

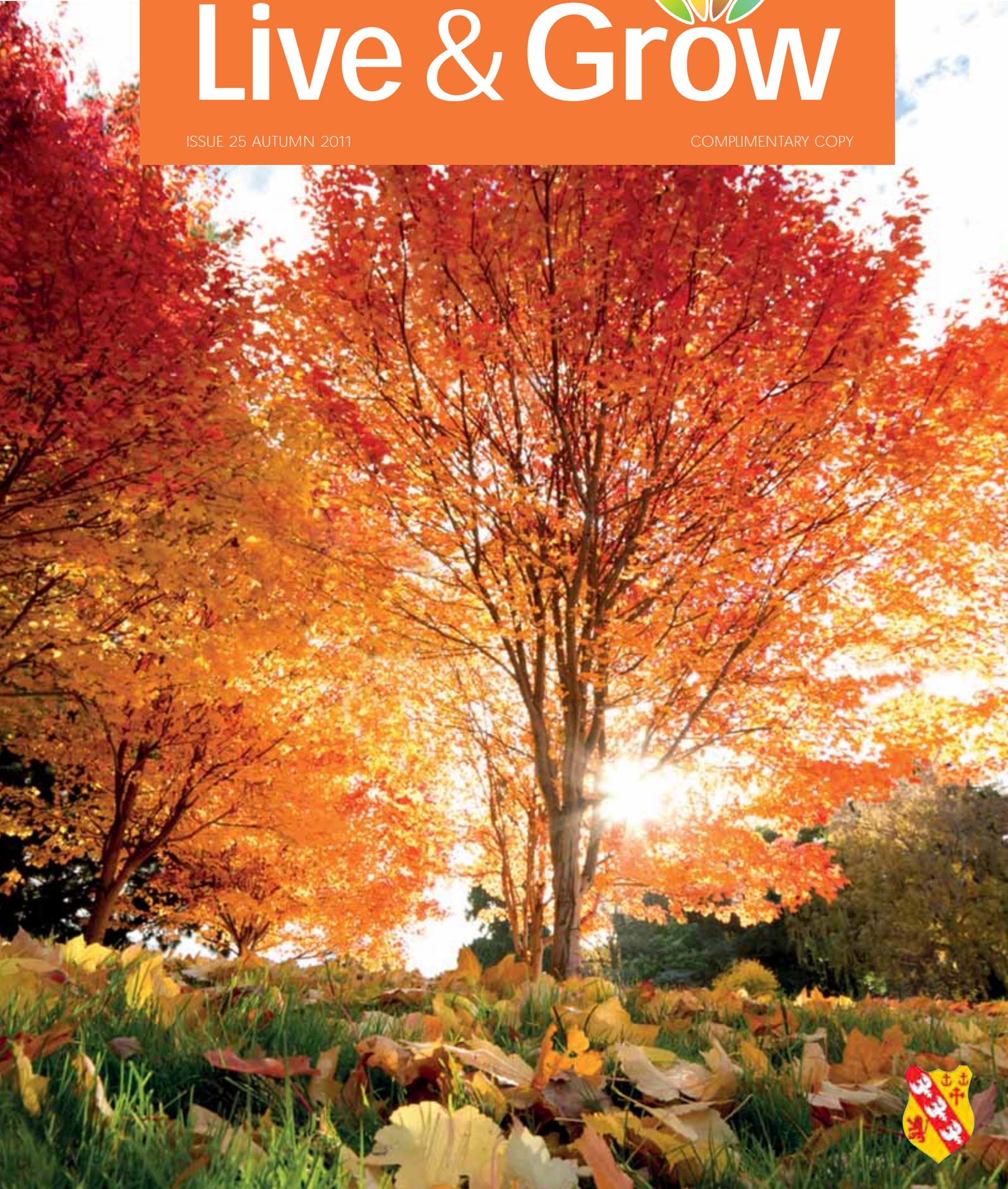
ODERINGS

The First Name In Good Gardens

Live & Grow

ISSUE 25 AUTUMN 2011

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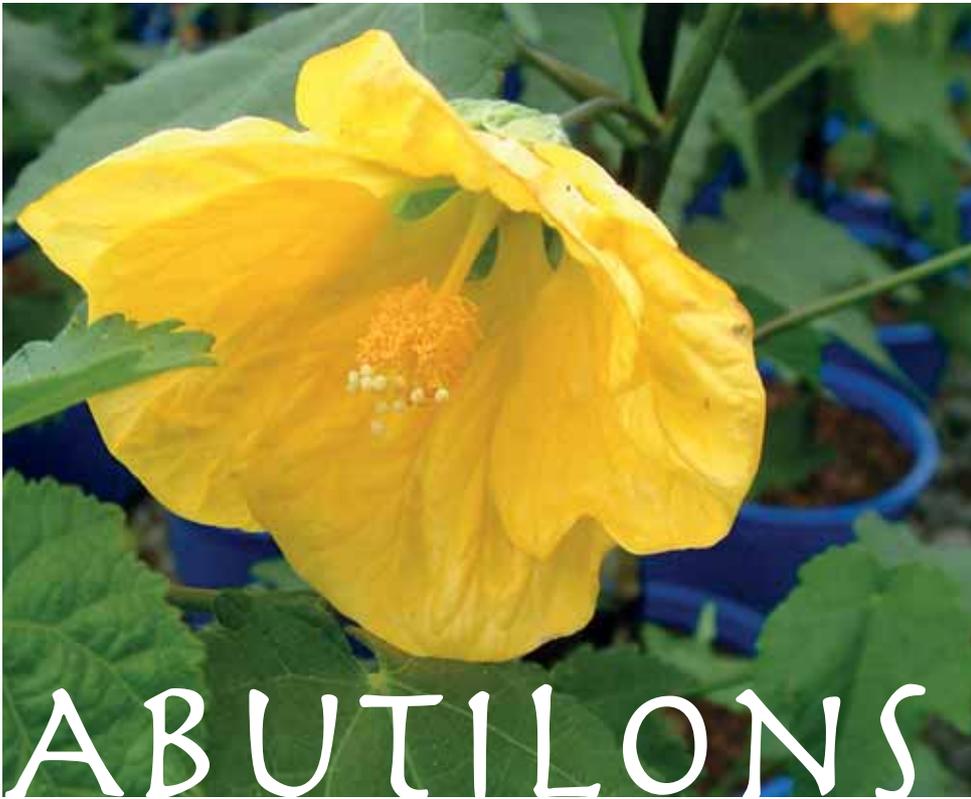
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ABUTILONS

