

Portstone

GARDEN CENTRE

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It's holiday time, when you have time to go shopping together and get the house and garden sorted out.

In the vegetable patch, the **broad beans** will have finished, so chop up the stems and dig them into the soil with a little lime and plenty of sheep pellets. The broad bean stems are full of nitrogen which will feed the next crop and the organic matter will feed the soil. Wait a week or two, then you can plant again.

It's time now to plant **brussel sprouts and leeks**. The leeks in bundles of 20 have a good head start already compared with sowing seed. The brussel sprouts, like all the brassicas, get attacked by the white butterfly caterpillar during the summer months, so it's a smart move to cover them with bird netting. Using bent over fibreglass rods is a quick and easy way of making a frame. I have covered my brassica patch this way and have virtually no caterpillar damage. Check out our blog on our website to see my brassicas! If you don't use netting, then protect your plants with a sprinkling of **Derris Dust**.

Keep on sowing seeds of **carrot, beetroot, radish, lettuce and other salad greens**. When growing root vegetables, be sure to work the soil well so it's nice and fine to the depth of the mature vegetable because if you don't and the soil is cloddy or stony, then the carrots etc. will grow distorted with kinks and forks in them which make them hard to clean or peel.

Things to plant now are **celery, silverbeet and spinach, lettuces and brassicas**. Grow salad greens in semi shade at this time of year as the full sun makes the leaves tougher and the plants go to seed quicker. Herbs like **coriander, mint, basil and**

rocket, also like some shade. If you find **coriander** a tricky herb to grow, try growing **Vietnamese mint** instead. It's much easier and tastes very similar. Plus it's very useful in Thai curry and essential in Vietnamese cooking like Noodle Salad and Rice Paper Rolls.

Powdery mildew starts to become a problem at this time of year. The best way to avoid it is to lay down a good thick **mulch** (ideally you did this in spring), and keep up a consistent moisture level, along with plenty of 'food' for the plants so they grow quickly. A **liquid feed** each week is ideal. **Plants prone to powdery mildew** are tomatoes, courgettes, pumpkins, cucumbers and silverbeet.

Maintenance is needed in the **flower garden** at the moment. Plants left to run riot can soon become overgrown, so constant nipping back of the bits that are going to seed will extend the flowering period of your plants.

Petunia's will benefit from a trim now otherwise they may be very big and straggly by the end of autumn. **Roses** need dead-heading to keep them looking good. If they are becoming bedraggled looking with pests and diseases, spray them every fortnight with **Shield** or for a friendlier approach spray with **Beat-a-Bug, Perkfection Supa** or come in we can show you other options specific to your particular problem.

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Hanging baskets may need feeding to keep them flowering. Spray the whole garden with a liquid fertilizer to keep everything healthy and growing well over the stressful summer period. The lawn needs it too. Keep the grass a little longer than in spring so the soil doesn't dry out so quickly. Pull out weeds to reduce competition for water.



If you bought a Living Christmas Tree, give it some fertilizer when you put it outside. Put a saucer under the pot so you don't have to water so often. When conifers start to die, they rarely recover so by the time you notice something is wrong, it is usually too late.

See our **BLOG** for lots of ideas and photos
www.portstone.co.nz