

Gardening Articles for week ending 31<sup>st</sup> October 2015  
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## NOVEMBER GARDENING

With the passing of our traditional planting time (Labour Weekend) we are at that point of the season where its about 8 weeks to the longest day. This means that over the next 16 weeks we are going to have more hours of sunlight than any other similar part of the year.

Think about that for a moment that is the time frame of nearly 4 months and most vegetables that we grow will mature within that period of time/daylight hours.

So not only is the growing conditions of the weather supposed to be suitable for planting out the more tender plants such as tomatoes and capsicums it is the optimum time for light hours.

As I sit here writing on Saturday, Labour Weekend, I look outside and see its sunny but a chilly wind which is really flapping my NZ flag.

This makes me very grateful to have glasshouses where my tomato plants are warm and secure from the elements. They are sharing this protected environment with cucumbers, capsicums, cayenne peppers, okra, bitter melon and seedlings of pumpkins.

Most of which would both not survive outside of the glasshouse or pack a big sad and not grow.

I pity those gardeners that are facing similar weather conditions, wanting to get their more tender plants going outdoors so they dont miss this optimum time.

Till the weather settles you can use various ways to protect your plants so you can have those early tomatoes to pick along with other vegetables.

For upright growing plants such as a tomato or capsicum place four strong stakes deeply driven into the soil about 30 to 40cm apart at the cardinal points, the first stake should be facing the prevailing wind, the second about 40 cm behind and the other two diagonally opposed to the first two.

Plant your seedling tomato in the centre putting some Neem Tree Granules in the planting hole along with Rok Solid. If psyllids have been a problem in past seasons water into the root zone Silicon & Boron Soil Drench before sprinkling Wallys Secret Tomato Food with Neem Granules onto the soil.

Take out your plastic wrap and wrap a couple of times around one stake starting about 4 cm above the soil level.

Then run the wrap around the outside of the other 3 stakes and back to the starting stake keeping the bottom of the wrap about 4cm above the soil. This allows an air passage for the wind to pass through and strengthen the base of the plant against wind damage later on when the shelter is removed.

You run the wrap around two or three times up the stakes to about 40cm in height.

Later as the tomato grows you can add more wrap to a higher level.

If your stakes start to bend inwards simply put a couple of slats of wood across the tops of the stakes and secure with a small nail. That forms a cross above your plant.

Sprays of Silicon Cell Strengthener combined with Silicon Super Spreader every two weeks at the end of the day for strengthening the tomato's cell against psyllids feeding.

For dwarf beans make some hoops out of number 8 wire to place into the soil about 20cm apart down the row. The hoops should be about 20 cm tall in the centre with a similar spread.

Down the furrow where you are going to plant your seeds sprinkle the new product, Calcium & Health along with Rok Solid then plant your bean seeds. Over the hoops place crop cover and secure down on all sides. Later when weather settles remove and side dress the plants with sheep manure pellets.

For climbing beans plant in the same manner in front of the frame they are going to climb and then out about 20cm drive home some strong stakes every 50cm in a line. Staple windbreak to the stakes to protect the beans while establishing. Windbreak can be used similarly to help protect other crops.

Hardy plants such as brassicas, silverbeet, lettuce and celery do not require extra protection but will grow faster if it is provided.

Growing your own vegetables naturally without using chemicals is extremely good for your health and the the health of your family. They taste much better than commercially grown produce and are more filling when considering weight problems.

Weight problems sometimes are caused by the body not getting the goodness it requires from the food you are consuming so it calls for more food hoping the next lot will have more goodness and be more satisfying.

To make this point I read this week that in the United States there are more than 34,000 pesticides derived from about 600 basic ingredients that are currently registered for use. I dont think there are that many in NZ yet but there already are far too many; most if not all are unnecessary.

If Certified Organic Producers can grow their crops without using any of these chemicals then they are proof it can be done. Logic also tells me that for thousands of years people grew crops without harmful chemicals.

Using these chemicals means that the general population illnesses are on the rise, including asthma, autism, learning disabilities, birth defects, reproductive dysfunction, diabetes, Parkinson's and Alzheimer's diseases, along with several types of cancer.

Their connection to pesticide exposure becomes more evident with every new study conducted.

We see that in our day to day lives; for instance one person I spoke to this week told me that 3 friends had been diagnosed with cancer in the last few days. I quote the following from a recent study:

Agricultural practices that rely on this type of chemical addiction are stripping the soil of nutrients with remarkable implications.

They are devastating the nutritional value of crops, making dramatic changes at an alarming rate in less than a lifetime, to be specific.

As an example, there has been a 41.1 to 100% decrease in vitamin A in 6 foods: apple, banana, broccoli, onion, potato, and tomato.

Of them, both onion and potato saw a 100% loss of vitamin A in a 48-year span from, 1951-1999.

Its a two sided sword, the chemicals pollute the environment and poison our food while vital minerals are lost. Is it any wonder that there are more sick people than ever along with health problems starting at much younger ages than we saw 50 years ago.

Gardeners that I talk to every week from all over NZ who are growing as much of their own produce as possible tell me that their gardens are great and that they and their children are of good health seldom seeing a doctor because there is no need.

Remember the first recognized doctor who stated the bases of health saying; Let food be thy Medicine and Medicine be Thy Food. Say no More!

A couple of things; hang those Sticky Yellow White Fly Traps to catch adult pests insects which means those ones dont get to breed.

I like the new blue plastic meat trays from one of the Supermarket chains, ideal for placing under your seedling punnets.

I was awarded with keeping a rare variety of tomato seed viable for just over 25 years by storing them in a glass jar in a fridge for all that time. A strike rate of about 20% has given me a tomato called Manawatu Special originating from Europe and the First World War by a returning soldier.

Excellent tomato; I was given a few seeds many years ago and grew them to produce lots of seeds for more plants to sell back when I had plant shops and nurseries.

I had thought after all those years they would have lost the germ.