CHINESE LANTERNS

Now I have to admit that when I recommend planting an abutilon, customers often look at me as if I'm crazy, because some customers think abutilons are scruffy-looking plants. It's true that some abutilons can become scruffy-looking but I believe it's generally because they are not given the proper care with pruning and light feeding. In reality the abutilon is a beautiful, easy care plant for the garden, container or even conservatory, growing into a nicely shaped bush of 1 to 1.5 meters high and wide.

Commonly we refer to the abutilon as the "Chinese lantern" because their flowers resemble the hanging paper lamps commonly found in China. The plant produces an almost constant supply of attractive, bright, bold blooms which are highly valued for floral art.

Plant abutilons in well-drained soil in part shade and prune heavily each year to ensure that the plants stay compact and healthy. Water them well in the summer, but only when required in winter. Note that if the lower leaves die it means you are not giving your abutilons enough nutrients. I recommend that you feed them fortnightly with a liquid fertiliser such as Thrive or Baby Bio during the flowering months.

Success with growing abutilons really is that easy. The only hard part is deciding which colours to get; white, red, orange, yellow or the new hot pink.



Digging In

with Daniel



Daniel Hart
Havelock North



Have you found it hard to find colourful cascading bedding plants in the winter that will flower right the way through the colder months? Up until now most of the beautiful traditional cascading bedding plants were either frost tender or daylight sensitive, meaning they would never flower until late spring.



Pansy Cascade

Well have I got some exciting news for you! New for 2011, Oderings are growing three new additions for your garden, hanging baskets or pots. Pansy Cascade Glacier was the first of these new releases that was trialed and released in spring 2010. It is a chameleon pansy whose flowers change colour from purple to white, often all at the same time. The three new cascading pansies to join the Glacier success are Pansy Cascade Yellow, Pansy Cascade White and Pansy Cascade Wing which is a purple and white bi-colour. These cascading pansies will add overflowing bright colour to any basket, tub, pot

or window box. This is one of the most exciting varieties of the year because it is the world's first cascading or trailing pansy from seed.

Growing

Plant these pansies in full sun or part-shade. Remember that good drainage is essential when growing pansies, if they get too much water on a regular basis they will become susceptible to dampening off (fungus), so a careful watering programme and good drainage is a must for success. If planting in tubs, baskets etc use Oderings Potting Mix. Regular spraying is also



important to prevent powdery mildew and black spot becoming established.

Don't leave your hanging baskets dormant this autumn. It's now easy to have winter flower power when you plant Oderings Pansy Cascade series.

Pansy Glacier was the world's first cascading/ trailing pansy and is one of the most exciting top sellers in 2010! What makes Pansy 'glacier' even more exciting are the chameleon flowers, that change colour from blue to white. Its fantastic planted in baskets and window boxes, height 15-20cm.





Fairy Primrose

PRIMULA MALACOIDES

You can see how this sweet little plant gets its common name 'Fairy Primrose' with its cute mass of single flowers looking up from dainty stalks and a soft fluffy leaved plant.

The colours range from pastel pinks and lavenders to bolder mauves, wine-reds and white. They even come in bi-colours. As delicate looking as

they are, they are far from delicate in nature. These tough little plants grow in most areas of the garden, pots and containers. They grow well in any cool spot even battling the frosts once they are established. Plant them in a full sun position in autumn or in semi-shade in spring.

They flower continuously through the winter and into early spring and look like a sea of sprinkled colour when mass planted. Try adding them to other popular winter annuals such as violas and pansies to create extra texture, colour and varying heights in your garden or containers.

Considered an annual, they will self-seed, but don't rely on this from year to year, it is always better to plant new seedlings. When planting dig well-broken down compost into the top 10cm of soil and once the plants are established apply dried blood to keep them flowering for longer.

As you can see these dainty showers of colour are well worth a try.



Vanessa Walmsley-Forbes
Havelock North



Pansy Grapetise

Pansy Grapetise offers something beautiful, different and definitely unique. This 'must have', new release for 2011 has medium to large flowers which vary in colour. The stunning grape-purple flowers which fade to white on the upper petals are finished with black whiskers and a bright yellow eye. Not only is this a compact and uniform growing pansy it is also a top performer with nonstop flowering. Plant in full sun to semi-shade in well drained soil and feed with Odeings Total Replenish in autumn and spring. This ruffled beauty is glorious with unique beauty and charm.



