

# May Newsletter

## Senetti - the big hit outdoor cineraria



No doubt you've seen or read about this stonking new plant on BBC Gardeners' World or in the gardening press and you'll be mesmerised by its amazing colour. This is a plant with the 'wow-factor' and it will give your pots and borders fantastic colour, even on the dullest of early summer days.



Being a relative of cineraria it is not totally hardy, and it will benefit from regular deadheading to help prolong its floral display. You'll also need to keep the feed going around it too; I'd recommend a high potash tomato fertiliser, such as Tomorite. We will certainly be 'test-driving' this plant around the garden centre over the coming months to see how it fares, but if first impressions are anything to go by, we think this is going to be a knockout plant for future years.

## Best of bedding

We're all looking for colour - that's the clear message as far as our bedding plants sales have proved so far this season. Up to the minute varieties and modern advances with slow release feeds essentially mean that plants are usually much further advanced by this time of the year and are coming into colour. There is absolutely no harm buying your bedding 'in colour' these days; in fact it usually makes the whole experience far more enjoyable!

We have plenty of stock looking good from our production unit and here are just a few that caught my eye today.

Dahlias are back with a vengeance this season and what's more you don't need a garden border and acres of space to grow them in. Take the new 'Dahllette' varieties. Growing to just 8-10 inches

(20-25cm) high they are perfect for planters, pots and even hanging baskets. The miniature blooms are available in separate colours and sell for £2.25 a pot.

Last year's hot summer ensured a fantastic display of the Gazania, and the variety 'Kiss' and 'Tiger Stripe' are this year's latest floral attractions. The vivid blooms open well in bright weather and are long-lasting. What's more, they look great in borders that are prone to drought.

Guaranteed colour from summer bedding doesn't come much better than from the 'Junior' Petunia range. Available in single colours, these colourful miniatures will delight the eye and ensure your pots are brimming with colour all summer long.

Let's end on a real cracker - Pelargonium 'Fireworks'. If you thought all geraniums (correctly known as pelargoniums) were the same then may we suggest you think again! The serrated individual blooms are formed on large numbers of flower heads, raised well above the well-zoned foliage. They are exceptional value at £2.25 for a 13cm (5in) pot.

## Sunflower Competition for Schools

This year instead of supporting local schools' fêtes, sports days etc. we are setting them a challenge and the chance to win prizes for the school. Any school which applies to take part will be given pot grown sunflowers all the same variety, grown from seeds donated by Unwins Seeds.

The challenge is then to produce the largest sunflower head - the world record, according to the Guinness Book of Records, is 32¼ins (82cm) across and was grown by Emily Martin in Maple Ridge, British Columbia, Canada in 1983.

Judging will take place here on 25<sup>th</sup> September so watch this spot to see if any budding Bucks green fingered schoolchild can get anywhere near the world record or even beat it!

## May's burstin' out all over!

Last autumn's drought stopped many of us planting trees - dust bowl soil and high temperature into late September did, however, ensure a fantastic display of autumnal leaf colour. We've noticed far more activity with tree planting this spring, so now is a great opportunity to check out our range of ornamental trees. We've some splendid flowering crab apples, maples, white-stemmed Jacquemontii birch as well as a plethora of great value small garden trees to tempt you.

## Air pot Technology

Last week we took into stock a collection of semi-mature trees which are in 'air pot technology' containers. This is a new patented method of production of large trees by Notcutts/Waterers and in layman's terms can be described as producing stock in a perforated tea bag! By letting oxygen get in through the container this naturally prunes the roots and thereby the tree produces an extremely good system of small fibrous roots. This means that a large tree, between 12 to 15 feet high with a really good head can be produced in a 65 litre container. Considering the size and quality of these trees we consider the prices ranging from £129.95 to £249.95 very reasonable. We shall be very interested to have your reactions.



And now to the more delicate trees – Japanese maples. These in all their guises are now on display in our new-look shade area. All the popular Acer dissectums rub shoulders with the finely dissected filigree foliage of the palmatum – it's a cracking display and well worth viewing in a perfect tranquil Oriental setting. You'll find this new display located next our new Fuchsia House.

Elsewhere, stunning spiraeas (great spring foliage and flowers), lovely lilacs (syringa) and lavenders, Exochorda ('The Bride'), the brightest of the variegated Ceanothus, that's 'Zanzibar' and masses of hebe varieties all bid for attention in the shrub area. Great gap-fillers to include on your shopping list include Berberis darwinii, Cytisus, Cistus and Vinca (periwinkles).

