

ODERINGS

The First Name In Good Gardens

Live & Grow

ISSUE 21 SPRING 2009

COMPLIMENTARY COPY



KAYE'S CORNER

TOMATOES

FOLIAGE

PETUNIAS



Cleome Mix



Petunia Storm Pink Vein



Matricaria Lemon Puff



Matricaria Snow Puff



Viola Penny Tinkerbelle



Petunia Ramblin Blue Jean



Pansy Merlot Ice



Viola Sambuca

Bedding



Portulaca Sunseeker



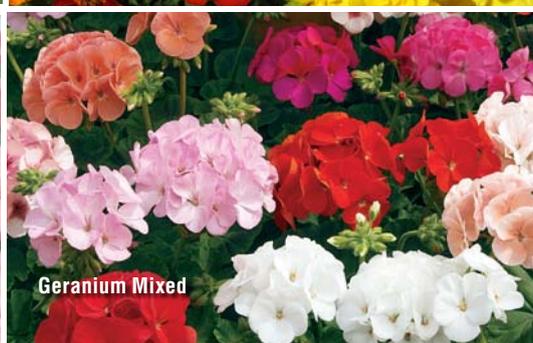
Marigold Safari Mixed



Antirrhinum Bubble Gum



Impatiens Peach Frost



Geranium Mixed



Petunia Storm Salmon

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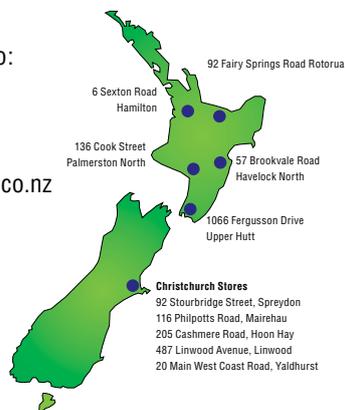
Welcome to Oderings Live & Grow Issue 21

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Email: info@oderings.co.nz



Cover Shot: Lavenders



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introducing
SEED TAPES

Welcome back everyone.

I hope you have managed to keep warm over the winter months without too many problems, and look forward to seeing lots of sunshine!

With spring here we need to start thinking about getting productive with our gardens again. With the popularity of growing your own veggies escalating, we are trying to make your life even easier!

I thought that might grab your attention!

Often when I sow seeds my hand slips, or the wind blows too strong and I end up with a very uneven sown crop! This normally means more work when the seed starts to grow because of overcrowding, the plants don't have the room to grow and you end up thinning out your crop and in some cases you have no seeds come up at all! I am sure we have all experienced this, but there is an easy solution!

Oderings are launching a selection of popular varieties that grow from a seed tape. In the seed tape seeds are evenly spaced apart, so no more thinning and no more guess work. What could be simpler? It's simply BRILLIANT!

Just prepare the veggie garden as you normally would. Using a trowel or a rake, make a groove about 1cm deep into moist soil. Place your tape flat on the bottom, then lightly cover the tape with soil, remember your tape can be cut to any length you require. Water and keep moist, spacing about 40cm between rows.

To ensure you have a constant supply of veggies, repeat every 4-5 weeks.

Oderings are launching a selection of popular varieties that grow from a seed tape. It's simply brilliant!



NEW PRODUCT DETAILS
ODERINGS SEED TAPE

The seed tapes are 4.5m long. Here are the varieties to look out for:

- Spring Onion
- Spinach
- Radish Champion
- Carrot – All Seasons & Manchester
- Red Beet Detroit

We are starting with these six top varieties, but I am sure as popularity grows we will increase our range.

The other plus is that these strips are environmentally friendly. It's got to be all good!

Let's get sowing and enjoy the fresh, crisp, healthy, fruits of our labour!



Petunia Storm Pink Vein

Petunias are amongst the most popular of all our bedding plants. They are highly fragrant, bright and vibrant and are really easy to grow once you know how.

Selecting Petunias

There are literally hundreds of different types of Petunias. Oderings alone grows over 37 varieties. They come in different colours and forms; some best suited for garden planting and others best in baskets, hangers and window boxes.

Types

Grandiflora are our most popular type. They have large flowers which are 7-10 cm wide in frilly doubles, or single flowers; some have a slight cascading habit but most are upright and mounding. Varieties such as the Storm series have thicker petals and recover better from rain.

Multiflora is more compact than grandiflora and has smaller flowers, but has many more flowers open at one time.

