



Digger Dan's Monthly Garden Tips

June 2010

The Veggie Garden

This June is kicking off with the first real hints of winter – lower temperatures and more regular rainfall after a dry beautiful autumn

Winter Herb Checklist – with the household diet turning to soups and slow-cooked food make sure you have plants of thyme, rosemary and a flourishing bay tree to add some flavour to dishes. Rosemary is a particularly eye-catching stalwart of the winter garden, as it produces its beautiful blue flowers from now on.

Harvesting of leeks, parsnips, carrots and the brassicas can start now.

Lettuce varieties that you find in garden centres at this time of the year are cold tolerant varieties and together with rocket, are easily grown over winter.

Divide up large crowns of rhubarb – in a mild winter you try 'forcing' your plant by placing an upturned plastic bin over it. (Unfortunately, beautiful Victorian terracotta forcers are scarce these days).

Buy garlic and shallots: after the shortest day, when the weather (and soil temperature) has cooled right down you can plant it: Gently separate bunches into cloves and chose only the healthy ones for planting. Place garlic in holes 5cm deep with the pointed end facing upwards. Cover and layer with mulch. Garlic should be ready to harvest over the summer months.

The Fruit Trees

During the winter most dormant fruit trees benefit from a combination spray of copper and winter strength oil to ward off fungal diseases and disrupt eggs of insects. But don't forget the evergreens: if the feijoas have shed their fruit and there's little fruit on the citrus trees include them in your spraying.

The Rest of the Garden:

Soil Replenishment: Before the ground becomes soggy and too damp to work dig *Living Earth Compost* through the soil to a minimum depth of 100mm. This is setting the garden plants up for good growth when spring arrives.

Torrential rain often shows up which parts of the garden do not drain well – remedial action in winter can help deal with this – repeated applications (twice in a month) of Gypsum will break up hard soils that water doesn't penetrate easily. Once this has been done, apply compost as above. Often choosing the right plant will make that garden more successful – several NZ rushes, our kowhais and the hydrangea family usually cope well, as do ligularias and NZ ferns.

Spray *Liquid Frost Cloth* (available on-line at www.mapuacountrytrading.co.nz) onto tender plants in the frosty parts of the garden. Citrus, succulents, and the warm climate climbers are particularly vulnerable.

Roses are best planted now. Here are Digger Dan's favourite roses for specific areas in the garden:

- To wind through sparsely foliaged, deciduous trees: the purple hued charmer *Veilchenblau* or the 'pillar rose' *Moonlight*.
- Covering a fence: *Alberic Barbier* the rampant 'Wellington' rose
- Procumbent (falling over a bank or raised bed): *Partridge* or *Seafoam* (not many roses will happily do this)
- Growing up a small (1.5m or less) plant tower in a pot: Try the Flower Carpet roses – white or the original pink – they can be successfully trained in this way.
- Rose hedges: Loose, but pretty: *Cardinal Hume*, *Rosa rugosa* 'Blanc Double de Coubert
- Tall attractive shrubs in a border: *R. Rugosa* 'Fru Dagmar Hartrupp', *Felicia*, *Mutabilis* or, the more formal floribunda *Iceberg*
- Tolerant of light shade and capable of travelling a long way: *Madame Alfred Carriere*
- Beautiful against brick: the coppery tones of *Crepuscule*

The Lawn

With winter here, the growth of your lawn will begin to slow, but it is important that you still pay attention to it. Fertilise with Prolawn Garden Supreme to keep your lawn as strong and healthy as possible during this period. This will enable your lawn to compete against winter weeds and the cold and wet weather

Keep your mower blades sharp so as to avoid tearing and damage to the leaf, and keep up your regular mowing.

Planning a Revamp? Now is a fantastic time to undertake changes – raised beds, new paths or a whole new garden! It's easier to see the structure whilst the foliage has disappeared for winter....

If you're planning that project, Central Landscapes is open the entire Queen's Birthday weekend for supplies of Cemix instant concrete, Premium Mulch, Living Earth Compost or Garden Mix, a great range of pavers and much more.

Product of the Month

Premium Mulch:

This is Central's own blend of black mulch and Living Earth compost. It is 100% weed free. Not only does it suppress weeds and save water but with the compost content it also feeds the soil and plants. On top of all that it LOOKS great!

Garden Thought of the Month: *"Despite the gardener's best intentions, Nature will improvise."* Michael Garafalo

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