

May Newsletter

May the month of the Maples and Fiery Foliage

As you are out walking and cycling around don't forget to take a moment to breath, and check out that spectacular display of autumn foliage that Mother Nature has put on for us.

And how that contrast in colour draws the eye, and you can achieve this effect in any size garden and even on small decks, give you have some pots.

Here's a selection of some of our favourite autumn shrubs and small trees;

Japanese Maples

Dog woods

Liquid Maple

Boston Ivy

Sedum

Virginia Creeper



And remember now is the time to mulch your plants with pea straw to suppress those weeds and protect plants from those cooler months ahead. The falling leaves are a great addition to your pea straw also.

Look forward to discussing your garden questions real soon.

The Vege Garden

So here we are at the end of a long hot and dry summer and a lock down level 4. So most of us could possibly have gotten to know our gardens a bit better an realized how fantastic it is to grow our own food. And just how nourishing it is for the mind and body to potter around outside, contemplating, preparing and planting and of course harvesting the last of the summer crops, to be stored or frozen or just plainly eaten as is.

It is time to gather fallen leaves and old plant material for your compost heap. You can also add chicken or horse manure also. Remember to water the heap regularly to keep the inhabitants happy. You can use compost enhancers to speed up the progress, such as hydrate lime, comfrey leaves or tea. It's a good idea to cover your heap with pea straw or any green matter from your garden after you empty your household waste. Mainly to discourage rodents or any other animals using your heap as a Lunch Bar. You can also use manure or seaweed tea to help with the homelife of the humble compost heap. To make "garden teas" usually requires a bin with a lid that you fill with water and make a brew with the above ingredients, let it sit for a while with the lid on to stop any odour leaking out, then use as needed. If it's looking real thick or strong , just dilute with water until it looks like a dark tea colour. It is also a great fertilizer for your whole garden.

May is also a good month for planning. Just a simple line drawing of where the current vege plants are and how to change them next season, will do. The basic rule in vegetable gardening is : Rotation. Try not to grow the same plant for more than 2 years in the same plot because it can lead to an imbalance in the soil-nutrient level. Also pests and diseases will steadily increase to epidemic proportions. Always get rid of any diseased leaves or plant material by burning it or place in the green bin. It is best to group vegetables according to the type. For example root crops, brassicas and salad crops should be grouped together. Permanent crops like asparagus or rhubarb can handle their own stretch of land, but need to be fed every growing season. Now is a good time to feed your asparagus bed with sheep pellets and mulch with pea straw.

Feed well, water well and provide the right condition for your veges and you should have success. You will be amazed how much you can grow in a relatively small space, if you haven't got a large garden to play in.

Think containers, raised beds and pots. Same rules apply: feed, water and protect. And we need to start thinking of frost cloth. Start covering your frost tender plants this month ie citrus; lemons, limes, oranges and any soft-leaved plants (tropical) you might have. This is also a good time to mulch your whole garden with pea straw. It helps keeping the soil warmer, helps retain moisture, is worm friendly, and protects young seedlings from the cold and wind.

Grow great Brassicas for winter harvest; Prepare your garden before planting by mixing in compost plus some blood and bone, sheep pellets or other well-rotted animal manure. Brassicas are great feeders. They produce healthy productive growth if fed regularly (little and often is best) during the growing season. Apply a liquid fertiliser every three or four weeks once they reach 10-15cm tall.

Other winter planting ; **silverbeet, perpetual spinach, onions, parsley, leeks, kale, coriander (I'd keep it in pots) and Pac Choi.**

Garlic, elephant garlic and shallots Have your beds covered with mulch, fed and weed free. You can plant these throughout the winter months.

And then there are the **Feijoas!!** What to do with them all! Eat as many fresh as you can and give away to family and friends.

Add them to a crumble with ginger and almond

Poach them and have with icecream

Turn them into jam



Strudel-infuse feijoas with flavours of cinnamon, vanilla, and sherry and wrap in butter puff pastry

Make them into chutney- with date and Indian and Asian flavours such as ginger, star anise and kaffir

Ice blocks - with the inclusion of pineapple

Freeze'em - pulp does change colour but taste great still, try squeezing a little lemon juice with it.

Love your garden