Milliflora are the Bella series which are the smallest flowering petunia, covering itself with petite flowers on nicely mounded plants, ideal in pots and planters.

Cascading or spreading petunias are a frost tender perennial and always put on a brilliant show

of colour every year. They have a huge colour range and are excellent cascading over banks and retaining walls, rambling over planters or in hanging baskets. These Petunias are great space invaders and excellent value for money. Try our new variety Ramblin Blue Jean; this spreader has blue denim coloured flowers that fade to silver with age.

Where to plant

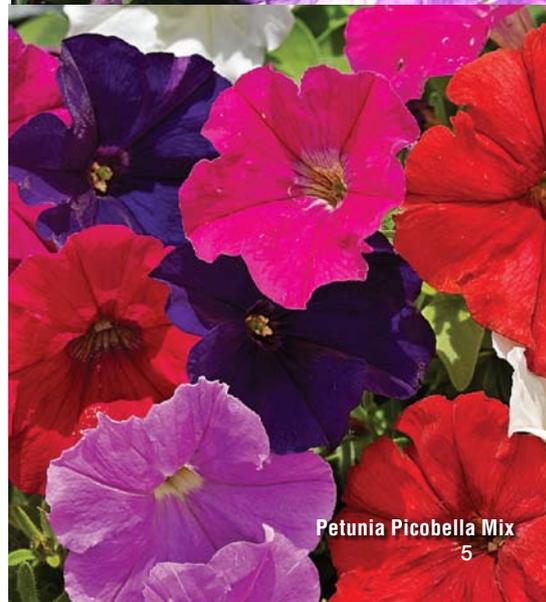
Petunias are hardy (will tolerate frost) and love a warm dry-ish sunny spot with well drained soil (essential). Incorporate compost at the time of planting into the garden and add a well balanced fertiliser like Oderings Total Replenish especially with cascading varieties as they require more food and water than other varieties.

There are two main killers of petunias

- 1 slugs and snails - slug bait is essential.
- 2 over watering - this will lead to your plants damping off. It is very important that they are kept on the dryer side but not so dry that they wilt.



Petunia Ramblin Blue Jean



Petunia Picobella Mix

Potentate



Yummy Tomatoes

With so many varieties of tomatoes to choose from how do you pick which flavour is the right one for you? At Oderings we offer over 16 varieties of tomatoes (and that does not even include the grafted varieties) so this choice can often be daunting to say the least. You need to decide what it is that you like from your tomato. Do you like low acid, sweetness, or is fruit size important?



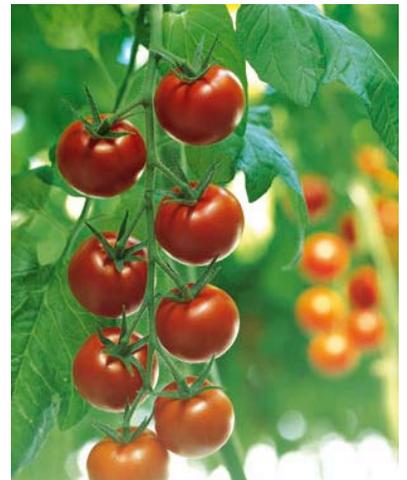
Sweet 100 Is Oderings number 1 selling tomato and is also called a cherry tomato! Loads of small, tasty, cocktail tomatoes are produced on a vigorous plant. It is one of the most prolific and earlier producers.



Moneymaker Another good early producing variety with medium sized fruit on a tall and vigorous plant. This is a good juicy variety.



Taupo Is one of our most popular tomatoes that is now exclusive to Oderings. It has medium sized fruit that is renowned for its tasty flavour, high yields and disease resistance.



Sweet treats One of my favourites! This large healthy plant produces masses of the sweetest, tastiest, bite-sized tomatoes that you have ever had. It is considered a cocktail tomato but the fruit is bigger than the Sweet 100. Only available in single plants.



Early Girl As the name suggests it produces fruit early. The fruit firm and a medium size with heavy crops.



Angela Highly recommended because it is one of the earliest varieties followed by a late crop. Medium sized firm fruit with a high yield and a good shelf life.



Grosse Lisse This is a very popular old variety. Amazing large beefsteak type with tasty, moderately sweet fruit and a medium to low acidity.



