



**Thompsons Garden Centre
Summer 2011**

Colour Throughout Summer

Weed control

Water Wise Gardening

www.thompsons-plants.co.uk

Welcome to the summer edition of our Garden Club Newsletter

As the summer months approach us, we're all spending more and more time in our gardens trying to achieve our own perfect environment to relax in and enjoy the warmer weather that's on it's way.

We've got some great planting suggestions for you in this edition of the newsletter including our large bedding plant range as well as popular shrubs for your garden.

We also have articles on weed control, water wise gardening and gardening jobs for the month.

Enjoy Your Gardening

Colour Throughout Summer

Cosmos Sonata

These bedding plants are for the border where they can be arranged in groups with other tall plants. Growing to an approximate height of 60cm, these undemanding plants will flourish in warm sun and poor soils.

Available in a mixture of colours carmine, pink, white and mixed, flowering from July to September.

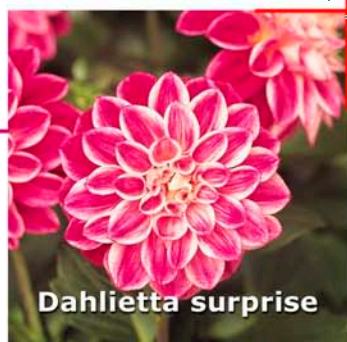
Gazania

Very early and free flowering even in dull, cool weather. Naturally compact, strong basal branches, ensuring multiflowering plants. Ideal for planting in your borders and containers. Flowers all through summer.



Dahlietta

Dahlietta's are small and charming and bloom profusely throughout the summer with beautiful flowers. Growing to approximately 10 inches tall they can be used as splashes of colour throughout the garden, in window boxes, or in containers. Plant them in full sun and keep evenly moist.



Dahlietta surprise

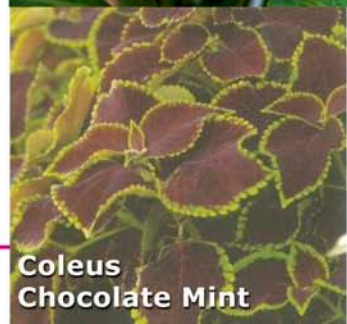
Coleus

Coleus has colourful variegated leaves that can be green, pink, yellow, dark purple, maroon and red. It grows well in moist well-drained soil, and typically grows to a height of 0.5m to 1m. In bright, hot areas the colours of the plant can be more intense.



Dahlietta surprise

We have 6 varieties to choose from; Crimson Velvet, Combat, Kong Red, Kong Rose, Peters Wonder and Chocolate Mint (Pictured).



**Coleus
Chocolate Mint**

Dianthus

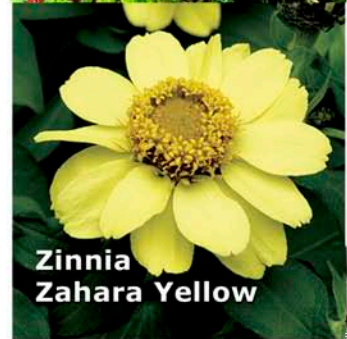
Great in your gardens or pots, this small, compact plant provides great colour in late summer. Growing to approximately 8 inches in height and spread, it's available in a mixture of colours.



**Coleus
Kong Red**

Zinnia

Heat-loving plants that have very low water needs, and are outstanding in sunny, hot and dry conditions. This all round winner assures a big impact and care-free, season long shows in your borders and containers.



**Zinnia
Zahara Yellow**

Choose from Zinnia Zahara Scarlet, Yellow (Pictured) and Fire.

'Summer Fun', With Lovely Lavatera

Get ready for summer fun this July with the help of a classic, yet always fresh plant - Lavatera. Popular name mallow, it's a fantastic, floriferous shrub that grows quickly and vigorously. An established specimen may put on thousands of flowers, each one of which is a delight to the eye and a draw for bees and other beneficial insects.



Mallows are true sun-worshippers and also thrive in drier soils. Once established they are happy in droughty conditions (but keep them watered as they settle in). Drought tolerance cuts down on the worry of watering, especially if you're going away and contributes to their credentials as 'sustainable' plants for today's gardens. Another tick in the box for sustainability is that because they attract beneficial insects, they are a great companion plant to grow with roses. As well as complementing the fabulous blooms, their power to bring in beneficial insects will help to invite natural pest control into your garden.

There are some real favourites in the Lavatera stable, like Lavatera 'Barnsley' with its white flowers with red eyes, the evocatively named Lavatera 'Burgundy Wine' flowers profusely and bears dark pink flowers. 'Kew Rose' is another winner, bearing loads of flowers right through the summer, in this case bright pink. Each of these will reach a height and spread of 2m in suitable conditions and the gorgeous flowers are all a similar size at approximately 7cm across.

Lavatera is an excellent beginners plant, making it a good housewarming or, retirement gift (for someone who's never had time to do much gardening) or even something to encourage a child's interest. The vigorous growth and copious flowering is very rewarding and the fact that hard pruning in early spring will be rewarded by vigorous new growth and even more flowers in the coming summer will help a novice to get their confidence with the pruning shears.

