



HRAA St Ives Gardening Club

Gardener's Question Time

Wednesday 15 November 2017

1. I have a Japanese Acer in a tub , and have had it for about 10 years. Every year towards the end of August the leaves shrivel up and fall off. This year I repotted it, kept it well watered, put it in afternoon shade, still the same. How can I keep it in leaf all summer please?

Japanese maples are subject to many environmental stressors such as drought, poor drainage, too much moisture, erratic watering, temperature extremes, too much mulch, planting too deeply, soil compaction, etc. Sometimes the bark can freeze and kill the cambium which can cause dieback. If your maple is located in a southern exposure or a windy spot, it can suffer extremes from wind and/or cold. You may want to protect with stakes and burlap about 18 inches from the plants to create a wind barrier. Do not drape the burlap over the shrubs. In this case, being in a pot, try to locate in a sheltered dappled shade zone, avoid over watering keep lightly moist not heavily damp – easier said than done. Ensure you are using ericaceous compost and add 10% by volume horticultural grit

You will have to wait until spring for new growth and carefully prune out any dead wood. Make sure mulch is no thicker than several inches and keep away from the base of the trunk.



Examples of Wind Scorched
foliage of Japanese Maples



2. Dahlias.....when to bring on in spring. This year I followed Monty Don's advice it was far too soon ended up with very leggy shoots which made for very tall plants. Can you pinch out? Do you need to lift tubers down here or can you chance it and leave them?

Gardener's world recommend February to March to bring on Dahlia tubers to make suitable Cutting material. Personally I prefer April, having started dormant tubers into growth during mid March which have been left in containers, in a sheltered position over winter and then brought into my cold shed greenhouse in March. When growths reach about 4" to 6" The cutting material is taken and rooted in a 50% compost 50 % grit mix, in pots each supporting 1 – 3 cuttings.





It is quite acceptable to pinch out the growing tips of Dahlias if they start to get too leggy. In fact this applies to the majority of subjects which are grown specifically for flowering.

It is also acceptable to leave Dahlia tubers in the ground so long as the location is sheltered, not cold and wet, and has a good 4" to 6" of leaf mould or straw lain over the root/tuber zone - a 12" diameter should be adequate. I have kept tubers in plastic tubs for the last 3 years and losses have been miniscule. Cuttings taken in April were sold as mature plants at the September Flower & Produce Show.

3. Roses. Please can you recommend the best spray for black spot and mildew and how soon to do it. Can or should anything be done over winter?





Black Spot on Roses

Badly affected plants can shed almost all their leaves and their vigour is greatly reduced. The symptoms are so severe that, anecdotally, the disease has been blamed for a decline in the popularity of roses in UK gardens in recent decades.

Control

Non-chemical control:

Collect and destroy fallen leaves in the autumn, or bury under a layer of mulch away from Roses. Prune out all stem lesions in spring before leaves appear. These actions will help delay the onset of the disease, but are of limited value because spores are bound to blow in on wind-blown rain from elsewhere.

Popular garden varieties of hybrid teas, floribundas, climbers and patio types are usually susceptible. Gardeners may gain a few years' respite by planting the newest varieties which claim resistance, but as discussed above, this usually does not last. Older species types are little affected.

Chemical control

The fungicides tebuconazole (Bayer Fungus Fighter Concentrate), tebuconazole with trifloxystrobin (Bayer Fungus Fighter Plus), and triticonazole (Scotts Fungus Clear Ultra and Scotts Fungus Clear Ultra Gun) are all labelled for the control of rose black spot.

The following products contain a combination of both insecticide and fungicide, enabling the control of both insect pests and disease: myclobutanil containing cypermethrin (Bayer MultiRose 2, Doff Rose Shield, Vitax Rosegarde, Westland Rose Rescue); tebuconazole containing deltamethrin (Bayer Multirose Concentrate 2), and triticonazole containing acetamiprid (Scotts Roseclear Ultra and Scotts Roseclear Ultra Gun).

Where a proprietary product contains an insecticide as well as a fungicide it is preferable to use an alternative stand alone product if pests are not a problem on the plants treated.

4. Pansies: My winter flowering pansies appear to be being eaten by something. Have you any ideas as to what it might be and action to take?

Mice, Slugs and Snails are the usual suspects. However, contrary to general opinion, there are small birds such as sparrows, finches and tits which will appear to peck at the petals of Pansies. Squirrels are also known to be partial to Pansy flowers once they have gotten the taste. So whilst there are the usual controls for the former – bird life and squirrels are a bit more difficult.

Recently when Jo and I were up in Bakewell, Derbyshire we saw a front garden planted with Pansies which had then been protected by small domed tents of chicken wire suggesting that birds or squirrels likely caused problems to the owners plants in the past.

5. What plant subjects can be reasonably rooted in water rather than investing in special cutting compost?





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plantpak

REG DES



6. I planted both white and red onions this year and the crop of white ones were very good but the red onions were very poor. Any ideas why?

Red Ray*: Onion Sets by Suttons Seeds - Sow Spring April / May : Harvest September

Electric: Sets from T&M October plant - Harvest August / September

Kamal F1: Seed only Spring Sow (March)

Red Arrow: Sets by Suttons and Dobies Spring Plant

Red Baron**: Only use heat treated sets for autumnal plantings

Red Brunswick: seed only currently available, Spring Sowing, October harvest
supplier: Victoriana Nursery

Reds generally do not over winter well, they do not like erratically changing weather conditions, Tend to bolt more in the South East [linked to day lengths] better in the North longer summer day lengths. Also heat treated sets do better when weather is erratic during early summer.



Vegetable Delights 2017 @ 53 Green Leys



The End