Oderings Dwarf This little treasure is a dwarf growing tomato with an excellent flavour. It produces medium to large sized fruit throughout the season.



Tumbling Tom
An outstanding plant like no other! Available in baskets with two plants (one red and one yellow) where they can cascade and produce handfuls of sweet, juicy cocktail sized fruit.



Doctor Walter

Low acid tomato!
It is a superior beefsteak variety with large fruit and a great flavour for eating fresh, using in cooking or on the BBQ.





Virosa Improved Great flavour and early fruiting. It has firm round medium sized fruit that is resistant against cracking. It is great in the glasshouse as well as in the garden.



Russian Red A semi dwarf plant, this tomato produces medium sized fruit with an early yield. The fruit has a good flavour and is great for bottling.



Red Robin A true dwarf reaching only 20 cm. It produces lots of tasty cocktail sized fruit. Best suited to growing in a container where you can pick the fresh fruit often.

◀ **Potentate** - An oldie but a goodie. It produces medium sized fruit with excellent flavour. This tall and vigorous plant fruits early.

Super Beefsteak

As the name suggests this tomato produces extra large, meaty fruit. It has excellent flavour that needs to be tried to be believed. NI only. (Not pictured)

So if you are you tired of spending a small fortune on tomatoes that don't even taste that good then look no further and grow your own! It is a very rewarding way to save money, eat healthy and is so easy even the kids can do it.

▶ **Big Beef**

One of the best beefsteak tomatoes! Outstanding production of large sized, tasty round fruit over a long season. The fruit holds well with no cracking.



Roma

This commercially grown variety is also known as the Italian tomato. It has medium sized fruit that are pear shaped. The main attraction of Roma is that it is a low acid variety with a great flavour.

ODERINGS NEW TOMATO & VEGGIE MIX



- ◆ Boosting your existing crop is easy because you can plant seedlings straight into the mix.
- ◆ Use in containers, pots, raised veggie boxes or the garden.
- ◆ Dig into the garden to rejuvenate existing soil
- ◆ Gives seedlings the right nutrients to produce strong, healthy roots systems.
- ◆ 6 months of controlled release fertiliser for sustained growth until harvest.

**TRY IT TODAY
YOU WON'T BE
DISAPPOINTED**

Potato and Tomato PSYLLID

Alice Donnelly, Havelock North

Were you unhappy with the quality of your potato and tomato crops last year? Have your potatoes been really small? Have your tomato plants looked wrinkled and stunted?

Unfortunately I am introducing you to the potato and the tomato psyllid that has migrated from Mexico. They were first discovered in Auckland in 2006 and have migrated their way around other parts of the North and South Island. This little nasty insect is resistant to nearly all chemical sprays, making it extremely hard to control. The psyllid goes through three stages in their development, egg, nymph and adult. The eggs usually appear in clusters on the undersides of the leaves and look like sugar. Once the eggs have hatched they become nymphs, which are lime green and about



3mm long. This is the stage they cause most damage. Nymphs suck and feed on the sap of your potatoes and tomatoes, which damages the leaves by removing nutrients from the plant and injecting a toxin during feeding. The leaves then curl and turn yellow or purple. This can result in an undersized crop or death to the plant.

Control

It is really important to begin control measures early and carry out regular spraying throughout the season. If allowed to establish it will be hard to control so a preventative spray programme is the key. I recommend you use Target, Mavrick, Confidor or any other systemic sprays. For organic sprays use Natures Way or Eco Pest. Remember when spraying to fully cover the undersides of the leaves. For best results alternate sprays in a two-week rotation.



Brenda Emms, Christchurch

Every year customers ask about the merits of our potatoes! There are thousands of types of potatoes, so how do you decide which one to grow? All of them are a healthy veggie and a good source of vitamin B6, C and potassium.

Which one to grow depends on how you like to eat them. Mashed, boiled, fried, roasted, baked or in a salad?

Potatoes fit into 3 main groups;

Floury

low in sugar and moisture but high in starch. This means they are good for chipping and roasting.

Waxy

High in moisture low in starch. This makes them great to boil and good in salads.

New

These tend to be waxy potatoes, for this reason they are great for salads or cooked whole with their skins on.

Here are our top varieties and how they fare in the kitchen.

