

Portstone

GARDEN CENTRE

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November

November is the last month of spring and we've had a lot of very cold winds this year in my opinion, so hopefully they will warm up as summer sets in.

VEGETABLE GARDEN We're unlikely to have any more frosts now, so you can start thinking about planting out frost tender plants if you haven't already; things like tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, courgettes and so on. Hopefully, you bought them a wee while ago and grew them on in a warm site so you have good size plants now to plant out. Protect them from cold or drying wind with plastic cloches, these will also keep the birds from pecking at them. Feed everything well with sheep pellets, liquid fertilizers or easy to use granular fertilizer and cover the garden with a layer of peastraw to protect the soil.

SLUGS AND SNAILS are an on going problem. Keep them under control with **Quash slug pellets** as this one is pet friendly. If you have hostas you need to be particularly vigilant or they will get eaten as they emerge. Hostas are great to plant with spring bulbs as the hosta covers the unsightly dying bulb foliage. Hostas have wonderful bold foliage that can really lighten a shady area.

POTATOES There is a pest called the potato psyllid which is spoiling crops all over the country and costing the potato growing industry millions of dollars. The potato tops may look good and healthy but when you dig your crop and find tiny wee marbles, then you know your crop has been infected by psyllid. More commonly though, the tops will be deformed, looking like they have spray damage. Once the crop is infected, there is nothing that can be done to fix it. You need to spray with **Mavrik** to PREVENT getting the psyllid.

BUXUS is the best plant to use for small hedges because it copes well with either wet or dry soils, sunny or shady sites, grows slowly so you don't have to trim it more than once a year, and it can be clipped into sharp shapes. Buxus can be bought in punnets of six or ten plants, usually 10-15cm high, or as individual large grade plants to start with a much bigger hedge right away. It always has a smart look with good colour, but you do need to feed it each year. Although buxus does flower, it is an insignificant and odd looking thing.

AZALEAS can be either deciduous or evergreen and the two are really very different and have their own unique qualities and beauty. They are small to medium sized shrubs that like an acid soil and don't take kindly to hot afternoon sun. Deciduous azaleas are known for excellent autumn colour and spring flowers, mainly in yellows and oranges, and new hybrids now include some pretty pinks. Some have heavenly fragrance as well. Evergreen azaleas are usually slightly smaller shrubs, in a wide range of pinks and reds and white, with only the occasional white one being lightly fragrant. It's a good time to choose rhododendrons too as there are plenty in flower.

HANGING BASKETS It's the time to plant them now so they are flowering beautifully for Christmas and right through the summer and autumn months. We have sooo many pretty options for making a colourful display; come in and we will help you choose something, or ask for Bjorg and she will custom plant a basket for you. You don't need to stick to planting just the top of the basket, plant round the sides as well. If using lobelia, then use the cascading variety in the top for it to spill over and hang down, but if you want it round the sides, then use the upright as it hugs the basket neatly. Fuchsias and petunias are a good option if you just want the simplicity of one plant.

Come in and see our extensive gift range