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Pine nuts

At this time each year I harvest crazy amounts of basil and one of my favourite things to make is basil pesto (see recipe below). Making your own pesto is fun and cheaper than buying the already prepared yummy stuff at the supermarket. However, pine nuts which are one of the main ingredients for making your own pesto, are extremely expensive even for small quantities.

So, I have researched pine nuts and am now going to plant my own pine nut tree this autumn.

Pine nuts are the edible seeds of a pine tree of which about 20 species produce seeds large enough to harvest. The shelled pine nuts appear like puffed grains of rice. The trees can handle extremely hot summers, will tolerate almost any conditions including salt and high winds, and grow best in hot, dry summers and cool, wet winters. They can handle temperatures down to -22°C, but they do not like a lime soil. They trees are often called stone pines because they grow well in stony ground.

Pine nut trees can be planted into a container for the first four to five years, and when planted in the garden make an excellent wind-break. Once mature they produce 5-15kgs of kernels, generally from mid-May to mid-July, which can easily be stored for later use.

Not only are pine nuts an essential component of pesto, but they are also commonly sprinkled on pies or salads and mixed into cooked meat, fish and vegetable dishes.

You may need to prune your pine nut tree to keep its growth in check but never remove more than 50%-60% of the total foliage. They need to have healthy branches with good clusters of needles because pines will not re-sprout from bare wood.

Now if all this sounds to good to be true there is some bad news. The cones, which the pines produce, take two full seasons to mature on the tree (e.g. spring and summer then harvest in autumn). You know they are ready to be picked when they have turned a brown colour. Stack the cones in the sun to dry and open. Remove seeds by hand, crack the shells and remove the kernels. Unfortunately this self-fertile plant can take up to eight years before it fruits, but on the plus side the tree is beautiful and makes a great Christmas tree if left in a pot. However, once planted in the garden they grow to five or six metres in ten years.

Visit www.edible.co.nz for more information on pine nut trees and other interesting edibles.

Pesto

- 75 grams fresh basil
- 25 grams fresh parsley
- 35 grams pine nuts
- 25 grams grated parmesan

Blend all the ingredients in food processor with small amount of oil. Gradually add more oil until a thick creamy texture is achieved. Add salt and pepper to taste.



Anemones

The *WOW* of the winter garden

Anyone who has grown Anemones will know they are one of the showiest and longer lived bulbs/corms you can buy. Anemones grow from corms which are underground stems that have swollen to store food through the plants' dormant period for the next season. Bulbs are also stems that form underground to store food but the difference is that bulbs are made up of layers of leaves where corms are solid.

Anemones can come in a range of pinks, white, reds, and blues. The flowers can be double or single and last well in a vase as a cut flower. I have seen anemone flowers used in a bridal bouquet and they still looked amazing at the end of the night; it is best to leave the flower on the plant for two days before cutting them off. Believe it or not, they will last longer in the water doing it this way.

There are two main ways for the gardener to grow anemones; either by buying the corms or by buying the plant as a seedling. The best time to buy corms is between January and mid-May. The earlier you get them into the garden the earlier you will see flowers. They take about four months from planting to flower. Plant them in full sun with well-drained soil for optimum results. If they get too wet they will rot and die but they do need some moisture to produce strong flower stems.

Purchasing anemones by the corm means you can buy separate colours and varieties for a bold display or you can buy a mixed bag for a colourful show. To get the best flower display from your anemone corms put the corms in a paper bag and

into the fridge for about six weeks before planting, this will help to break the plants' dormancy. After six weeks in the fridge, put the corms into a bowl of lukewarm water to soak for a few hours or overnight. This will rehydrate the corm, encourage the roots to grow and make it easier for the plant to sprout. You can now plant them directly where you want them to grow in the garden, but you should first prepare the area by spreading Bulb Fertiliser or Bone Flour and then dig it into the first 10cm of soil. Plant the corms 5cm deep and 10-15cm apart.

For those of you who have seen the corms before, you will know that they are small and shaped a little like a Hershey's Kiss chocolate. It is hard to know which way up to plant them but you put the cone side down and the flat side facing the sky. Water the corms in well after planting. If you find you are too late to grow your anemone from corms it's not too late to have them in your garden. We sell them as seedlings in our 'Primaflora' range. The variety we sell is anemone 'Harmony' which is a disease resistant, compact growing strain with a fantastic mix of all the

colours. While your anemones are growing feed them with a Bulb Fertiliser or Bone Flour, this will keep the flowers going for longer.

As the days get warmer the plant will finish flowering and will start to go yellow. Once the foliage dies down to the ground you remove the foliage and pull up the corms to replant for the following year. In my experience the younger corms that you buy from the garden centre are more vigorous and put on a better display so it's always a good idea to mix the old corms with some new ones each year.

For something a little different try planting them in a pot or container. You can plant them closer together for support and a thicker display. Jazz the pot up a bit by planting a bedding plant around the edge like our cascading pansies; this will give the pot interest while the anemones are growing.



Happy Planting!

Vanessa Walmsley-Forbes
Havelock North

Green Crops

Green crops are also known as cover crops or manure crops and are grown for the nutrients and organic matter that they give back to the soil.

This is a natural method of soil maintenance that will boost and replace nutrients and encourage earthworms and other micro-organisms. These crops are also a way of adding rich organic matter to the soil and helping to stop the soil compacting during winter. Most people plant green crops in early autumn to replenish the garden for spring planting.