Monster Mash

The best mashers. **Jersey Bennies, Heather, Ilam Hardy, Allura and Agria.**

Boil Boil Toil and Trouble

Do you have trouble with disintegrating potatoes? The best spuds for boiling and salads are **Purple Passion, Allura, Cliffs Kidney, Jersey Bennie, Liseta, Maris Anchor, Swift, Heather or Nadine.**

Microwave

The two best spuds to use are **Purple Heart** and **Osprey.**

Chippers and Fryers

Our pick for the best chippers are **Ilam Hardy, Allura, Purple Passion, Agria** and **Moonlight.**

Bakers and Roasters

The best roasters and bakers are **Osprey, Liseta, Maris Anchor, Rocket, Allura, Chippewa, Agria, Rua** and **Van Rosa**

OUTBACK

with BRETT



Brett Harris
Barrington Street



Jade Cascade



So Sweet



Aphrodite



June

Spring Stunners

When lush leafy Hostas appear in your local Oderings store you know spring is here. Hostas thrive in shady to semi-shade areas and love soil rich in organic matter. This means Oderings Compost is ideal for preparing garden beds before you plant Hostas.

Oderings are growing four different Hosta varieties. **So Sweet** is the smallest growing of our Hostas, it has lush green leaves which have creamy-yellow variegation around the leaf margin, 30cm.

Hosta **June** is medium height, standing at 45cm tall. The foliage has gold centres and a stunning blue-green edge. **June** has pale lavender flowers which are held above the foliage on long stems in summer.

Jade Cascade has elongated glossy jade leaves. These have a ruffled edge and tend to grow in a weeping habit. Lilac flowers follow on tall stems in summer. 60cm

Aphrodite has large bold glossy leaves, followed by fragrant double white flowers in summer.

Aphrodite is the tallest of our Hostas, growing up to 75cm.

Everyone has a dark, shady corner they don't know what to do with it, so why not give one of Oderings lush, leafy Hostas a whirl!

Quite simply, it wouldn't be spring without a little bit of colour and Oderings is proud to present our range of miniature roses.



Little Jackie

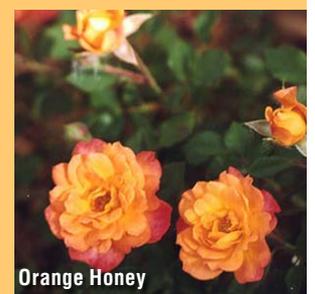
Released in 1991, **Little Jackie** caused a stir at an international rose show when a specimen with over 100 blooms was presented. **Little Jackie** has light orange/red flowers with a yellow centre. Flowers repeat quickly and growth habit is upright.

Born Free provides a massive display of deep orange/red flowers, and the yellow stamens in the centre of the flower provide a dramatic contrast. Foliage is a dark lush green.

The double flowers of **Orange Honey** have a fruity fragrance. The smaller growing habit makes it ideal for hanging baskets.

My Angel is a compact grower with small single pink blooms. Ideal for pots or on a patio.

Mini Red, as the name suggests, has a compact growth habit and sports masses of small double red flowers. It has a prolific repeat flowering habit.



Orange Honey



Fantastic foliage

When I think foliage I think Heucheras. This is one of my mum's favourite plants; this is because they are easy care and the colours are fantastic. If you are a new, novice or an experienced gardener the Heuchera should have a place in every garden.

Georgia Peach



The range of Heucheras is huge with different leaf sizes and shapes but more importantly a huge range of coloured foliage. The new modern varieties are exceptionally striking. Earlier this year we introduced three new varieties called Georgia Peach, Southern Comfort and Paris.





Southern Comfort



Chocolate Ruffles

Growing Heucheras is relatively easy. Most people think Heucheras should only be grown in shade but this is simply not the case. Most varieties will grow happily in full sun especially the darker leaved varieties, however semi-shade is generally best. If you are unsure, plant in semi shade or consult your local garden centre. You can plant into pots, raised garden beds, rock gardens, as a boarder plant in well draining compost enriched soil.

Did you know the Heucheras are edible, and the leaves can be tossed in with other greens for a mixed salad? The leaves are too bitter to eat on their own, but add a tangy kick to an otherwise bland salad.



Paris



Amethyst

Harmonious houseplants

Aaron Holland
Christchurch



Why not brighten indoor areas with some easy-care foliage houseplants?

Here at Oderings we grow a wide range of houseplants to suit any situation.

For a well-lit position, out of direct sunlight, try *Cordyline Kihula Rainbow* with its strappy colourful foliage or *Dizygotheca* (false aralia) which has dark green toothed leaves and a compact nature.

