



## “Transplanting Workshop”

Saturday May 28th, 2016

Presenter: Alison Juta

### Gardening tips

Keep it simple – always!

Important to remember: **SAWS - Soil, air, water, sun**

**Soil** – is the most important food for your plants –for ever. Best mix 1 part topsoil, 1 part peat and 1 part well, rotted manure. Then add amendments like perlite and extra potassium and phosphate and trace elements.

**Air** – plants that are too close to each other get diseases very easily. Give them space.

**Water** – 1" water once a week is better than a drizzle of water every day. It lets roots grow long and strong and downwards, whereas light watering brings the roots to the surface, they burn and the plant dies. However, if you are growing in pots if a plant goes yellow – it is probably being overwatered. Lettuces need more than once a week otherwise they go to seed quickly.

**Sun** – vegetables and fruit like at least 8 hours' sun per day. Only lettuce and rhubarb will grow in partial shade

**Worries:** Bugs and weeds and others

If your plants are strong and healthy bugs and weeds should not affect them. However....

If your plants are spaced correctly and mulched then you will have fewer disease problems – plants placed too close together get mildew, wilt and blight much more easily.

Mulching is important – it can prevent weed growth – easy and cheap mulches – shredded paper, hay (watch out for weed seed in the hay) straw, natural items – coloured bark mulches can contain poisons – some black mulch is coloured with coal. Black plastic is unsightly but stops weeds, but can also stop water. Black fabric – if you are going to spend the money get the best with at least a 10 year life span.

### Bugs and beasties -

1. Flea beetles- the first beetles of the year to cause damage, minute black or brown beetles who make holes in leaves of radish, choy, arugula, beans – and even row covers can't keep them out. Sacrifice a few radishes to save other plants. Plant marigolds around the perimeter of the plot. Easily identified – they hop.
2. Cucumber beetles – little black and yellow beetles – pick off and drown or spray with the following mix – 1 tsp dishwashing liquid, 1 tsp canola oil, in 2 litres water
3. Colorado potato beetles – love potato family and sometimes even tomatoes – only ways to stop them – straw round all your potatoes- deeply, and pick off any bugs and drown them. Some people even get propane torches to kill them! Dedication to duty does pay off.
4. Lily beetles (red) – pick off and drown. Sprays sometimes work if early in the season
5. Slugs/ snails – mix 1 Tbsp. yeast, ½ cup sugar and 2 litres warm water in a big container. Wait for it to froth and place where you would normally find slugs or snails in a yoghurt container set into the ground – the smell attracts the slugs, they crawl in and drown .... Rhubarb leaves

are another way of trapping snails and slugs. Lay them out near plants you want to save. The slugs crawl in under them overnight – lift the leaves, collect the slugs and drown them.

6. Groundhogs, raccoons, deer – dog and cat fur and faeces spread around the area you want to protect does help. I patrol with the dogs every night in corn season so that their scent is there at night. It seems to work most of the time. Leaving a radio on all night next to corn is said to work. Also place paper bags over the ripening ears of corn and tie them down with an elastic band.

**Weeds:** one year's weed seed is 7 year's work – and believe me that is true!

Before you plant anything in spring, dig over your garden and leave it for 3- 7 days before you start seeding, I often cover my gardens with clear plastic to heat the ground up. Then I pull off the plastic and check for any weed growth which will come out easily. Only then do I think of seeding. If you seed among weeds you might pull out the wrong plants, or the weeds which are generally stronger will grow over your seeds.

Mulching reduces weed growth. Regular weeding is a necessity – “In Spring I seed, in Summer I weed “

Don't forget some weeds are actually edible – lambs' quarters is a leafy green like spinach , and dandelion leaves can be used for salad greens , and the flowers can be used to make a dry white wine. The dried roots are used in Japan to make a medicinal tea. Grass – get it out before it spreads.

## **NATURAL HELP**

Compost – if you have space compost it has been found that compost adds such a variety of microscopic fauna and flora to your garden patch that we have never even dreamed of, but which are so good for the soil. There are all sorts of ways of in ground composting that do not smell, and are not visible to the neighbors – honey holes, trenches, lasagna layering etc. For tomatoes – dig a hole 1 foot x 1 foot x 18 inches deep – fill it with part rotted compost, and plant 4 -5 tomatoes around it about 18 " from the edge of the hole. They will really enjoy the extra food, especially if you water the hole regular and keep it topped up.

