



Digger Dan's Monthly Garden Tips

May 2010

Children & the Winter Veggie Garden

This autumn is proving to be a very temperate one – perfect for getting out in the garden. Often children want to help, but parents don't always know what interesting crops will flourish over winter now that tomatoes, corn and melons are finished. If your children are keen, here are some things that will 'do their thing in winter' or that can at least be planted now for harvesting in spring:

- If they eat coleslaw (and a surprising number of children will) then plant out the cabbages and carrots that go into this dish. (Any mint lying around the garden can be chopped through coleslaws also).
- Last year's runners on the strawberry plants will have developed roots in the soil. Help the children lift and separate these into new individual plants for the coming season. They can fork a bit of strawberry food through the soil or potting mix first.
- Colourful Swiss Chard (Brightlights Silver Beet in the Garden Centres) is easy to grow and the stems make a great colour splash in the dead of winter – tell your girls the pink stemmed ones are the 'Barbie Chard'
- If they eat garlic bread, then bulbs of garlic will appear in the garden centres at the end of this month – but explain that you are going to wait and plant it when the soil is **really cold** – on the shortest day of the year in late June. (Planting instructions next month. DD)
- Broad Beans – not many children know what they are, but they are quite decorative and interesting to plant over winter and your children can eat the young fresh beans straight from the plants. (Don't cook them like our mums did – they'll never touch them again).

Ornamentals for Kids

- They can have a lot of fun growing a hyacinth bulb in a hyacinth jar – put some water in the bottom of the jar, but make sure it doesn't touch the bulb. The roots will grow down towards the moisture which is fun to watch. Keep the water purified by placing piece of charcoal in it.
- Good flowers over winter - polyanthus are very colourful and primula makes a great display. Winter flowering calendulas are very bright and they keep the bugs away. But children usually go for pansies with their 'smiley faces' – they'll need a sunny warm spot to do their thing over winter.

The 'Adult' Garden

- Deal with moss on paths before it becomes a safety risk – spray with Yates' Surrender.
- Don't trim roses back now – let the canes 'harden off. Apply potash around the plants.
- Weeding and mulching – doing it now makes your garden look beautiful, but gives you months of rest from the weeding! Our **Living Earth** Compost can be layered over the soil or dug through to really condition it – This is the **best** addition you can make to your soil right now – so order a home delivery or visit us and borrow a trailer to get it to your place.
- Bulbs – they all need to be planted by the end of the month, ideally.
- Now's the time for planting a camellia hedge – *Camellia sasanqua* is the species of camellia that flowers in winter and makes a beautiful hedge. Flowers too early to get petal blight I reckon....best varieties are C. sas "Setsugeka", "Gay Sue", "Plantation Pink" "Silver Dollar" "Hiryu" and "Yuletide" (the latter is slower growing).

The Lawn

With your autumn renovation done and winter just around the corner it is time to get your lawn strong and healthy before the cold weather sets in. Fertilise with Prolawn Garden Supreme to give your lawn a helping hand to battle the winter conditions. By applying Garden Supreme you will be strengthening your lawn to protect it against the cold and wet weather.

Make sure your mower has sharp blades to get the best appearance you can when grasses are under stress. Although growth starts to slow at this time of year it still pays to be vigilant and try to mow your lawn at least once a week.

Product of the Month

Metal, Scoria and Sand:

We carry a full range of basecourse, metals, scoria and sands. These are available in bulk and bags. You can pick up or we deliver. What about our free loan trailers?

Metal: Gap 7, GAP 20, GAP 40, Builders Mix, Drainage Metal

Scoria: SAP 7, 25/7, 50/14

Sand: Paving, Pumice, Sandpit, Blocklayers, Bricklayers

During the month of May all purchases of the above products puts you in the draw to WIN dinner, bed and breakfast for

TWO at Sky City Hotel courtesy of

STEVENSON

(Note: Some yards may not have all of the above products)

Garden Thought of the Month: *"Plants give us oxygen for the lungs and for the soul." Linda Solegato*

0800 TOPSOIL - www.centrallandscapes.co.nz