Calathea Veitchiana, with its feathery markings of dark green and brown and an underside of purple, enjoys a filtered light position.

Also *Aphelandra* (Zebra Plant) has very attractive foliage, large pale green leaves stripped with white veins which makes these houseplants stand out in a crowd!

Stumped with what to put in your shady spot? *Philodendron Silver Arrow* has stunning silver, glossy, heart-shaped leaves. *Syngoniums*, with dramatic markings on their leaves make a striking climber for a shady corner for your home or office.

Which ever you choose, these indoor foliage plants are easy-care, require moist soil and a temperature of 15 to mid 20's°C. Feed with Oderings Total Replenish twice a year to keep houseplants looking healthy and vibrant.

Calathea Veitchiana



Aphelandra



Cordyline Kihula Rainbow



Syngonium



Philodendron Silver Arrow



Dizygotheca

I love strawberries in summer, but my advice is not to leave it until then to plant. Now and autumn are the ideal times to plant strawberries to ensure you get bigger crops in summer.

Strawberry Sensations

Vanessa Walmsley-Forbes
Havelock North

Strawberries are one of the quickest of all the berry fruits to produce a crop. The plant is usually only retained for one or two years before it is replaced with a new one. This is because they produce at their best on their first year and decline each year thereafter. There is however still hope after you have brought these little gems. Each plant usually sends out runners, these can be cut off the mother plant and replanted to create new plants; by doing this you are guaranteed successful production year after year.

Soil preparation

They need a sunny, warm, well drained position that is humus rich and slightly acidic. Dig in plenty of compost or Oderings Tomato & Veggie Mix at the time of planting. Plant strawberries in rows of mounds or ridges; this helps with drainage, prevents root disease and keeps the roots warmer, increasing growth and production. Plant 15cm apart with the crown above ground level. At the start of spring apply Tui Strawberry Fertiliser this is high in potash to encourage fruiting. Strawberries are also great planted in containers or in hanging baskets. The Tomato & Veggie mix is again a good product to use when planting. When feeding plants in containers use a liquid fertiliser or Oderings Total Replenish.

To use or not to use... black polythene

The main reason black polythene is used is to keep the plants and the fruit clean. It is also good for keeping a high soil temperature for better fruit production. The disadvantage is that polythene doesn't breathe so the soil deteriorates faster. The alternative to polythene is newspaper, weedmat or mulch; these let the soil breathe and help keep moisture in during summer.

Controlling birds

There are a few different methods to prevent this but the most effective is bird netting. It is no good throwing the netting straight over the plants as these cunning feathery friends will still find a way into them. Putting netting over a frame is the best way to protect your plants. It does make it a little harder to get the berries but at least you get to eat them.



What to choose...

In store we have two different varieties, seascape and diamante. Most varieties of strawberry need a certain amount of day light hours before they will flower, these are day-sensitive. The two available from Oderings are day-neutral; they will produce flowers and fruit no matter what the hours of daylight are. This means they will start producing earlier and finish later giving an extended season.

Seascape

big crops of extremely tasty fruit. It is what we call 'ever bearing'. This means that it produces a lot of fruit over a long season. The fruit is large, juicy with a beautiful flavour. The plants are disease resistant.

Diamante

has been bred for superior yield, great flavour and long season production. This variety is compact and upright, making harvest easier with cleaner fruit. It also produces larger sized fruit. It will not produce as early as seascape, but will still produce before many others strawberries. The plant is pest and disease resistant.

OXALIS



Yummy Yams

The name makes people instantly cringe, even though there are 500 different species worldwide. The one that springs to mind first is the common weed called *Oxalis articulata*. Its small corms and bright pink flowers can drive a gardener crazy. Try the product 'Death to Oxalis' for this particular invasive type of Oxalis.

However not all Oxalis is bad! Did you know *Oxalis tuberosa* is the common yam?

I have just finished digging my yams from our garden and what a yummy yam feast we will have this season. There are several colours of seed available on the market, and at Odeerings we have Red and Inca Gold in stock now, both of which are vigorous growers and high in yields. When planting choose a sunny warm position in well drained soil that easily crumbles in your hand, each tuber should be planted 3-5cm deep and 30-35cm apart. October is the time to plant but if you are in a frost free area you can plant anytime. Add some compost at planting time and mix in well with your soil. In March get ready to start mounding the soil around them (like potatoes), if you have plenty of top growth you can start mounding before then.

