

JULY

This month so far has had its trials growing wise, what with the lack of meaningful rainfall and high temperatures, okay so we had 17mm of constant rain on Monday the 10th and into the night. This was very welcome but short lived as the warm weather and a breeze soon dried things out some what, here at Howbury Hall I am installing as I go an irrigation system mostly of low-pressure leaky pipes even in the vegetable garden whether its potatoes of carrots each row has irrigation and has enabled us to get crops and plants out of the ground and thrive. these type of irrigation are not overly expensive if looked after and put away when not in use they can last for years which spreads the cost.

Seeds to sow this month:-

Salad leaves these include mixed Lettuce, Swiss Chard with its many coloured stems, Rocket with its nutty bite, Brassicas i.e. kale (Borecole) red Russian or Nero di Toscana (Mr Fothergill's) with its long thin leaves both of these can be picked as young leaves and not forgetting mixed mustard leaves these are commonly available, also you can raid you beetroot leaves.

There is still time to sow carrots, beetroot salad onions, Dwarf French Beans- try the different coloured beans with white, yellow, purple or red and white pods (steam the beans instead of boiling to retain their colour)

You can hurry things along if you have a greenhouse and start things off in module trays, sow 4or5 seeds to a module but don't thin out when big enough to handle, plant out into large pots or veg garden close to each other to force them upwards to create more leaves then just cut what you need fresh every day. repeat sowings every three weeks for a continual supply.



The Flower Garden

The flower garden should be ticking along nicely, dead heading is essential for continued flowering and the odd bit of thinning out helps by easing some of the pressure on the plant. Certain plants can be cut back after flowering, this will encourage them to produce a second crop of flowers. In the case of hardy geraniums, you could repeat this three or four times depending on type. Nepeta (Catmint), Alchemilla (Lady's Mantle) and Aстранtia to name a few.

If you collect your own seed from your plants, don't forget to clean any excess plant material and store them in the fridge in a paper bag or envelope inside a plastic bag, this will keep them longer so you can sow them in the spring. I am generalizing here as some seed needs sowing straight away but a quick look on Google will give you the info you need.

Feeding plants is very important, there are slow release fertilisers, which are good and last the whole growing season. One type of feed that is over looked is foliar feed, they are easily available the one I use is called Maxicrop it is a seaweed extract and it helps with deficiencies and deters pests, aphids don't like the smell or taste so the experts tell me and a little goes along way. hope I have helped and not confused, enjoy your garden.