

## July Newsletter

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Not sure about you, but time seems unusually fast and furious, hence July is already here, which isn't such a bad thing, except it's the middle of winter and wet weather is setting in. Never mind, the garden is still there, and you can always find something to do.

The first task that comes to mind is of course **Roses**. Now is the best time to plant and prune Roses. Always prune on a sunny day, spray with lime sulphur solution which will help address any potential problems with fungal disease scales and mites. Alternatively spray with copper and then Enspray oil, or both. Portstone stocks the Grosafe product range that covers all areas of spraying and caring for Roses.

Cut out all the dead wood of existing Roses, and as a rule of thumb, most Roses will benefit by being cut back by 50%, which will stimulate a burst of new growth. The upper stems of a standard rose should each be pruned back to approx. 15-20cm long.

Always make sure that the uppermost bud on each stem is facing outwards – this is where new growth will sprout from.

You can cut climbing roses on average back by about a third. Just remember that roses are very forgiving of even the most unusual haircuts, so don't worry too much if you think you haven't pruned correctly.

For your new rose – find a nice sunny spot with plenty of organic matter and water regularly while it is getting established.

### Herbs

You can plant hardy winter herbs now, such as thyme, rosemary, sage and bay.

Thyme comes in a range of varieties such as lemon thyme that have a citrus taste, whereas pizza thyme packs a garlic, oregano, and onion flavour. Rosemary vary in habit rather than flavour, with the prostrate types being perfect for low tubs and growing down banks and walls. The upright versions are perfect for hedging or topiary or simply just on their own. Bay is best in a tub, unless you're after a large vigorous shrub.

And remember it is best to plant all these plants in good sized containers to give them plenty of space for the roots to develop.

### Currants

Currants are a mainstay of the home fruit garden because they are delicious, productive and low maintenance.

Bushes simply need yearly mulching and pruning, and netting at harvest time to protect from birds.

Like many berries, currants are naturally found in woodland or forest-fringe habitat, areas with rich, leafy, well mulched soil and partial shade. In fact red currants can tolerate quite a bit of shade, under a fruit tree or in a dryish shady corner of your garden. But don't get me wrong, they also enjoy full sun like black currants. White currants are colourless, a translucent form of redcurrants. They are slightly sweeter than other types.

**Blackcurrants** bear fruit on new wood. Cropping on these canes peaks in the second year, then declines, so prune out anything older than two years. The oldest wood has the darkest bark. Prune new shrubs very severely leaving only two buds above ground, when dormant. Give them lots of compost and manure. They will not have much fruit that year but it will be a bumper crop next year. After that remove one third of the oldest canes (those that have just fruited) each year to prevent overcrowding.

**Redcurrants** fruit on spurs on older wood, so don't prune them too hard. Prune out the oldest wood in winter, and cut back new growth by about a third after fruit has set, to keep the bush compact. Do the same with white currants.

## In Store

- Roses, roses and more roses. We have a great selection. Don't miss out on the one you want.
- Lilies – so easy to grow and so rewarding
- Paeonies – they look fabulous and great as cut flowers
- Asparagus – remember to choose a permanent sunny, composted site, and they don't like to be moved

## Tasks for July

- Cover your vege seedlings from frosts
- Plant new roses, and prune existing ones
- Plant summer flowering bulbs
- Cover your citrus with frost cloth
- Plant your garlic
- Brighten up your garden with some potted colour
- Breathe and smile 😊

## The little Market

- Some cool spider plants in peat pots ready to be slotted into a bigger pot
- Pots of Lily of the Valley, beautiful scented white flowers that keep for ages in a vase
- Also a few pots of Bluebells (Scilla) and some scilla white, perfect en masse or in pots
- A few small grade Meyer lemons, and as usual some bits and pieces – and that little dog...



## **July – the Fruit Trees are in**

This is the time of the year to start thinking about where to plant that fruit tree, you've always wanted, and to come in and put your name down so you don't miss out on the popular varieties.

The choice of a good site such as a warm corner or a north facing wall. Soil, a good fertile loam soil is the best for most fruit crops. However, whatever the nature of the soil, it can be improved by the addition of organic matter and fertilisers. While in some cases drainage may be necessary. Space available, nearly all home gardeners will be governed by the space available, as to what fruit they can grow. But with the introduction of dwarf varieties and bonsai bags we have many more options in for small gardens.

Fertiliser – fruit trees and vines require nutrients to thrive. The main fertiliser used in the home orchard provide the plant with nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium. Nitrogen stimulates lush, vigorous growth. Blood and bone provides nitrogen and breaks down slowly in the soil, releasing the nutrients over a long period of time. Phosphorus is important for root growth, also flower and fruit production. Potassium in the form of potash, encourages sturdier plants, better fruit colour and quality and more disease resistance.

## **Indoor plant Care in Winter**

Your house plants still need maintenance through winter. It is best to keep them on the dry side but make sure to mist the leaves for any plants that like humidity, so the leaves do not dry out, especially if you have any heating on.

Indoors plants don't normally take up food during winter but can benefit from a seaweed tonic food from our Grosafe and Tui range.

Water in once a month to keep some goodness in the soil. This year plants seem to be still growing through winter so keep checking for bugs. Bugs like aphids, scale, mealy bug and gnats seem to be thriving on indoor plants. They love the warmth and stillness, so keep checking on stems and under leaves as they can escalate quickly. Even check the soil as mealy bugs and gnat larvae can be in there. Spray to combat them, and drench the soil to rid any hiding there. Another trick for gnats is to cover the top of the pot with fine pumice so that flies cannot lay in the soil and any larvae already in the soil cannot come to the the surface as the pumice is too rough for them.

## **Giftware**

New shipment of bone china mugs from England, with a range from Anthina which has a teapot, set of three cannisters and cake stand in pretty floral pattern.

Also check out the range of melamine trays, three sizes: four patterns – very handy.

Lots of Lifestyle Pots for indoors – some with saucers and drain hole in the bottom to plant directly into, others are cover pots to place your existing potted plant into without repotting. Just make sure you do not let water build up as that will drown your treasures.

**Love your Garden**

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