Apply a small amount of Potato Fertiliser as a side dressing at mounding time to encourage the yield. If you discover grass grub or wire worm during this time try planting some radish seed around your yams this will deter the pests (it worked wonders in my garden last season); alternatively sow mustard as a green crop during the winter months. Harvest in May-June, when tops have died back to the ground after a couple of good frosts or once flowering has finished. You can get up to 15-20 good sized tubers from one plant. Try tossing some yam leaves into a salad for extra flavour and texture. Now you have harvested your tubers all you have to do is decide how you wish to cook them, remember you don't need to peel them just give them a scrub then bake, steam, mash or fry but I love mine roasted.

Brenda Emms, Christchurch

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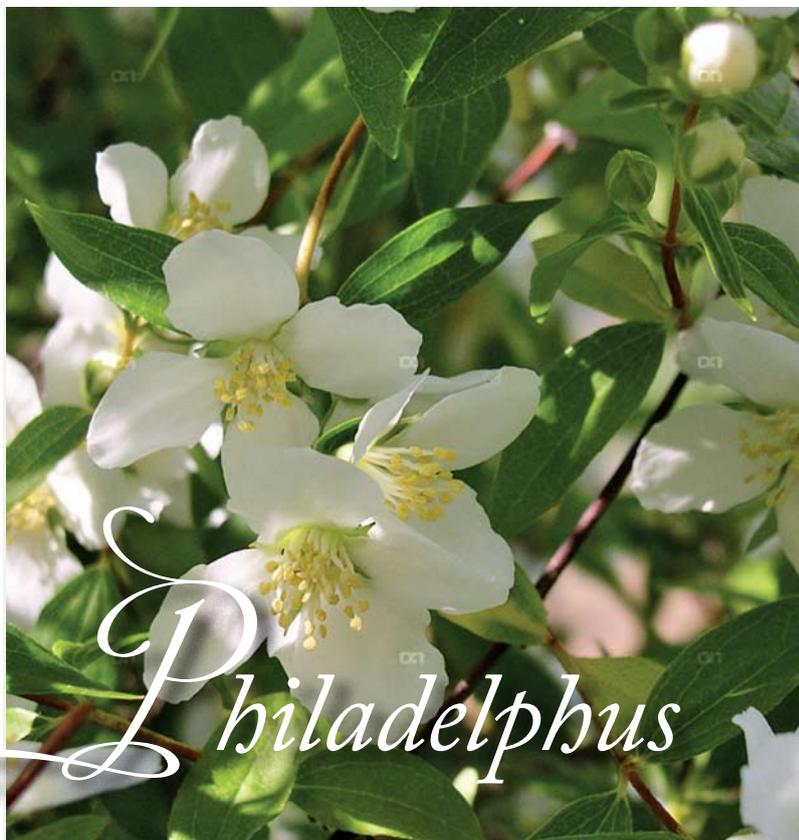
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Look out for *Geranium Rozanne*™ arriving in store shortly



Needs quarter page something to balance layout here



Philadelphus

Philadelphus commonly called Mock Orange because of the intensity of the fragrance, is a shrub that has stood the test of time with species from Europe, Asia, North America and Mexico.

Philadelphus is a deciduous shrub/tree generally 1.5 to 2 metres tall, though there are some dwarf cultivars as well. The leaves are soft green with lovely tall arching branches. The fragrant flowers are single, white or cream, with a bright centre of yellow stamens. There are also some fully double flowering cultivars, but these have less perfume.

Philadelphus have a stunning display of flower in early summer for at least a month. Grow as an individual feature plant, near a well used walkway so the fragrance can be enjoyed. The arching branches make it suitable to espalier against fences or walls. For best flowering, plant in full sun, but they will also tolerate partial shade. Summer watering, especially when young is important, but once they are fully established they can cope with extremes. Frost is not an issue as they tolerate temperatures as low as -15 to -18 deg C. Any type of soil is tolerated, even heavy clay so long as the soil is not water-logged. A dusting of lime and an annual dressing of Bone Meal, or Blood & Bone, will keep them happy.