There are many different types of green crops but most common are:

Blue Lupin – a quick growing, nitrogen fixing crop suited to cooler climates.

Barley – adds protein, nitrogen and organic matter to strengthen the soil structure.

Oats – used to combat soil erosion and to help break up hard clay soils.

Mustard – cleans up harmful soil fungi and provides good control of wireworm and nematodes, which often ruin root crops such as potatoes and carrots. Mustard is a good weed suppressant suited to cooler climates but do not use this crop if you are planting cauliflower,



Blue Lupin green crop



Blue Lupin



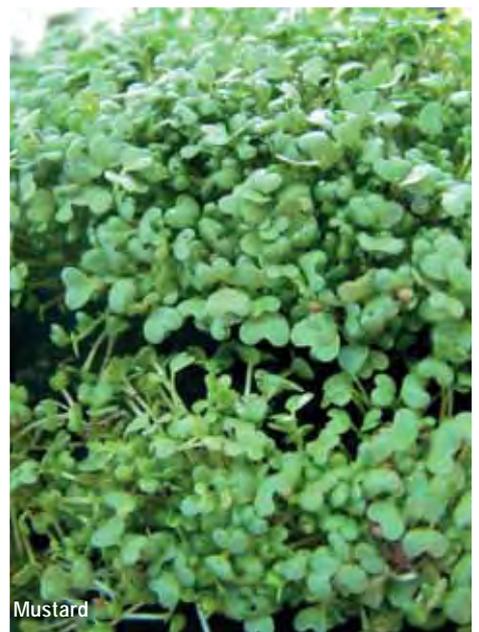
Wheat

broccoli and other brassicas in the same area the next season.

Broad beans – return nitrogen and organic matter to the soil.

Peas – add nitrogen to the soil and are incredibly useful for making pea straw for mulching in spring.

Plant the green crop when it is raining because it is essential that the seed does not dry out when germinating. You know the crop is ready to be dug into the soil when it flowers in late winter-early spring, but note that the stems should still be soft and watery. Chop the foliage off near the ground and dig it into the first 15cm of soil. An alternative method is to leave the foliage on the garden and then cover it with a layer of compost. By adding Blood & Bone Fertiliser or animal manure you will speed up the breakdown of the crop, but wait at least three weeks after digging in the crop before planting the next crop of spring vegetables.

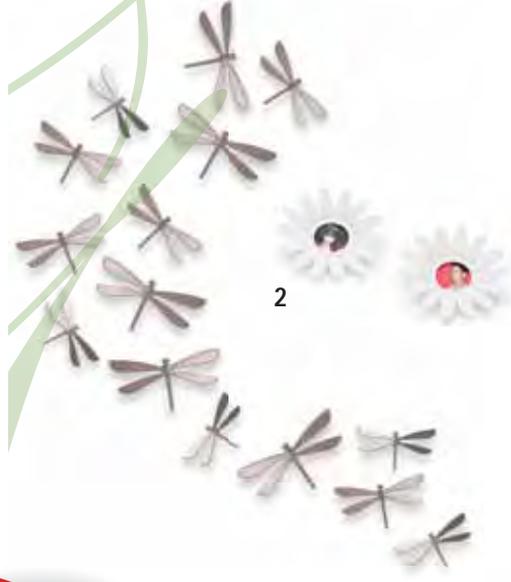


Mustard

Whichever green crop you choose it is a good, cheap way to add organic nutrients to your soil.



1



2



3

G iftware

with mothers in mind



6



4

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5

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- 6 Herb Scissors
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What's New



Hebe 'Jewel of the Nile'

An absolutely stunning new release featuring unique vibrant foliage that changes with the seasons, from creamy yellows in summer to rich pinks and magentas in winter. Autumn brings a smattering of bold ruby coloured flowers and the ruby colour on the stems spreads across the foliage to give the plant a sparkling jewel-like appearance in the colder months. 'Jewel of the Nile' is perfect in pots and thrives in a full sun position, although it needs to be protected from very harsh frosts. This hebe is an easy care garden shrub which always has a point of interest, growing to 80cm x 80cm.



Cordyline 'Goldilocks'

'Goldilocks' is a unique plant with dramatic, structural foliage featuring attractive soft yellow and lime stripes.

Cordylines are useful as a trendy accent for

pathways, in pots either side of an entrance or perfect in groups of three in the garden to add a bold splash of colourful texture. They are useful plants in contemporary suburban gardens due to their slim upright habit, and their height can easily be controlled.



Cordyline 'Snow White' (North Island only)

Also joining cordyline 'Goldilocks' is cordyline 'Snow White' which is a unique plant with distinctive, architectural foliage featuring pure

white and green stripes, resulting in a much cleaner look than older cultivars.

Coprosma 'Midnight Martini'

The cocktail series of coprosmas is the premier series which has been increasingly popular due to their bold range of year-round foliage colour. 'Midnight Martini'



has been selected for its gorgeous, almost black foliage, subtly accented by a splash of orange in the centre of the leaf. The foliage changes through the seasons from bronze to a rich black with red centre accents. Great when planted en masse in the garden or perfect in pots or as accent plant against other plants with pale foliage or the pale walls of a house. It prefers full sun, a well-drained site and protection from very harsh frosts.

Coprosma 'Scarlett O'Hara'

Also joining the premier series of the cocktail coprosmas is new 'Scarlett O'Hara'.