Compost tea is normally made with any or all of a spadeful of compost, comfrey leaves, alfalfa pellets, and well-rotted manure. Depending on how much you need you can start with a 5 gallon pail right up to a massive tank. Mix the ingredient /s with water and leave to stand for a day. Stir for 5 days thereafter with added sugar or molasses (½ cup) every day for 3 days. Stir for another 2 days. Once it smells pretty strong, use diluted 1: 20 with water on all sorts of garden plants (but preferably not houseplants).

## **Things not to put into compost**

Fat, meat, dairy products, bones – anything that will attract our non-friends of the animal world.

Animal poop – that is from the meat eaters. Horse, cow, sheep and chicken manure help a pile heat up and are good. Pig is sometimes Ok, not always. Dog food will heat up a cooling down compost pile and get it going again. So will alfalfa pellets.

## Household items in the garden

**Epsom salts** – why? Epsom salts in one of the purest forms of magnesium, is very cheap and helps plants assimilate



calcium through their roots. Like us they need silica and calcium to grow strong stems. Buy in bulk at your bulk store. On the subject of silica – horsetail –which contains a very high concentration of silica, is also an indicator of acid soils. It is a nasty weed though as it stolons (grows roots underground) and pops up in strange places... the same as crabgrass, wild raspberry and various other weeds.

**Lawn clippings** – compost or mulch or not? Fine if only grass, but weedy seeds are not good in a compost pile nor as a mulch – thus your first mowing with dandelions in it is likely not good. Remember lawn clippings get extremely hot if spread over plants when newly mowed – they actually give off steam – so they will kill seedlings outright if used as mulch. Composting – use as green (nitrogen) layers – but do not make layers more than 1 “thick, they will turn cloggy and prevent any air moving around the pile.

**Coffee grounds** – good for discouraging slugs, good compost for roses and a tea can be made from them among other items to stop beetle damage.

**Sugar and rolled oatmeal** – when transplanting plants use a teaspoon of rolled oats in the bottom of the transplanting hole - it is a natural plant food. Sugar- add about a cup to a 5-gallon pail of water when transplanting and water the plants in when firmed into the ground – this will help the plants get over transplant shock.

### Transplanting tips

**Harden your plants off** – this means taking them in and out of their original home, still in their pots for a few days before you plant them in the ground. This is to let them experience temperature changes and wind and direct sun for the first time. If you plant direct your plants will not get off to a good start and may die.

Try for a cloudy day with no wind and try to transplant in the evening if possible. Prepare the new holes before you take the plants out of their pots- water and oats or compost in the bottom of the hole before you actually plant them out. Ensure that the hole is the right size – not too small and not a crater! Transplant with as much of the original soil as possible and do not shake the roots out, expect with large shrubs and trees.

If not possible to plant in the evening cover your transplants with cloth – an old sheet will do. Alternatively make “hats” with wetted newspaper and sticks. Water the ground thoroughly before transplanting if the weather is hot. Water every day for at least 3 days after planting if the weather is dry. Do not water the leaves –water around the base of the plant. If water remains on the leaves and the sun shines on them, you will get sun scorch.

Always plant at the same depth as the plant has grown to or slightly deeper. If you know the summer is going to be hot (2016?) make a saucer around your plant in the soil- it will prevent water running off and being wasted. Water in the early morning, if possible, so that the plant has more time to take up the water before the heat starts. Evening watering, especially in high humidity can lead to wilting diseases and powdery mildew. Soaker hoses are a good thing, or make your own olla /aura. These are ancient watering pots with holes in the sunk into the ground. Take a 4l vinegar bottle (or similar food grade bottle), make slits in the sides with a knife, leave off the top and sink into the ground to the top of the neck. Pour in water and let it seep into the ground at root level.

**Tomatoes** – grow extra “adventitious” roots along their stems if allowed to, which anchor the plant more firmly and lead to better growth. When planting out make a furrow along which you lay the stem of the plant, up to the lowest set of leaves. Bury the stem and water in thoroughly. The plant will right itself and grow big and strong. This also applies to peppers and eggplants (in moderation) –but they like to be buried straight up, not at a slant.

Crops such as beets, [lettuce](#), artichokes, and strawberries like their roots to sit right below the soil's surface -- just up to the crown (the place where they begin to grow). Watermelon, cantaloupe, zucchini, and cucumbers should be planted deep enough so that the soil comes up to the base of their first leaves.

Always make sure that your plants are not flopping over – firm them into the soil with your hands. The roots need to have contact with the soil, not at big air balloon around them.

Questions: [alison.juta@gmail.com](mailto:alison.juta@gmail.com)

**Your own notes here:**