

Gardening tips for June

The inside of the BBQ looks like something from the film Evolution, the nylon rattan patio furniture has split, anything made from “sustainable teak” needs oiling, the patio and the greenhouse are green [sic], the veg patch full of weeds and the fence still needs replacing after the storms earlier in the year and anything likely to eat your plants such as insects, birds, slugs and snails have just noticed you have laid on a feast. It must be summer, enjoy your garden.

The veg patch

Now is the time to sow seeds directly outside. It is easy to get carried away and plant dozens of different veg but remember space is usually at a premium and restricting yourself to a few of your favourites will make gardening easier.

At the time of writing in early May, the weather has been especially dry and the soil is mostly hard and desiccated. Any planting will need close supervision regarding watering. If planting runner/French beans water the trench well before planting, you may want to line the trench with layers of newspaper to help retain moisture.

Try planting cucumbers, courgettes and squashes so they can scramble up a frame. These plants need plenty of well-rotted manure and don't let them get dry.

Brassicas Special

Don't delay planting brassicas in the veg patch. Whether you are transplanting young plants or sowing seed, make sure they are correctly positioned because they really don't like being moved.

Tomatoes

Plant tomatoes outdoors. They need warmth and sunshine, something they didn't get enough of last year hence the blight. I'm having a go at growing the blight resistant variety called Crimson Crush, I'll let you know how I get on.

The flower garden

Lift and divide over-full clumps of bulbs as leaves turn yellow. Replant in fresh soil with added compost.

Stake and tie in dahlias as they grow. Start thinking about which ones you may want to exhibit at the EGRGA Autumn Show!

Fill any gaps in your borders with bedding plants, such as salvia, begonias and pelargoniums. Water well before planting and then water them regularly, particularly in drier weather and in the days after planting. Watering in hotter months is always better done in the morning or evening, to avoid scorching plants in the heat of the day.

Put the hanging baskets up and plant all the tender bedding plants and feed with tomato fertilizer.

Strong winds at this time of year can cause quite a bit of damage to taller perennials, so it's essential to keep staking and tying them up to help prevent damage, especially with vulnerable plants such as delphiniums and peonies. Metal plant supports are ideal for use in borders and at the edge of lawns and paths, and flower rings are also great for supporting plants such as rudbeckia and chrysanthemums.

Lawns

If you didn't mow the lawn in May now is the time to get the lawn back into shape. You will have to start with a high cut again as if it was the first cut of the year and gradually reduce the height over the next few weeks. With the dry weather the lawns will soon start to look dry and change colour earlier than normal. It is tempting to reach for the sprinkler but it really doesn't need it as it will recover. If a lush green lawn is your thing the water company will love you for it.

A date for your diary, the EGRGA Summer Show will be held in Ellens Green on 2nd July. Please see the notice in this month's Rudgwick Magazine.

For membership details and to ask garden related questions please go to our website www.gardenreg.org.

Keep gardening.

Richard Haigh EGRGA Chairman