



Gardening News for Hopeman BALL Group

Introduction

Today I will have an egg and cress sandwich, cress courtesy of Marks and Spencer. I think there is probably enough cress for a finger sandwich if that but I am determined to use it. All my seven pots have now germinated. I had two pots of lettuce seeds and I have now planted these pots together into a bigger pot to see what happens. I cut my first lettuce this week for a salad and I have more ready for another day.



I have done a succession of lettuce plantings so that I can cut them over a number of weeks. I leave them in trays, cut enough leaves for a salad and let them grow on again. The number of snails in my garden mean that lettuce planted out never survives and I really don't like slug pellets although I have been known to used them in desperation. I don't mind sharing my plants with the animals but I do object when they take everything.

I had a few photos this week good to see what other people plant. I wonder if we can help



from Carol and Margaret. It is really are doing. Carol has a mystery her to name it?



Margaret is obviously very good at growing orchids amongst other things. She says this "is an orchid that is now in its seventh year, and so far there are 20 buds on it. Twelve flowers have already opened" Its great to see such a beautiful plant. Carol sent me a lovely photo of her beautiful tulips which came from.....?

Yes, Amsterdam! Lets all sing



together.

These were bought 5 years ago and out of the pot every year once the yellow. They are stored in a bag in a September they are replanted in a pot says that they are better than any ever bought in this country.

because they are lifted leaves have turned dry shed. The following in new compost. Carol

How many of you have killed plants from over watering? We are sometimes too kind to plants especially in pots. When moving plants like tomatoes into large pots it is important to leave enough watering space at the top of the pots. The bigger the plant and pot, the more watering space is required. Leave at least one (2.5cm) to two inches (5cm) of space from the compost to the top of the pot. When you water make sure that the plant gets a good drink



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because just a sprinkling of water is not enough. The compost should feel dry to touch, **not very dry**, before you water.

Some plants like peace lilies require and tolerate a lot of water. I found this last year when I removed one from where it was pot bound, separated it and put the separated bits into new compost in a variety of pots. One of the cuttings rewarded me with a host of flowers. It was in the shade in the house and I watered it every day. Other plants like geraniums would die if you did this. They should only be watered if the compost they are in feels dry and they like the sun. Orchids do not like to dry out but I find that my orchids in the bathroom require just one good watering each week. Don't let any plants get 'soggy bottoms'. Unless they are plants normally found in nature in boggy conditions, plants, a bit like pies, fall apart if their bottoms are soggy.

This week we have had quite a few frosts even though we have had wonderful sunny days, the nights have been cold and sensitive plants do not like the cold. Bedding plants should not be outside all night yet. It is good to put them out during the day for hardening off but they need to go back inside at night. I have been doing this with a few varieties of seedlings this week and although it is a repetitive task, the plants will reward you in the long run.

I did plant out my sweet peas and mangetout yesterday which I had started in the greenhouse. I had hardened these off and then left them outside in their pots for a few nights before planting. Both of these varieties of plants are quite hardy and can be planted directly into the ground from seed. I used the mangetout plants I had grown in the greenhouse to supplement the ones I have grown outside since there were quite a few spaces where the seeds had not germinated.



This is my structure I have built to support my sweet peas. It is difficult to see but it consists of some twisted metal uprights tied together at the top with plastic coated wire. I have then tied a close mesh netting around the uprights with garden string. It was not easy to plant the sweet peas after I had built the structure and perhaps I should have done the planting first but I got there in the end. Only 16 of my sweet peas germinated but this is enough for this size of pot. I will have feed them as the season progresses because the compost is only multipurpose and only contains enough plant food for four weeks. Sweet peas are greedy plants and do like plenty of water and food (just like me at the present time). Gardens are pretty dry at the moment and with the sandy soil base that most of us have, watering has been necessary for the past week. Let me know how your garden is growing. Photos please.