This coprosma features delicious reddish-orange variegated foliage which changes with the seasons. The cooler months bring a rich burgundy and black appearance which will make a lovely accent to surrounding autumn or spring flowering perennials.



Hebe 'Bel Air'

This is a great new addition to the Hollywood Hebe range which has been selected for its extra large and showy flowers. The huge bi-colour mauve and white blooms appear over beautiful, rich green foliage from mid-summer lasting through until the first frosts. Like most hebes 'Bel Air' will be a garden favourite due to the low effort needed to grow it successfully. This quick growing plant will thrive with an annual trim, but will eventually reach one metre in height. 'Bel Air' will excel naturally in a sunny site providing attractive colour for up to four months. It is great for filling spots in the garden or as an attractive backdrop to flowering perennials.



Tulip 'Carola'

'Carola' is a mid to late-flowering single Triumph tulip, and a much sought after cut flower overseas. It has a rich luminous colour and will be a spring garden talking point when planted in your garden or pots.



Nectarine 'Mabel'

Found as a seedling underneath a 'Blackboy' peach tree by a Waikato gardener named Mabel, this nectarine is unique with its stunning dark purple foliage and delicious sweet purple-skinned nectarines. This variety will grow well in all areas of the country, ripens in mid season and is quite hardy to diseases. As with all nectarines, this variety is self fertile.

Autumn introduces many new and exciting plants and bulbs for the home gardeners.

Heucheras



'Autumn Leaves'

Truly a four season plant, 'Autumn Leaves' changes its appearance as the days grow longer, with leaves that are red in the spring, taupe in summer, and ruby red in the autumn. Put on a show in your garden or your pots and containers, regardless of the season, with Heuchera 'Autumn Leaves'.



'Mint Julep'

Short cones of clean white flowers arise from delectable, mint green and silver foliage, followed by a spunky lemon-lime and minty green colour in spring. These dense growing, luscious clumps glow in the shady or darker areas of the garden.



Daffodil 'Delnashaugh'

This is a newer, full double Daffodil with the softest salmon intertwined petals that develop to a stronger pink; it is softly scented and also makes a great cut flower.

Heucherellas



'Alabama Sunrise'

This heucherella changes colour with the seasons! The deeply cut foliage, from spring to mid-summer is gold with red veins. In late summer the leaves change to green with red veins and in autumn the older foliage turns orange pink.

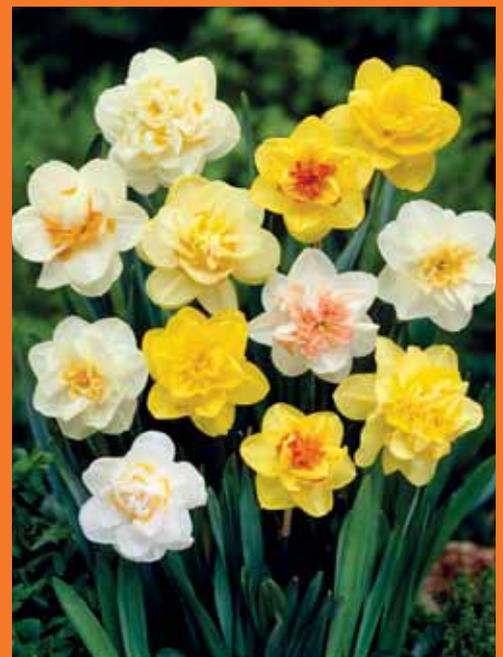


'Golden Zebra'

'Golden Zebra' is a plant with a twist and a real head turner. Bright yellow feathery leaves are boldly marked with dark red. A standout plant in containers or in a border mixed with other perennials or bedding plants.

Daffodil 'Double Mixed'

This outstanding pack provides a beautiful spring burst of softly scented double daffodils. These are excellent planted in clumps to provide a bold display of colour.





Garlic, Shallots, O

Garlic and shallots and asparagus will soon be available and you won't believe how easy it is to grow these crops at home. Now is also the time to plant onion seed so read on for some information on growing these plants.

Garlic ►

First let's consider garlic which is a natural antibiotic and imparts such a wonderful flavour to so many dishes. It can be grown easily in the garden or in containers but it requires good drainage. To get the best results buy only certified cloves from your garden centre, don't use those you brought for cooking from the supermarket. Garlic is traditionally planted on the shortest day, and harvested on the longest. Plant each clove of garlic 5-8cm below the soil surface about 15cm apart, making sure the pointed end is facing upwards. It is important to keep the area weed-free and well-watered during the summer.

When harvesting, make sure you dig the garlic up, do not rip it out of the ground. If you lift garlic too early you will have small cloves, whereas if they are left too long they will burst. Once you have dug up your garlic, brush off any soil clinging to the bulbs; allow three to four weeks of drying in a well-ventilated situation, or in dry, shady spot outside away from direct sunlight. When the tops and roots have dried, cut them off.



Shallots ▼

Shallots are basically mild onions; they reproduce by bulb division underground and require the same growing conditions as garlic. When their green shoots show above ground level, they can be cut off and used like chives. Shallots need to be planted about 20cm apart, and should produce six to ten bulbs per plant. Like onion they are also planted on the shortest day and harvested on the longest. Prepare them in the same way as you would garlic in a well-ventilated, dry situation. Well-cured shallots will keep for at least nine months.





