



Gardening News for Hopeman BALL Group

Introduction

This week I received a gift of new staging for my greenhouse and after two days of moving out and moving back in, including shortening one of the benches, the greenhouse now looks organized. I have a top shelf on which to display my geraniums which are all beginning to flower and a waist high bench for my seedlings and cuttings. The old stool and polystyrene boxes I was managing with have now been moved out and stored just in case I need them again!



I still have too many plants and have been leaving them on the wall at the top of the garden for people to take away. I will soon be giving away Cosmos and Zinnia when they have grown a little more. The geraniums that are in flower are older plants and soon some of these will have to go too. I am a bit obsessive about keeping everything growing but space is now at a premium and some plants

will have to find new homes.

I have quite a lot of favourite plants, including ones which have been given to me and others which I have seen and wanted to grow. One of these is a Trillium that has its petals, sepals and leaves arranged in 3s. This has survived in a shady place for the last 8 years or so and I am always delighted when it appears again for another year. More recently I bought miniature Aquilegia and as these, like the Trillium are herbaceous plants, it's always a surprise when they reappear. It is difficult to decide where to place new plants in the garden before the herbaceous plants have come through since all of their leaves die back over winter. I always mean to take photos of where everything is but I have good intentions which don't always come to fruition.



Trillium like a shady place and their leaves can be spotted or mottled.



Some of my more precious plants, e.g. Aquilegia, I keep in containers since that means I know where they are.

A Magnolia plant which I bought 4 or 5 years ago has never flowered and I had forgotten

about it. Each year it has had new leaves but no flowers and I had actually forgotten what it was but hadn't removed it. This year it has rewarded me and so far has buds. I am really not sure if I have planted it in the right place. Perhaps I should get out my gardening books, if in doubt, check the information available. I tend to carry on regardless until I become unstuck.



Gardening News for Hopeman BALL Group

I can hardly believe it but my daughter arrived with compost today and my Magnolia flowered.



For those of you who like to identify plants there is an app called Picture This which identifies a plant and places a photo of it with your photo collection. However it does cost after 7 days and I haven't checked out other possibilities. This was identified as Star Magnolia, *Magnolia stellata* and it seems I should have planted it in a peaty soil. What do I have? Sand!! I suspected as much and I ordered a bag of ericaceous

compost just last week. It is still to come.

I have been planting out broad beans that I started in the greenhouse and hoeing up the early potatoes, or in my case, trowelling them up since they are in raised beds. The ones in bags are also growing but I had run out of compost to cover them. Now it has arrived, the new shoots are covered. The few main crop potatoes I planted have also come through but I don't need hoe them yet since they are too small.

Ever since I first encountered Cosmos in my Godmother's garden, I have continued to grow them every year from seed. I have found them very easy to grow and one year when I didn't remove them before they seeded, they self seeded and I had a magnificent display the following year. That was one of my lazy years. They really do like the sun though so do place them in a south or west facing position in your garden.

It is always good to give away produce to friends and neighbours. I used to have a very large Bramley's Seedling tree in my last garden and all the neighbours in the street were well supplied. This, I have found, also works in the reverse direction. This year I have been given a cucumber plant, a pepper plant, two chillis, Zinnias and Petunias in addition to the Marks and Spencer pots I talked about in an earlier Gardening News. Just today we ate lettuce and radishes from these pots and the carrots, all 6 of them, are very small but all in their own pots. Only 4 forget-me-knots germinated and I am taking great care of them. I recently received 4 more pots from the same friend. These pots I must say, are quite a challenge. Please let me know how yours are growing so that I can share your results with the rest of the readers.

In an earlier edition of this News, I told you about the tomato seeds that I had been given. All 4 of them that germinated are now in small pots and growing well but are not yet ready for their large pots. These are the large conventional type of tomatoes and will need large pots, which I prefer to growbags. I like to grow them on in a compost which contains more nutrients than the multipurpose variety and there are many types of these on the market. An easier variety of tomato to grow is the miniature one. They come in hanging varieties and can be placed in a hanging basket or pot. One plant per basket is quite sufficient as you will soon find out. Happy Gardening.