

Chrysanthemum

The spring season has started in the garden; members are already taking chrysanthemum cutting from last years stools (the plant when it finished flowering last year). These have been kept dry and protected in the greenhouse or a frost free place. Side shoots are taken when they are about 2" to 3" long, dipped in a hormone rooting compound and placed in seed compost to root. It takes 2 to 3 weeks to root successfully, during this time if possible keep your cutting warm at a temperature of between 40°F and 50°F on a warm day it is good idea to give a light spray with water to prevent the foliage drying out and the cuttings wilting. Cuttings will turn a lighter green when they have rooted. Plant our into 3" pots when rooted using a mixture of multi purpose compost and horticultural grit. Place in a cooler place and after 2 weeks spray with rose 3 in 1, Fungal and green fly killer, Avoid spraying in full sun as this will scorch the leaves and damages young plants. On warm days it is good idea to vent the greenhouse.

Dahlia's

March / April are the time when dahlia tubers sprout into life. Tubers can be bought at any good garden centre, for beginners ball or decorative type will give good results. Cover the tubers with damp peat compost but leave the crown open to allow the shoots to develop and grow to a height that has two pairs of leaves on them. Trim these off just under the lower pair of leaf joints, this allows the crown to develop more shoots. Using hormone rooting compound place these cutting into watered compost to exclude air from the base of the cutting, for best results keep cutting moist at all times, do not over water at this stage. After 2 weeks pot into 3" pots and when large into 5" pots, Harden off, in May plant out after all frost, Water well through summer and enjoy the colour.

Vegetables.

Don't despair with the cold bad weather, your veg seeds will catch up as the weather improves - planting now will only cause the seeds to rot in your seed compost.

Leeks, Onions and Parsnips are the exception to this and can be sown now in a tray in the Greenhouse or window bottom

Potatoes are now ready to chit - this is placing individual potatoes in upright position in a tray or egg boxes are good to use for this purpose.