Onions and Asparagus



Onions ▲

Onions take about six months from sowing through to harvesting. There are a number of varieties of which 'Pukekohe Long Keeper' is the most popular and most widely grown. I like to sow them now using Oderings Potting Mix. Always use fresh new seed because onion seed does not keep well. When sowing, firm the mix down, sow seed lightly, and then cover with about 1cm more of the potting mix and water gently. When buying seedlings from the garden centre I transplant them at 8-10cm apart in a single or double row, with rows 40-50cm apart. The onions are ready to harvest six months later, when the tops dry out and fall over. At this time pull them from the soil and leave them to cure in the sunshine and dry, then store in a well ventilated dry area.



Asparagus ▲

Once established, asparagus plants are very long-lived, and can produce crowns for up to twenty years. Don't worry if you're in an area where you get frost as asparagus dies down each winter and will produce new shoots or spears in the spring/summer.

Light soils are preferred, so the spears can easily push through the soil surface. Before planting the crowns prepare the soil to the depth of a spade by digging in liberal quantities of compost then adding a general garden fertiliser. If you have acidic soils, then a light dressing of garden lime will be needed.

In the first growing season set crowns 15-20 cm deep and 30-50 cm apart at the bottom of a trench. Then fill the trench with an initial 5cm of soil. Add more soil as the asparagus starts to grow. Water regularly, and give liberal dressings of a high nitrogen fertiliser such as Oderings Garden Replenish in summer to encourage vigorous top growth. In winter, cut the dry yellow fern down to ground level and fertilise again to encourage spears in spring.

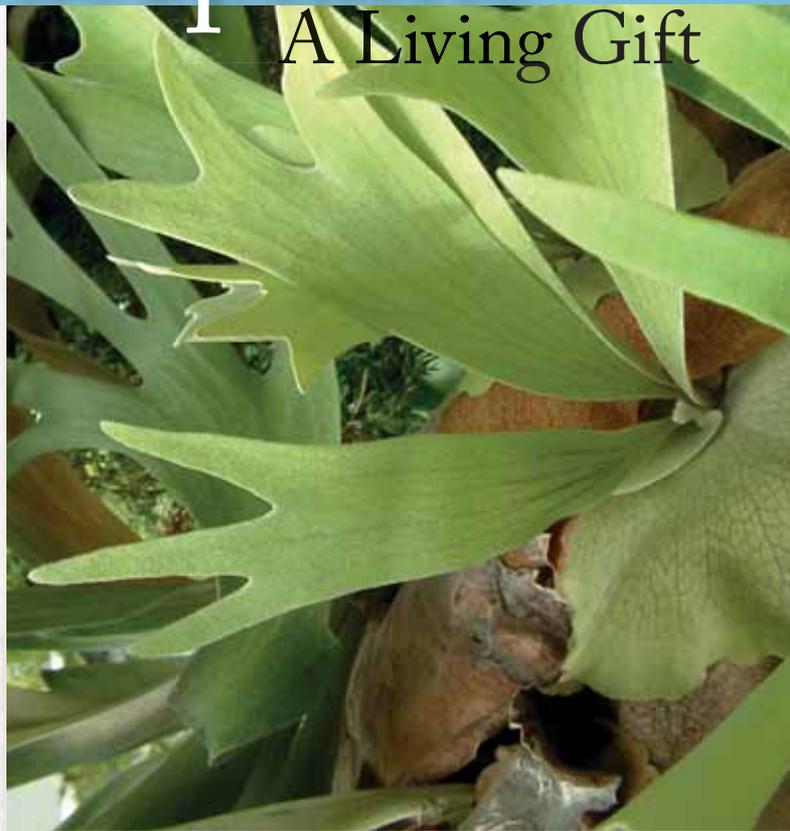
Do not cut any spears in the first season of planting. Spear numbers increase each year as the plant grows older (reaching full bearing in four to five years). In the second year, start cutting the spears as they appear (generally in August or September depending on where you live). Harvest spears every day or two and continue cutting for eight to ten weeks.

Houseplants

A Living Gift

Staghorn Ferns

These unique, subtropical, epiphytic ferns are a "must have" for any collector of houseplants. An epiphytic plant is one which anchors itself onto another plant or object for the sole purpose of support. The staghorn fern grows naturally in Australia on tree trunks, with fronds growing in the shape of a nest. These catch leaf litter, which helps to feed the plant. The deeply-lobed fronds, which resemble a stag's antlers, may grow up to 30cm long.



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Staghorn ferns prefer a warm, humid position out of direct sunlight. They are easy to grow and are cold tolerant, but will not survive frosts. During warmer months they enjoy being misted frequently, although the waxy leaves prevent excessive evaporation making them suitable to have near a heat pump. Feed them weekly during the growing season with Nitrosol Organic at a rate of 2.5mls per litre of water. Epiphytic ferns can be mounted onto a plaque, a piece of punga or bark. To do this choose your mounting, then wrap the ferns' roots with moss or Magic Mulch, which is already alive and moist and therefore helps to retain moisture. Attach the plant to the plaque/punga or bark by cutting the legs off a pair of pantyhose and place the moss-wrapped root bundle into the pantyhose, which you then tie onto the support with wire. Water the plant by plunging it into a basin or a bucket of water and hang in your chosen spot. Alternatively staghorn ferns can be grown in a hanging basket.

This unusual, easy care fern will make an interesting addition to your home or garden so why don't you hunt out a staghorn fern today.





Trachelospermum

Are you looking for a well-behaved, non-invasive climber that still has a lot going for it?