## Tasty little numbers

This season we have propagated 14 (that's right 14) different varieties of tomato here at the nursery for you to choose from. Most are tried and tested old friends (and popular favourites) and the others we are trying for the first time. All varieties are priced at 99p each and are on sale now (subject to availability).

*Here's the essential pick list of tomatoes you can select from...*

**'Alicante'**. An old favourite - a reliable and heavy cropper with fleshy fruits that have a fine flavour. This variety is also resistant to greenback and can be grown either under glass or outside.

**'Bigboy'**. A beefsteak variety with fruits that can weigh up to a pound (half a kilo)! If you would like to have a go and grow this one to that size disbud the truss to just two or three fruits and feed it well, good luck and best of all, grow it outside.

**'Gardeners Delight'**. Another old favourite, a cherry type with large trusses of fruit of outstanding flavour; or if you could only grow one variety of tomato this is the one. You will not be disappointed believe me, and can be grown under glass or outside.

**'Mirabel'**. Delightful yellow cherry type with sweet tasting fruits similar to Gardeners delight, and can be grown under glass or outside.

**'Moneymaker'**. A very popular variety with large trusses of medium-sized fruits, which are best grown under glass.

**'Red Alert'**. A modern early variety with small fruits of excellent flavour. This is a bush variety, which can be grown in a border or even on containers on the patio.

**'Roma'**. A plum type tomato of good flavour, fleshy fruits with few seeds and is perfect for sandwiches and cooking. This bush variety can be grown under glass or outside, but may need support.

**'San Mazarno'**. A plum variety mainly used for making soups and paste sauces. Grow this variety under glass.

**'Shirley'**. A very reliable variety producing heavy crops of medium-sized fruits of good flavour. 'Shirley' is resistant to leaf mould, virus and greenback. Grow under glass.

**'Supersweet 100'**. Nearly a rival to 'Gardeners Delight', delicious sweet grape sized fruits. You can expect to pick several hundreds from a well-grown plants. Can be grown under glass or outside.

**'Tigerella'**. An early tomato that has distinct red and yellow stripes when mature producing good yields of fine flavoured fruit and is best grown under glass.

**'Tiny Tim'**. A dwarf bush variety producing grape-sized almost seedless fruits of good flavour. Can be grown outside in pots or even in a window box.

**'Totem'**. Dwarf and compact, producing early crops of medium-sized fruits and is ideal for the patio.

**'Tumbler'**. A bush variety, the plants have a cascading habit and are perfect for hanging baskets and pots. The cherry-sized fruits are of excellent flavour - a single plant can produce over 2kg of fruit, so don't put too many plants into a hanging basket!

## **Fuchsia House – for fuchsia addicts!**



There have been a number of changes as far as displays at the garden centre over these past few weeks, and none more impressive than our aptly named 'Fuchsia House'. Located within the shrub sales area, this tunnel is choc-a-bloc with a massive range of fuchsia plants. There are hardy forms, bush types, basket varieties, full standards, half standards, columns and huge stock plants and all are looking fantastic. Our special multi-buy this season is worth considering – select any five (5) fuchsia in 9cm/10cm pots for just £6 (you save £1.50). You'll see the best of varieties on display, and all at a great price – happy fuchsia hunting!!

### **Jobs for May**

**CONTINUE** planting up baskets, wall planters and patio tubs with half-hardy bedding plants. Remember to have some horticultural fleece to hand just in case night-frosts are forecast so you can cover vulnerable plants. It is a good idea to keep your baskets undercover for a few days to allow the roots to establish before putting them directly outside.

**SPRAY** for aphids, capsids and other sap-sucking pests on a routine basis. You can use contact sprays such as soft soap (Bio organic pest control spray gun) and natural plant oils (Growing Success Bug Killer) weekly. Alternatively, spray your ornamentals with Ultimate Bug Killer, a systemic insecticide (the only systemic on the market now) to control more difficult and persistent pests.

Do follow the recommendations on the packaging when spraying your plants.

**SUCCESSIONAL** sowings are essential for the vegetable plot. Keep short rows of lettuce, radish, spring onions and beetroot ongoing over the next few months. Plant out cabbage, cauliflower and early Brussels sprouts. Once the danger of frosts has passed, set up your bean wig-wams and plant up runner and climbing French beans.

