

Garden Ramblings

March! how exciting to sort through the packets of seeds to find those that need sowing now. Of course there is always one that mentions January but just ignore it. I know seeds can't read.

Still plants do know about temperature and light. They know to grow towards light and to get a move on in the growth department when the soil is just the right temperature. It is relatively easy for us to discover for ourselves if the soil is warm enough by sitting on it (with exposed flesh) but decorously draped in a sheet or large sack. I suggest this is best done at night or buy a soil thermometer that of course will never be found when needed.

I am sure you have washed and disinfected all your seed trays and pots by now. As a disorganised gardener I will be doing this two seconds after I have torn open the seed packet. And isn't that a minefield. Most now do have foil packets in. If you look at those there will be some sort of code such as CABDUNC17 which tells you it is a cabbage called Duncan and is optimally viable until next year. That's fine if you don't tear it off.. Similarly with the outer packet. Left in my greenhouse the lovely little snails will have stripped off the writing and pictures in the time the snail identification book has been found.

Isn't it strange that many of us go ugh to slugs and oh to pretty snails. Much fun can be derived from examining a slug to see the pneumostome opening and closing. You can see it near the mantle which is a raised wrinkly bit. It doesn't happen a lot but it allows air in. If you see it happening quite a lot the slug needs water as it is getting dehydrated. Also interesting and rather disappointing to gardeners is that they don't hibernate like snails and the eggs can remain dormant for several years but on the plus side not all slugs eat your plants. I have cracked the eating of hostas. I just don't grow them for no other reason than I cannot spend time worrying about them when dandelions take care of themselves. (I loved the spell check for hostas - hostess-)

Last June I went to Iceland and dandelions seemed to be everywhere and were appreciated. Don't you just hate it when people will name drop countries.

Having mentioned a very poisonous plant last time I want to warn you about euphorbias. They are one of my favourite plants but watch out for the sap which certainly doesn't need to get in eyes or mouths. I was pruning one and somehow the white sticky sap got into my mouth. (No more singing in the garden). It tasted dreadful, was almost impossible to wash out and really hurt. Not even a ginger biscuit tasted right for hours.