If you are, then I recommend you consider planting a trachelospermum, which is otherwise known as the Chinese star jasmine. Now don't let the word "jasmine" put you off. Even though it is like the jasmine in some characteristics, it is slower to establish and easier to control, with a beautiful sweet fragrance in summer that won't overshadow the other fragrances in your garden.

This versatile climber can grow in shade or sun, as a climber or a groundcover. I've even seen it espaliered along wires and it looked simply fantastic.

What I love about this climber is the deep green, glossy foliage and the abundance of the delightful starry flowers. A two year old specimen will double its size within two years and will eventually grow to 3m high and 3m wide.

To train it as a groundcover I use weedmat staples to hold the foliage in place for the first year. The main thing to keep it in check as a groundcover is the use of hedge shears on the plant once a year after flowering.



Golden Duel



Jasminoides

Oderings offer two great varieties of Trachelospermum

Trachelospermum jasminoides (means Jasmine like)

The most common form of trachelospermum. It is strong growing and has sweetly fragrant clusters of pure white, starry flowers which smother the bush from late spring through summer.

Trachelospermum asiaticum 'Golden Duel'

Has a stunning display of fragrant yellow-white flowers in late spring and summer. A great complement for tired walls, fences or trellis that need a lease on life.

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Stachys



Pratia

Scleranthus

Groundcover Groupies

Groundcover plants provide a multitude of really unusual colour and texture options that you can choose from for your garden.

Groovy Groundcovers

Stachys – (Lambs ears) grown for their attractive thick, silvery, woolly leaves. Mauve-pink flower spikes appear in summer.

Pratia – this attractive plant smothers itself with blue flowers. The leaves turn a grayish-green tinged with purple in winter and are deep green in spring.

Leptinella – this is one of my favourite different ground huggers with its feathery, bronzed foliage providing year round interest.

Acaena – these plants have small fern-like foliage of an intense purple which simply stands out and draws the eye to the garden.



Leptinella



Acaena

Most gardeners plant groundcovers to finish and frame the garden, whereas others use them simply for colour or as weed suppressants.

I'll bet that a lot of people don't realise what a difference groundcovers can make to a garden. People that build a garden and forget to plant these little groundcover "groupies" will often come in at later date and underplant their existing garden to give it that third dimension, and add a finishing touch. I suppose it could be called

"garden layering", and gardens that are layered with different heights, colours and textures look complete and finished, instead of flat and boring.

I recommend you plant clusters of three or five plants depending on the area you have to fill and the ultimate spread of the plant you have chosen. This will ensure that the plants won't look lost, as they would if planted on their own. Also by planting in groups you add an extra dimension and layer to your garden whether it's big or small.

Weed Suppressing Groundcovers



Lawn chamomile



Mondo Grass

Scleranthus – most us know and love this moss-like mound-forming groundcover, which looks ideal in rockeries. Even though it is small in stature it provides the garden with a formal look.

Orange Berry – whether or not you want the orange cordial tasting berries this is one of the best weed suppressing groundcovers you will find.

Mondo Grass – this small grass-like plant forms such tight clumps that it allows no room for weeds to grow. Although the black-leaved variety has been our most popular variety for a long time the green-leaved variety is now making a huge comeback and is increasingly used in landscape plans.

Lawn chamomile – this is a mat forming, non-flowering, aromatic herb that is an ideal alternative to grass or for garden underplanting.



Orangeberry



Armeria



Campanula



Phlox Wagon Wheels



Armeria variegata

Groundcovers for Colour

Armeria – this plant is often overlooked, but when it comes to small flower power this is the plant for rockeries, pots and garden borders.

Phlox – an “oldie but a goodie”, phlox is one of the most vibrant, bright groundcovers you will find. My favourite is still phlox “Daniel” but also give “Wagon Wheels” a spot in the garden.

Campanula – sports beautiful up-turned bell-shaped flowers which completely cover this compact mounded plant through spring, summer and sporadically throughout the rest of the year, available in white or blue.

Lithodora – brilliant blue or white flowers smother these semi-prostrate plants. Trim well after flowering to ensure they stay compact and bushy. This is a vibrant eye-catcher that looks stunning mixed with scleranthus.



Phlox Daniel



Lithodora

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Simple Sage

While other herbs like coriander and basil are starting to look tired, sage keeps looking good and performing. Even if you don't use sage in your cooking (and if you don't, you don't know what you are missing), sage is a great filler plant which attracts both butterflies and, even more importantly, bees to the garden.

Commonly sage is known for its value in being added to stuffing. Almost all stuffing recipes contain this peppery flavoured, pungent herb, but it can also be combined with other popular herbs such as oregano, basil and rosemary to enhance the flavour of pork, beef, lamb and chicken.

The main thing is not to overwater sage and harvest/prune often so the stems don't get woody and leggy. Generally sage will last around three to four years in the garden, but if you harvest it frequently it will reinvigorate the plant and keep it looking in its prime.

Sage is easily dried. Pick a handful of stems mid-morning and remove the bottom leaves from the stems and any insects from the leaves. Gently wash and thoroughly dry with a towel, then tie the stems together and hang upside down in a dry place (the garage is ideal). After one to two weeks check to see if it is properly dry and be sure no mould is forming. When fully dry, pull the leaves from the stem and store them in a clean glass jar for up to a year. You can also freeze the fresh, clean, dry leaves in a zip lock bag in the freezer.

