

## **Gardening tips for June**

Summer is finally here. Time to clean the patio, buy a new parasol to replace the one that collapsed last year and buy some gas for the BBQ because the gas regulator wasn't uncoupled and the bottle has leaked away. And empty that foil tray that lurks below the burners, the one that always catches fire because its full of fat.

### **The kitchen garden**

Time to plant out just about anything in the veg plot and remember to keep watering until established. Remember to rotate your crops. Crop rotation works because the pests and diseases that attack certain types of vegetables often do not attack others. By moving the crop each year, you stop soil-borne pests that are crop specific attacking the next that you plant.

### **Tomatoes**

So far this growing season, the weather hasn't looked favourable for outdoor tomatoes so perhaps it is a good year to try the blight resistant varieties or if you are fortunate enough to grow in the greenhouse. But the weather can change, by the time you are reading this it could be 35C, the start of a drought and a hosepipe ban, you can never really know with the weather.

### **The flower garden**

Now is the time to put the hanging baskets outside. There is still time to start planting; for a summer basket, try planting fuchsia, trailing or upright, pelargonium – geranium, trailing Begonia, Lobelia, Petunia, Salvia, Nicotiana, Bacopa, Calibrachoa (mini petunia) and Verbena, this last one is good for foliage as well as flowers and resistant to mildew.

Once your hanging basket has begun flowering remember to keep it maintained, not just watering and feeding but keep deadheading the old flowers to keep a succession of new flowers and to keep a tidy appearance.

However unpredictable the weather, June should be safe enough for the bedding plants if you haven't risked putting them out already. As with hanging baskets the secret to prolonging the flowering season is to dead head the old flowers. A plant flowers and sets seed and having achieved this, it will stop flowering. By removing the spent flowers, it forces the plant to flower again in order to set seed and keep on flowering. So, flower, dead head, repeat.

If you are trying to add colour to a shady part of the garden try plants that will tolerate some shade such as Impatiens, Begonia, pansy and viola, Antirrhinum, Nicotiana and Fuchsia will also tolerate partial or dappled shade.

Most other bedding plants require full sun to flower well. If you have chosen Gazania or Osteospermum for a sunny spot remember the flowers open in sunlight and close on dull days or at night so take care when dead heading.

### **Lawns**

Whatever lawn you have gone for this year whether wildlife friendly (you haven't cut the grass) or manicured (you have) try to resist the temptation to water it. Grasses have evolved to resist drought. You can help by leaving the grass longer than usual when giving it a cut, longer grass means longer roots.

For previous issues of Gardening Tips, membership details of EGRGA and to ask garden related questions please go to our website [www.gardenreg.org](http://www.gardenreg.org).

Keep gardening.

Richard Haigh  
EGRGA Communications