

Rod Hill's Gardening Tips

CORFE MULLEN IN THE GARDEN

MARCH / APRIL 2014

I love this time of year when the days have more daylight and the sun gives us more warmth and the sap begins to rise pushing off the old leaves and showing us new buds on the branches and the whole circle of life begins all over again.

How fortunate we are to live on a hill with very sandy soil, where in most cases the water runs off or is absorbed by the soil.

As we look back to the inclement weather, all this rain will not do our lawns any good especially if they have been cut too tight back in the autumn time.

As I look round my garden I can see the stalks of my Nyrreemes which have now gone over and nearby I will be watching out for the new growth of my Fritillaries and those small Snake head fritillaries which will be giving me a show.. That reminds me, I will be on the lookout for those lily beetles on the Fritillaries and get rid of them appropriately. With the crocuses, daffodils Alliums and Tulips I'm hoping to have plenty of colour for Springtime. I must be careful not to dig too deep around the borders to disturb any of the established bulbs.

If you haven't pruned your Buddleia's or Mahonia's don't leave it too late keep them under control.

Clean away any of the old leaves from around Bush Roses or any grown in pots dispose of, but not on the compost heap] don't do any pruning after the middle of March and feed them up with some good compost before applying a fertilizer.

Clematis should not be overlooked. Early flowering can have a light prune and those that flower during July / August onward prune hard as they flower on the new growth. I like to give them a drink Mixing 2 gallons of water with a capful of Tomerite they will always reward you.

April time we will have to give serious thought to our lawns. If it is very compacted we will need to airate the top by putting in the fork, a very laborious job but, on a nice sunny morning with a cup of coffee and a slice of cake nearby, plan to do just one strip at a time depending on the size of lawn and mark where you finish and continue over a period of time. Gritty sand or compost from an old grow bag is useful to brush into all the holes that have been made.

Mixing some grass seed with a handful or two of good damp compost and left for a week in a bag can be useful to put down on any bare patches

Maybe your lawn just needs a little bit of TLC scarifying by hand or using an electric scarifier to get rid of moss before giving the first cut with the blades high

I have one or two repair jobs to do where the mole went through and left some bad indentations where the soil has dropped. If he comes into my garden this year I'll be waiting for him.

Keep an eye around the Garden Centres and plan your colour schemes for summer bedding plants.

Happy Gardening

from Rodders, the retired gardener