



# Gardening News for Hopeman BALL Group

## Introduction

As I have said before, I am an experimental gardener and not a purist. Some gardeners I know would cringe at what I do but most of my plants grow and I enjoy what I do. Weeds, as you will already know, are plants growing in the wrong place and I must admit I don't always remove these. About two years ago, I saw a seedling in one of my pots and since I had no idea what it was, I decided to let it grow.

It is now a fully grown plant which fills the pot and I still have no idea what it is.

I also have other plants that have decided to visit my garden or have moved themselves to other locations and I quite enjoy seeing what happens.

Do you remember the little seed pots from M&S that I talked about? Well, this week I received a reply. Carol sent the following picture. Isn't this amazing? All of them have germinated. And this was a challenge for me. I hadn't even planted mine and by now I had 7 pots since 6 had been kindly donated. I am not very good at reading instructions but this time I decided I would. Inside the pot there is a disk of dry compost and a seed mat. This is what happens.....



On the right is the disk of compost in water and on the right is what happens after a few minutes. I must admit I didn't expect it to grow so much. It was just like magic and I know that young children would find it quite amazing. My pots are all now planted with the labels that were part of the packaging and I am waiting to see what appears. I also had tomato seeds given to me and the first one germinated this week.

Do you remember my experiment about pricking out versus not pricking out?



This is what happened. Do you see any difference? We will watch and see how they both progress.



I am a bit late pruning my roses and other bushes this year but Sunday was a lovely day and I was inspired to get into the garden to do some work. You can prune roses at the end of the season but that will usually result in some die back of stems depending on the weather. I do try to disbud roses as the flowers die but I do enjoy my last roses of summer which sometimes can be into December and I rarely remove these dead heads.



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Roses are very hardy and hard to kill and pruning of any kind wont hurt them but there are a few things that will help them to look better. The first thing to do is to stand back and look at the whole plant. Remember plants will do what they want unless you control them. Think about what you would like the final plant to look like once it is pruned.

1. Begin by cutting out any dead wood. This is important because it can be diseased and can spread to the rest of the plant.



This is what I started with. The overall shape is OK but there is quite a lot of dead wood and the centre of the rose is crowded.

2. Cut out the stems in the centre to open out the plant. Use sharp secateurs and make clean cuts. Try not to leave rough edges.

3. Cut the length of each stem back by one third of its length. Make a diagonal cut on the stem just above an outward facing bud. If you cut by an inward facing bud the stems will grow in towards the

centre, giving you even more work next year.



You will see that I cut this branch out even though there is a bit of new growth. Most of it looked old and unhealthy and I decided that it had to go. I like my plants to look young and healthy and cutting out old stems is the way to go. The harder you cut a rose back, the more growth it will produce; if in doubt, cut it out. A plant's main aim is to produce seed to progress to the next generation and therefore it will try to produce flowers whatever you do. In a later issue I will talk about the Chelsea cut.

My rose looked very different when I had finished but I know it will reward me



My garden is beginning to look good especially now that the tulips are coming out. The primulas which have been in for few years also look good. But my favourites are a few primroses and some wood anemones which are so small and delicate and only open their flowers in daylight. My seeds are progressing with the mangetout now germinated along with the purple sprouting broccoli.

Next time: Questions and photos from you. We are so lucky that the weather has been good for gardening.