Pruning... is essential as neglect produces unruly, overgrown plants. If you have one of these, immediately after flowering prune back old and over-crowded wood that has flowered to the base of the plant; this will stimulate new shoots. If your shrub is young, cut the flowering branches back to a flower free shoot; do not trim back the new growth as this will provide next years flowers. If at all possible, do not use hedge clippers, as this will trim new as well as old growth, thus reducing the number of flowers next season. For a general "rule of thumb", remove 1/3 of the oldest flowering wood each year. The purpose of pruning is to keep the plant open and airy. Firm pruning actually promotes longevity in Philadelphus. Picking the flowers also aids pruning so if using as a cut flower and the stems are particularly thick and woody, strike the cut end with a hammer to separate the fibres a little, this assists water uptake (this does work).

Philadelphus are good companions of perennials and old fashioned roses. They look good with lilies, iris, peonies and deutzias. They are a welcome addition to a mixed border and will delight with the volume of flowers and fragrance.



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Selected for superior performance

Good for culinary use



Vanessa Leigh PVR



Pat Leigh PVR



Lemon Leigh PVR



Myr Leigh PVR

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Christchurch 03 349 5546
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Julian Odering has been our seed sowing guru since 1979. Follow his simple steps for your own seed sowing success.

First of all choose a reputable seed raising mix. Like the **Oderings Seed Raising Mix** this should contain: peat, bark, sand, food, fungicide and a wetting agent.

Decide whether you are going to plant your seeds into the ground or trays.

The advantages of sowing into trays opposed to open ground are...

- You can sow seed earlier and have crops all year round. Seedlings tend to survive better, are stronger and have a better chance against weeds and pests.

However there are a few disadvantages...

- Seeds such as carrots, parsnip and radish detest root disturbance when being planted.
- It takes a long time to transplant seedlings and this needs to be done before they get too big.

The container you plant into must have drainage holes and be free of algae; this ensures seedlings get a good start when they are most susceptible to disease. The ideal containers to choose are seedling punnets, plug trays or boxlots.

Take the seed raising mix and fill the container. Spread evenly to the top, then using a block of wood spread out the soil and gently push it down. This gives a flat and even surface to sow into.

Now select your seed. Some Oderings seed packets have a now and later option. This allows half of the seed to stay sealed (once packet of seed is opened humidity is the biggest killer of

remaining seed). Using scissors cut open the packet making a dispenser of the envelope to help evenly sow seed. Sprinkle on the seeds as evenly as possible, avoiding clusters. With the block of wood, gently push seed into the soil. This helps anchor seed so the first root can burrow its way into the mix. Take a sieve or kitchen colander and fill with the mix, sieve the soil over seeds to cover. Most seed requires a depth of twice the thickness of the seed. Gently brush off any excess mix off the tray. Write the variety sown with sowing date on the label provided in the Oderings seed packet. This provides a useful record of when your crop was planted. Using a watering can or a fine rose, gently water the tray making sure no puddles are forming, which could wash out and move the seeds close together, making it harder to transplant later.

Most veggie and seedlings require an optimum temperature of 15-18°C and flower seeds an optimum of 18-22 degrees to germinate and require plenty of light and watering (don't overwater) generally once a day. Follow instructions on packet regarding emerging time (usually 2-3 weeks depending on variety).

Oderings huge range of veggie and flower seeds are available in store or online at www.oderings.co.nz

fig-tastic



If you have never tasted a fresh fig, then prepare yourself for a taste sensation! If you have only tried dried figs, trust me, fresh off the tree tastes nothing like the inferior dried version.

Figs are enjoying a surge in popularity for the home garden lately even though they have been around for at least 5,000 years. They are a deciduous tree that is hardy, self-fertile, has good resistance against disease and pests (though aphids can be a nuisance). Figs don't require a lot of attention, water well while young, during long dry periods and when the fruit is developing. Most varieties need a long hot summer for the fruit to fully mature, so plant figs where they receive maximum sunlight (a north facing wall is the ideal). Figs also enjoy root restriction and will fruit better when potted or in harsh growing conditions.

Expect to wait 2-3 years for your tree to produce good crops of fruit; however my **Brown Turkey** produced delicious edible fruit after one year. The fruit appears on new season's growth and has a delicate sweet flesh and soft skin. You can tell they are ripe when they are soft to the touch. Protection from birds is a must when fruiting. Feed twice a year with a general garden fertiliser.