**PRUNE** back spring flowering shrubs as they finish their display for this season. Spiraea, forsythia and kerria can be cut back hard to encourage good strong bushy growth. Once pruned do follow with a feed of Vitax Q4 and a generous mulch.

**FEED** your bulbs as soon as they have finished flowering. Apply Sulphate of Potash around each clump and water well in. Alternatively, use a hose-end dilutor and add Phostrogen or Miracle-Gro and apply around the clumps of foliage. Do not cut down the foliage of bulbs for six weeks after flowering to allow the bulbs to take in the feed.

**TIE** in stems of climbing and rambler roses as growth develops. Don't over tighten around the developing stems – give them room to grow.

### **Larger Car Park**

The area at the back of the car park has now settled enough for us to be able to surface it to form an overflow car park. This will provide many extra parking spaces, so we shall not see so many frustrated customers driving round and round in circles in the car park.

You may be interested to know that all the soil in this area came from our 'irrigation lake' - a large area where we store all the rain water which has come off the greenhouses and buildings in that area. This will then pumped into the irrigation system so that the plants can be watered as much as possible with rain water rather than the rather limy water supplied by the local water authorities.

In the past many of our plants have had a greyish marking on the leaves due to constant irrigation with tap water. This was particularly apparent last summer when we were forced to do so much watering. We are hoping that using saved water will help to get over this problem.

Anyone parking in the overflow area may wonder what all the construction work to the right of the area is going to be. We are at the moment putting in security fencing to enclose the new hard landscaping area. Soon after this is completed we shall be getting in a superb new range of paving and edging stones and we shall be able to increase the range of fencing and trellising.

### **Outdoor Living**

Like us you are no doubt hoping for a long warm summer. With this in mind, we have introduced lots of new lines this year that have an outdoor living theme which we are sure will help you to unwind once the garden chores are done.



A brand new water feature area has been installed adjacent to our seasonal plant area. We have many working displays that will help you to picture what you can achieve in your own garden. Many of the features can be set up on a pond or pebble pool or used free standing on your patio. We have all of the components that you need and expert help at hand to give advice should you be unsure of how to set a water feature up.



For those who already have a pond in their garden the new season's range of cold water fish are now in stock, as are water plants – marginals, floating, oxygenating and deep water.

You should now have stopped feeding your fish with wheat germ and be back to feeding with a regular feed.

I am sure that many of you who read that barley straw had been banned for use in ponds will be delighted to hear that the ban has been lifted. The Aqu Bales we have available will treat the algae in your pond. One bale costing £4.99 will treat up to 1000 gallons.

If your pond really is in need of a clean out we do have an aqua-vac here which you can hire to help you carry out this rather messy and sometimes smelly task. We won't say it will eliminate the mess or smell but it will speed matters up and make the task less arduous and odorous!

We have introduced a huge new range of pots and stoneware in all shapes and colours, so we now

have pots from 10cm up to a massive 90cm in diameter. Amongst our new range of stone is a life size Great Dane this weighs a quarter of a ton but can be delivered direct to your home.



To complement our furniture range we have also introduced for the first time ranges of gas and charcoal barbecues plus accessories, and set up three introductory offers to tempt you.

### **LEISUREGROW SUNNY GAS BARBECUE COMPLETE WITH COVER**

Normal Combined Price	£154.99
<b>Added Value Price</b>	<b>£125.00</b>
Save	£29.99

### **WEBER ONE TOUCH SILVER 57cm CHARCOAL BARBECUE**

Normal Price	£109.99
<b>Special Price</b>	<b>£99.99</b>
Save	£10.00

### **WEBER COMPACT GRILL 47cm CHARCOAL BARBECUE**

Normal Price	£69.99
<b>Special Price</b>	<b>£59.99</b>
Save	£10.00

To complete the outdoor theme we have ranged various tee lights, lanterns, oil lamps and also an 8 piece low voltage light set for just £19.99.

Many customers were disappointed last year when we ran out of the easy-build 3 metre square gazebos. These gazebos which really are easy to put up have detachable side curtains to keep the wind out are available again, and we are pleased to say that they are still selling at £99.99.

Keep watching this space as the season gets under way because we are planning to introduce many more new lines to help you to enjoy summer in your garden.

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Spring and Summer opening hours:

Mon.-Fri. 8.30am to 6.00pm, Late night opening Thurs. till 7.30pm.

Sat. 9am to 5pm, Sun. 10am to 4pm.