. However I do have 60, yes 60 fruits on one plant. I have supported the heavy branches by tying them with string to connectors in the greenhouse structure. I look everyday to see if there is any sign of them turning red.

There is not room for another photo but I found a bee feeding on a blackcurrant when I was picking them the other day. I very nearly picked the bee! The good news is that I now have 6 jars of blackcurrant jelly and the bee lived to feed another day.