The Californian Fig Institute claims that figs are one of the healthiest fruits in the world with almost 40% more dietary fibre than oatmeal. What's more, they're 80% higher in potassium than bananas and have more calcium than whole milk. Figs are virtually fat free, have no cholesterol and very little sodium. Oderings offer a wide range of figs including varieties Mrs Williams, Brown Turkey and Brunoro Black.

With all the health benefits and taste sensations that a fig can offer why not try one today. Try them baked, poached or grilled and accompany them with vanilla, orange, mascarpone or my favourite honey; otherwise eat fresh off the tree for a true taste sensation.

Paul Lennie, Rotorua



French Lavendar



English, French or S



English Lavendar

Lavender is amongst one of the earliest plants introduced into New Zealand by Europeans and belongs to the mint family which includes herbs such as sage, thyme and rosemary. It is one of the most widely cultivated plants and as a herb has been in documented use for over 2,500 years.

Lavender originates from a number of places and to simplify things we have just picked three of the most popular varieties.

Lavandula angustifolia (English lavender)

English lavenders are in fact native to the western half of the Mediterranean and is now cultivated in many countries. It was thought the finest lavender grew in England and thus the common name English lavender evolved. English lavender yields an essential oil with sweet overtones used in balms, salves, perfumes and cosmetics. English lavender is the one our grandmothers and mothers cut, dried, sealed in pouches and placed in draws to make clothes smell nice, it was also a deterrent to moths.

Lavender *angustifolia* has a different flower form than others, with no bracts (rabbit ears) protruding from the top of the flower head. Typically English lavender grows between 60-80cm high when in flower and produces masses of varying shades of violet flowers on long flowers spikes of up to 15cm. It is traditionally one of the earliest to flower.

Lavandula dentata (French lavender)

Lavender *dentata* is another garden favourite often referred to as toothed or French lavender. French lavender is cultivated widely for its essential oil, which is similar to the English lavender but with a sharper overtone to the fragrance. Its narrow fragrant leaves and spikes of purple flowers can also be dried and used in sachets. This species is fast growing and is also popular as a hedge.

Lavandula stoechas (Spanish lavender)

Lavenders *stoechas* are grown for the landscape not medicinally like the other two. These lavenders are lovely and easily identified by the large, petal



spanish?

Spring is in the air and what better way to celebrate the season, than with rich flower colour and the alluring fragrance of lavender. But have you ever been confused about the selection of lavender on offer at your local garden centre? Allow us to simplify the choice for you.



Spanish Lavendar

like sterile bracts (rabbit ears) at the top of the flower spike. Spanish lavender blooms profusely in the spring and when its flowering has finished it needs a good prune. The result will be an attractive, fragrant, grey-green shrub throughout the rest of the year with a possible second flush of flowers.

From coastal to high country, town to rural dwellings, cottage and structured gardens, aromatic lavenders will be a highlight in any garden. As hedging and edging for winding brick pathways or the delightful pottager garden to a feature plant in a container or planted en masse in a sea of waving colour, lavenders are true performers.

Amongst silver foliage plants, they can create colour accent with their floral capabilities or for a truly romantic notion, planted amongst roses gives an old worldly feel. To create that Mediterranean look plant amongst other like minded plants such as *Convolvulus cneorum*, Rosemary 'Tuscan Blue'

and Sedum 'Purple Emperor'. As a contrast garden plant, there is always a place for lavender, it is just the matter of choosing which variety.

Our pick of the season would have to be:

Lavender stoechas Major – one of the best lavenders available, this beauty produces an abundance of rich dark purple flowers from early spring through to late summer and grows to a height of 60 cm tall.

Lavender stoechas Avonview – produces masses of deep purple flowers from early spring to late summer and is fast growing to 60 cm tall.

Lavender stoechas Pukehou – selected by Mary Robertson formerly of Pukehou Nurseries in Manakau, its Maori name means 'Hills Of Dedication'. With its silvery foliage and intense violet coloured flowers with large purple bracts, it puts on a show from spring through to late summer and will grow to 60 cm tall.

Lavender Sidonie - if you are feeling the need for an Aussie in your garden, Australian bred lavender Sidonie has intense iridescent violet-blue flowers with elegant tall stems. A great choice for hot and humid areas, this stunner has a long flowering period from spring till autumn growing to 1 m tall.

Lavender augustifolia Hidcote – definitely my pick of the English lavenders, Hidcote has a compact habit producing a dense mass of short stemmed blooms with dark blue, button like flowers in late spring through to summer growing to 30 cm tall.

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