



## Gardening News for Hopeman BALL Group

### Introduction

My cousin was an amazing gardener and over the years has given me many plants including my



Helibores which are the first flowers to give a beautiful display even in the winter months. I have both white and red ones which have self seeded over the years and I can see little seedlings growing around the parent plants. Some of these seedlings I am going to dig up and plant in pots to grow on.

This is the same cousin who grew on the Balmoral geranium from a cutting, a number of which are now flowering in my greenhouse.

However, some are quite old and this week I decided I would plant them on to bigger pots. You can see how woody this one is. Apparently this is normal for this type of geranium. Prepare your new pot first by measuring both pots together to see if the plant will fit into the new pot.



Place some crocks or grit in the bottom of the new pot and add some compost. Not too much, remember you don't want to overfill the new pot. Carefully remove the plant by turning the plant and pot upside down and gently tapping the edge of the pot. The plant should come out easily. At this point I usually remove some of the old compost. Place the plant in the new pot and carefully fill compost around the plant. Firm the compost down. Brush off excess compost and water the plant well.

Most of my geraniums are now beginning to flower but it is still much too cold to put them outside. I will be taking more cuttings to keep refreshing what I have and I will also be giving some away to make some space.



They really do look colourful when they are displayed together. I know that Trish has grown some from seed and I am looking forward to photographs of them flowering. It is also good to see that Trish is experimenting. She left a geranium outside over the winter to see what happened and it is now flowering.

A sheltered spot and a mild winter really helps. She has also grown pansies and marigolds from seed and is growing a cucumber plant she was given by Barbara. The cucumber plant I was given is not doing so well and I have tried changing the compost to see if that works.

A number of weeks ago, Carol sent me a photo of a very pretty plant but neither of us could name it. With my new App I now have found its name which is Flaming Katy or Widow's Thrill and is a variety of the Kalanchoe. I prefer Flaming Katy myself. This plant can have red or white flowers, with the red being



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more common. I am having a lot of fun with this App but I know it doesn't always gets things right. This morning it gave me three different names for three different pictures of the same plant and I am still no wiser.

I think I have killed most of the Zinnias that I pricked out and after a bit of research I think I know why. I was thinking that they may have been half hardy annuals which need to be kept inside until about June 1<sup>st</sup> but on checking they are annuals which should not be planted until the frosts are past. Mine have been out for a while and they clearly didn't enjoy the recent cold weather. There have been many early morning frosts which have cleared quickly in the sun but still managed to damage my seedlings. I do have some that have survived but they are still quite small and are not putting on much growth.

My Antirrhinums from last year are now flowering again.



If you have some in your garden, be sure to cut off the old growth and any seedpods. Antirrhinum are biennials so should really flower in their second year but growers have now produced varieties that flower from seed in their first year. They often produce new growth at the end of the season and this is what will produce early flowers the following year.

On my early morning walks, new flowers are beginning to emerge. It is amazing how much more I am noticing now that I am doing a similar walk each day. The gorse had been especially nice on sunny mornings and the Yellow Hammer has been camouflaged in the bushes, although his call gives him away. This morning I noticed that the sea pinks were flowering down by the harbour. Many of you will grow these successfully in your garden but it was good to see a whole bank of them growing wild. As students of farming and gardening, we were encouraged to pick and press wild flowers. Once on a seaside outing in Wales, I remember picking these beautiful pinks from the rocks. By the time we had all taken a sample, there were none left. I never did collect plants after that and I prefer to do as a postcard on my wall reminds me, "Touch Only With Your Eyes".

My raised bed that normally has flowers in is now growing beetroot. This morning, I removed the last of my tulips from this bed, which I left with their leaves on, and are now stored in a box protected from the rain. I will leave them to dry out naturally. I had already planted some beetroot in this bed but I put more in this morning and decided that there was also enough room for one purple sprouting broccoli plant. I am really struggling for space so I have planted another broccoli plant in a bag and a few in large pots. This is another experiment and I have no idea how it will turn out but I will keep you updated. I now have many broccoli plants left over, having pricked out any seed that dared to germinate, and I plan to place them on my garden wall for people to take away.



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Please let me know how your gardening is “growing”. It’s good to hear from you about your plants and gardens and your successes and failures. Photos are very welcome.