

JUNE'S GARDEN

In the last few years I have received gifts of four guardian angels and 15 frogs. The angels don't sing and the frogs don't croak or eat bugs; they are made of concrete, sculptured clay, carved stone, metal, even plastic that resembles marble. My dog, "Barker", thought they were real. He barked at them when I placed them in different areas of the back yard. I really needed four guardian angels; after all, who can have enough caretakers. . . and I've found just the right places to hide the 15 frogs under the fronds of Sword fern, various planters, etc. I also really do appreciate my gifts, but I realize I'd better be silent about liking chickens, cows, pigs or owls. My mother used to say, "Be careful of what you wish for, it might come true," but I don't think she had angels and frogs in mind when she said that.

I have a friend who also caught the "frog fever." She bought a cement frog in England on a trip we made together visiting English gardens. The frog wouldn't fit in her suitcase . . . she carried it on her lap on the long flight home. She didn't confess to me it was "darn heavy," until we reached Portland, but I envy her, as I wish I'd brought an English frog home, to add to my collection. When I visit her garden we reminisce about the tour we took and the day she bought the cement frog in the gardens surrounding Hever Castle, and wish we could go back. That's one wish I don't mind expressing. Who knows, next year I also might be carrying an English cement frog in my lap all the thousands of miles back to my home. What's one more frog hiding under the fronds of my Sword fern.

Question: When to plant seeds in the ground?

Answer: The ground must be dry and friable. Pick up a handful of dirt and crumble it and watch it fall to the ground. If it is sticky and doesn't crumble, the soil is still too damp to spade. If it crumbles easily, then you can work the soil. It should be without lumps and consist of fine texture for the tiny seeds to germinate.

When the soil is workable mix compost and dried chicken or steer commercial fertilizer before planting. Be sure to mix thoroughly, as too much concentrated fertilizer will burn the plants.

The finer the seed, the less depth they should be worked in the ground. Sprinkle the seed over the planted area, then use a hand rake to lightly rake in the seed, water the area gently but thoroughly with a fine spray to keep the soil damp throughout the process of growth. After germination, be sure to thin each plant to produce healthy growth.

In raised beds the soil tends to warm up sooner and is less likely to hold the moisture from winter's rains. I was able to work compost into my raised beds in February and March, but I wait until April or May to plant most of my seeds.

On the coast, where summers are not as hot as in the valley, many varieties of the pea family can be planted as late as April. I've had edible peas and Sweet Peas produce blooms as late as the last of August and parts of September. When I tried planting them in February, as some seed packets suggested, the seeds rotted from heavy rainfalls.

When you sow annual poppy seeds, for a more extended bloom time, divide the packaged seeds into four equal amounts and space out your plantings, one-fourth each week. This will give you more continuous blooms. Once they produce their blooms, they soon will have finished their growth cycle. I tried this with a package of Shirley poppies and had extended blooms for weeks. I don't dead-head all the blooms, but allow some to ripen to harvest and save the seeds for next year's crops.

This year I vow to thin out all the seeds that sprout in my garden. I know this should be done to grow healthier plants. Last year someone sent me a variety of what she called "Mary's poppies" and all of them sprouted. I was hesitant to thin the hundreds of plants, because the package said there were many different colors. They were growing so tightly together, I had only spindly plants. Fortunately a few did grow to be stronger and I was able to save a few seeds. Again I say, do thin out . . . you'll have greater success!

A successful gardener was quoted, "Always plant seeds when the moon is full." I did try this, but my seeds sprouted whether I planted them during the time there was a crescent moon or a full moon, but you might experiment. She certainly has great success.

Be sure to read the instructions on the seed packets, but there is a question I would like answered. All packets give the suggested time of planting, such as after the last frost or before the first frost for fall planting. This doesn't seem to be much help some years, unless you have a direct line to nature or somewhere out of the heavens Mother Nature speaks and says, "This will be the last frost," or "Next week we are going to have a dandy frost on October 4th." Do you have a direct line?

I'd really like to hear from readers who enjoy gardening. Please send your comments and questions to **June's Garden**, P.O. Box 74, Cannon Beach, OR 97110.



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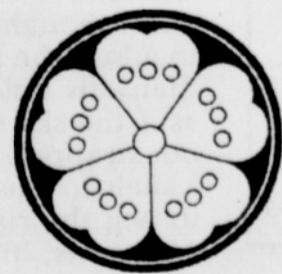
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 "For heaven's sake!"
 Edgar Watson Howe, 1853-1937

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 April 20, 1996
 Astoria Middle School
 1100 Klaskanine, Astoria
 8:30am - 2:00pm
 Cost: \$7.50

	Section A	Section B	Section C
9:00	Heirloom Gardens Erica Caulkins	Plant Propagation Jerry Faddis	Herbs Emmy Roach
10:45	Garden Layouts Beth Holland	Composting Happens Wes Lawson	Sensible Pruning Jim Pomeroy
12:30	One section Only -- Gardening With Perennials -- Mike Smith		

Pre-registration is recommended. Class size may be limited in sections B & C. Refreshments will be available.
 For further information call Clatsop County Extension at 1-503-325-8573.

UPPER LEFT EDGE APRIL 1996

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