

GARDENING CALENDAR - May 2018

Give them a shake: When selecting new plants for the garden, make sure you pick a healthy specimen – a good sign to look out for is strong root growth spreading properly through the pot. Try giving the pot a swing. If the plant stays firmly in the pot it is ready for planting out. Always remember to place container-grown plant in wet soil and water regularly until the plant has established itself. Mulching with bark is a great way to keep the moisture in the ground but make sure the soil is wet before the mulch is applied.

Food for thought:

Once your plants sport new growth of about 5 – 6 cm it is time to give them a little extra help. With the British spring and summer becoming increasingly dry, it is a good idea to use a liquid feed which a plant can easily draw upon.

Promise yourself a rose garden:

Black spot is a rose's greatest enemy so spray now with a fungicide fortnightly before it is too late to control the condition. Dead heading and regular feeding in May will ensure a blooming good show in the summer.

Stake it!

Give your trees adequate support for the months ahead and look out for any that need staking with a tree tie. Trees planted in lawns should be planted in a tree pit rather than directly in to grass which will sap away moisture.

Beware of tap water:

Remember to remove all dead flowers after flowering and give shrubs a good feed to restore the natural food balance. Remember not to water lime-hating plants with tap water, use rainwater instead and apply peat 5 cm of peat around the plant to counteract the natural lime content of the soil.

Beat the brown tinge:

A familiar sight on conifers at this time of year is the typical brown tingeing of the foliage caused by drying winds. To prevent this, water the plant regularly and spray with water to keep the foliage soft. Conifers should be pruned in the early summer months but only take off the current year's growth. Feeding should be carried out late spring and mid summer and remember that, as with trees, conifers planted out in exposed areas must be staked and tied.

Keeping herbaceous plants happy:

After the initial flowering phase remove all flower heads. Taller varieties such as lupins and delphiniums should ideally be supported to allow healthy growth. Feed after flowering with a liquid feed.

General garden maintenance:

You cannot spend too much time hoeing at this time of year as weeds multiply at a terrific rate and sap vital nutrients out of the soil. Regular hoeing will also help improve the structure of the soil