If you've got school-aged children anywhere near you'll need no reminding that school breaks up for the long hols this month. With this in mind, the garden can serve as both a refuge and a destination for entertainment, depending on your own priorities. Buying and planting flowering shrubs is a fun activity in its own right and will deliver instant results and brighten any border. With options on offer like Lavatera, what are you waiting for?



Weed Control

The manual removal of weeds is the old-fashioned way of weeding. While it may supply some people with necessary exercise, most of us consider it the biggest back-breaking chore in gardening. Blistered hands and aching backs are common complaints after digging or hoeing.

Sometimes it is not only the gardener who is damaged. Digging and hoeing can damage the roots of wanted plants, reducing their vigour and encouraging the formation of suckers.

Few of us have enough time to do the jobs we enjoy, so finding a way of saving time on weeding is a big benefit. It is possible to treat large areas quickly and with little effort.

When digging out weeds or hoeing, the gardener will bring thousands of weed seeds to the surface where they will find the right conditions to germinate. This is not the case with chemical control which does not disturb the soil. Breaking up the roots of perennial weeds, like couch, ground elder and bindweed, leaves behind small pieces that can quickly grow into a new plant.

Weedol MAX

Weedol MAX Concentrate and Weedol Gun! MAX will show visible effects in just 1 hour and kill the weed in just a few days. It contains pelargonic acid, an active ingredient that is found in nature.



TumbleWeed

TumbleWeed is a systemic weedkiller designed for tough jobs, it kills from the inside out, right down to the deepest root. A job this thorough takes time. It may be three to four weeks before the task is complete. Best used in spring and summer. Children and pets need not be excluded from treated areas once dry.



Roundup GC

Roundup GC Weedkiller is a systemic weedkiller. Systemic weedkillers are designed for tough as well as all round weedkilling. They kill from the inside out – right down to the deepest root so weeds can't re-grow. Leave weeds 7 days before digging or soil cultivation, for the weedkiller to move to the root. Concentrates can be applied either through a watering can or a pressure sprayer. Biodegradable. Children and pets need not be excluded from treated areas.



Weedkillers are best sprayed in the evening when it's cooler. This gives maximum time for the chemical to be absorbed and ensure good results.

Summer Fun

Quality Garden Furniture at Thompsons



Antibe Collection

A simple traditional style of fine wire-work furniture in a subtle distressed pale green and cream finish. Ideal in small areas as the items just blend into the background. They are light in weight and easy to store.



Antibe Tea For Two

Set Consists of:

- 1 x Folding table
60cm D x 73cm H
- 2 x Folding chair
95cm H x 39cm W x 50cm D



Anitibe 4 Seater

Set Consists of:

- 1 x Table 100cm D x 73cm H
- 2 x Folding Chair
95cm H 39cm W 50cm D
- 2 x Armchair
102cm H x 60cm W x 58cm D

Milano Four Seater

Pictured left. Manufactured from powder coated aluminium, and is completely maintenance free. Textaline material provides all weather performance.

Set consists of

- 1 x 106cm Round table
- 4 x Recliner chairs
- 1 x 2.7m parasol
- 1 x parasol base

Countess Tea for Two set

Round table and two chairs made from rattan seagrass. Ideal for your conservatory.



Manhattan Seat Swing

Made from all weather textaline fabric. Powder coated steel frame with a UV resistant canopy. Available in green and blue.

Rose and Lily Bench

4ft decorative bench with cast iron sides and back and a varnished finish.





Better Barbecues with Tregothnan Charcoal



To keep your barbecues burning this summer we've got a new, superior quality of charcoal for you. Produced locally in Kent, Tregothnan Charcoal has many benefits to other brands of charcoal.

- Much easier to light than imported charcoal or briquettes. Simply wrap Tregothnan charcoal on a bed of paper and light with a match.
- No need for chemical-based firelighters or lighter fuel. These are an additional expense that can taint the food.
- An intense, even cooking temperature is reached quickly in 15 minutes.
- Economical to use. You only need a small amount of charcoal to produce sufficient heat. Our home-grown charcoal is lighter by volume compared to the denser, imported briquettes.
- The burn is cleaner producing less flame and smoke. There are no additives in the charcoal such as artificial fillers and binding agents.
- Produced solely from local, sustainable, coppice woodland (FSC Pure certified) therefore protecting indigenous plant and wildlife species and encouraging biodiversity.
- Reduces the use of imported charcoal which helps preserve endangered rainforests and mangroves as well as reducing transportation miles.



Tregothnan charcoal is produced using wood sourced solely from the Estate's FSC PURE-certified coppice woodlands on Seven Mile Lane, near Mereworth in Kent.



Water Wise Gardening

At the time of writing this article we've had an unusually dry April and start of May, with periods of very hot weather and below average rainfall. Unless the weather takes a turn for the worse we could be facing a long dry summer. To us gardeners this means we need to be a little more water wise.

The first thing we can do is to store the water when it does rain by using waterbutts to collect rain water off of your roofs. Did you know that in recent years, London has a monthly average rainfall of 50mm. This equates to roughly 50 litres per sqm of roof, giving a rain water yield from an averaged sized semi detached house of 2500 litres per month. By tapping into this source (excuse the pun!), we can store much needed water for those periods without rainfall.