Sage can be grown almost anywhere but does best when planted in average soil in full sun or part-shade in pots or the garden. Odeurings stock five varieties of sage.

Common sage – *Salvia officinalis* is an ideal choice for gardens or pots. This evergreen herb has grey-green aromatic leaves and reaches a height of 80cm x 40cm wide.

Sage purple – *Salvia leucophylla* has a slightly woolly, purplish leaf which are strongly aromatic and slightly bitter. You can also eat the bluish-lavender flowers. This plant can grow to 2m tall.

Pineapple sage – *Salvia elegans* has oval, hairy leaves with a pineapple-like aroma. Brilliant red flowers appear on long spikes in summer and autumn; it grows 1m high and wide.

Sage tricolour – *Salvia officinalis* 'Tricolour' is a useful herb with attractive green and cream, pink-tinged aromatic leaves. It's an ideal choice for containers with a height of only 65cm.

Sage golden – *Salvia officinalis* 'Variegata' offers an aromatic, decorative, variegated look. It is good in rockeries, growing to 80cm tall.

According to the book '*Companion Planting in New Zealand*' by Brenda Little, sage protects carrots against carrot-fly and cabbages against cabbage moth. Cabbages also taste more tender when grown near sage, and dried sage sprinkled around plants will protect against mildew. Any natural preventative like this, which we can easily achieve from home, is worth a crack in my opinion.



Sage purple



Pineapple sage



Sage tricolour



Sage golden

Pickling & Preserving

Autumn in the garden seems to be accompanied by an over-abundance of crops that we either let to go to waste or give away to neighbours and family. Pickling and preserving excess garden produce that you can't eat all at once is a great way to get the most out of your garden. How many of us have bought beetroot, gherkins, jalapeno peppers, sundried tomatoes or even different tomato or pepper chutneys from the supermarket? I honestly believe that gardeners are often missing a vital step in their gardening experience if you don't try pickling and preserving some of your own bountiful crops.

Pickling is one of the oldest known ways for preserving food and is accomplished by including a preservation process using vinegar and/or oils which penetrate the food and prevent deterioration. Pickles and chutneys are a great way to use up fruit you may have not used because of its unusual shape or weather markings, as well as excess crops. When making pickles and chutneys the appearance of the fruit doesn't matter.

The reason food lasts longer when preserved is because bacteria can not grow in vinegar, so well before the freezer was invented this method of food preservation provided the family with healthy produce all year round.

You should try some of these tried and true recipes. Also ask the older generations in your family to share their recipes, that is often where a lot of the best tasting recipes come from.

Kaye Odering's Grandmother's Tomato Relish Recipe

Boil 3kg tomatoes, 12 onions, ¼ tablespoon of salt, ¾ cup of water, 600ml of vinegar, 2 tablespoons of mustard powder, 2 tablespoons of curry powder and five or six chilli's, for one hour. Thicken with 2 tablespoons of cornflour mixed with vinegar.

Sweet Apple Chutney

This recipe is hundreds of years old and has been passed down the Simcock family for generations. Thanks to Val and John for this recipe.

Finely chop or put into a food processor 1.4kg of quality cooking apples, 230gms of dates, 450gms of onions. Put into a pan with 480mls of spiced vinegar and cook until soft. Add 450gms of brown sugar, a pinch of salt and bring to boil, stirring to avoid burning. Stew for a short while. Mix 2 large tablespoons of cornflour with a little spiced vinegar to make a smooth paste. Add this to the fruit mix, and bring to the boil, stirring to prevent burning. When the mix has thickened, put it into sterilized jars, and seal.



Preserving Beetroot

My mum made this recipe recently and we had home-preserved beetroot throughout the Christmas holidays. It didn't last long because it was so delicious. This recipe can be used to preserve other vegetables as well.

Cook enough beetroot to fill 4-6 jars until soft. Leave whole or slice and put into sterilized jars. Now boil 3 cups of water, 1½ cups of vinegar and 7 tablespoons of brown sugar until the sugar is dissolved and liquid is piping hot. Pour the hot liquid over the beetroot, then seal. This will keep for six months but is best if left for two weeks before eating.

Thai style jalapeno sauce

Vivian (one of our staff) recently brought some of this chutney into work and it has a nice little bite but is quite sweet and not too hot.

Heat 2 teaspoons oil, 30 fresh jalapeno peppers (sliced and seeded), 6 cloves of garlic, 1 cup minced onions and 1½ teaspoons of salt and sauté for five minutes. Add ½ cup of sugar and 4 cups of water to the mixture and cook for 20 minutes, stirring often. Leave to cool. When cool whizz in a food processor until smooth. Add 2 cups of vinegar and bring to the boil. Once hot put into sterilized bottles. This will last for six months in the fridge.

Best pickled onions

Kaye Odering's mother had this recipe that Kaye's kids are now also making. Delicious.

Cover 2.2 kgs of skinned pickling onions with ½-1 cup of salt and stand for 24 hours. After the 24 hours put 950mls of vinegar and 450grams of sugar into a pot and boil. Take some cloves, 2 tablespoons flour, 2 tablespoons of turmeric, 1 tablespoon of curry powder, 1 dessertspoon mustard powder and whizz into a paste with a little vinegar in a food processor, then add to the boiling mixture. Boil until thickened. Add the onions (do not wash) to sterilized jars and pour over the liquid and seal. This should be left for three weeks before eating, and keeps for 6 months.

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