

GARDENING GLORY

By Brenda Visser

Summer is here! Okay maybe not true summer, according to seasonal clocks, but it is definitely time for gardeners to get outside and be busy. The earth is coming alive with colour and growth. Garden centers are opening, and any seeds you may have planted early indoors may now begin to outgrow their pots.

Once the danger of frost is past, seeds, vegetable transplants such as peppers and tomatoes, bedding plants, and hanging baskets can all be placed outside. The common rule of thumb for frost dates is the Victoria Day weekend in May. After this time, it is unlikely that frost will kill any young plants. However, as we have just experienced this winter, weather is not always predictable, so it may not hurt to pay extra attention to forecasts for a few weeks after planting to protect the work you have done. If there is a frost warning, it is recommended that plants be covered overnight. I like using old bed sheets or lightweight fabric. Be gentle

covering the tender plants, as you do not want the stems to break.

Vegetable gardens can be planted sooner than the long weekend, especially those crops that like cooler weather, such as spinach, onions, potatoes and peas. Watch for those early spring crops that will soon be ready- rhubarb and asparagus, for example.

If you would rather wait, and not worry about frost, there is still a lot that can be done in the yard. Donna White from Green Things Garden Centre on Highway 2 recommends raking, fertilizing, mulching, pruning, and planning are all great



activities for the late spring season. She also says that "If people are tired of winter, come browse through our greenhouses!" They are full of colour and greenery. Some of your planning can take place here.

Plants that love heat can be put in the ground by mid-June. This could include beans or cucumbers, and many more. Many crops can have repeated sowings of seed throughout the summer. Last October, I was eating fresh yellow beans that had been planted in August.

Information about gardening abounds, and by asking questions, doing some reading, and trial-and-error, you can have a beautiful garden to enjoy for many months. Most gardeners are enthusiastic to share their knowledge, and of course, employees of garden centres are a great place to start. Ritchie's Feed & Seed on Highway 29 (www.ritchiefeed.com) and Westgate Landscape Supply in Gananoque have much experience and expertise.

I also highly recommend joining a garden club. Not only does your knowledge grow, but friendships can as well. Seed exchanges, plant sales, and perennial plant sharing is an economical way to expand your garden.

Keep your eyes open for yard sales and non-profit sales- I have found some great garden treasures this way.

With the wealth of information about gardening in our area, beginners and experts alike can enjoy this fantastic time of year. Avid gardeners are in their glory! **LH**