Water efficiently. Water in the evenings when it's cooler as this reduces the risk of evaporation. Water your plants slowly to allow the water to soak into the soil rather than running off. Where possible use a watering can so that you can water at the base of the plant.

Choose the right plants. Generally plants that have grey, hairy, fleshy, small or needle like leaves tend to do well in dry conditions as they lose less moisture through their leaves. Larger, broad leaved plants lose moisture through evaporation.

Plants such as Lavender, Rosemary, Cistus, Cytisus, Cotoneaster and leptospernum will perform well in dry situations. Many alpine plants will also do well especially Cerastium, Phlox, Sedums and Thyme.

Bedding plants that can withstand drier conditions include Geraniums, Gazanias, Osteospermums, Marigolds, Tagetes and Verbenas to name but a few.

Lawns can be thirsty, particularly if you want to hang on to the lush green colour throughout summer. Try giving it a long soak once a week, rather than a little sprinkle every other day, again making sure you water in the evening to reduce evaporation.

My main advice would be to not worry, as there are many ways of watering and many plants suitable for all conditions. Having written all this we'll probably have a wet summer after all, and all the speculation of a summer hosepipe ban would have been long forgotten.



If we are lucky, July should be the month for even the less dedicated sun worshippers among us to get out and catch some rays. There aren't many better places to do this than your own garden, patio or balcony. Private, economical and when you fancy something to eat or drink, just pop inside to the fridge. So much better than fighting it out with the holiday-making hordes!

If July brings out the human sun worshippers, it is also the time to see and enjoy the plants that are happiest when the rays are beating down on them. *Hibiscus syriacus* is one such shrub that performs best when the sun is out and the mercury's rising. If you've got a sunny place in your garden with neutral or slightly acidic soil, then *Hibiscus syriacus* could be just the plant to deliver bags of colour and fun.

Given a bit of heat, this shrub really does flower well, and what flowers they are! 'Diana' bears big, white flowers, up to 12cm across. The blooms of 'Woodbridge' are a rich pink, with beautiful dark centres up to 10cm in diameter and the flowers of 'Oiseau Bleu' are a gorgeous bright blue. *Hibiscus syriacus* 'Red Heart' is another lovely plant that produces flowers with delicate white petals and rich, dark red centres.

A medium to large deciduous shrub, *Hibiscus syriacus* can reach a height of up to 3m and a width of about 2m. They are perfect for shrub or mixed borders and are also an attractive accompaniment to the various pastel shades of Hibiscus flowers.

July is when most of them come out to salute the sun, and this performance can carry on into early autumn, but do make sure you keep this shrub well watered through the growing season. *Syriacus* varieties are mainly frost-hardy, but ask when you buy if the variety you have chosen needs any special attention in cold weather.

Hibiscus syriacus is not a demanding plant to maintain, making it an ideal choice for people with a busy lifestyle, or newcomers to gardening. Tip-prune in late winter and early spring to maintain a healthy framework of branches in the shape that you want.

Summer Gardening Jobs

Make the most of your bedding plants by dead heading them regularly, this will encourage repeat flowering and keep your colourful bedding displays looking fresh. It's ideal for plants like Petunias, Impatiens, Marigolds and Begonias as well as other plants like Rhododendrons & Roses.

Watering can play a very important part in your garden during summer, particularly in periods of dry weather. Containers and hanging baskets need to be watered regularly as they dry out very quickly, don't forget your fruit, vegetables, lawns and borders as well.



Try to avoid watering during the intense heat of the day. Give everything a thorough soaking first thing in the morning or late in the day.

Watch out for pests and diseases! It's at this time of year you're most likely to encounter a pest or disease. By keeping a regular check on your plants and vegetables you can prevent a problem from getting worse. Read our plant doctor at www.thompsons-plants.co.uk for extra tips and advice.

To achieve a perfect lawn this summer you're going to need to give it some regular attention, so mow it once a week. If your lawn is looking pale, apply a suitable lawn feed, and don't forget to water in periods of dry weather.

Feeding your containerised plants will help them to produce more flowers over a longer period of time. We recommend using Miracle-Gro plant food. Roses and other flowering shrubs will produce more flowers when using a feed like Toprose.

For those of you with greenhouses, make sure you have good ventilation during the hot days of summer by opening doors and vents. Use a fabric mesh or coolglass to help keep the temperature from drying out your plants quickly.

Later on in summer, plant your autumn flowering bulbs such as Colchicums & Crocus for colourful displays in Autumn.

For more monthly tips and advice visit our website: www.thompsons-plants.co.uk



Contact Us

**Thompson's Garden Club
Perry Street
Chislehurst
Kent BR7 6HA**

Chislehurst: 020 8302 2455

Newchurch: 01983 865292

Petham: 01227 700449

Shepperton: 01932 781474

Welling: 020 8856 2933

Email: feedback@thompsons-plants.com

Website: www.thompsons-plants.co.uk

www.thompsons-plants.co.uk