

GARDENING

MY FIRST DUTY is to thank all my friends for their greetings and good wishes for my ninetieth birthday. I certainly received more than one card for each year of my life. The effort of writing to each one of you is beyond me so I take this opportunity to express my appreciation. For your kind thoughts, good wishes and in some cases gifts, for your hopes for my future in happy horticulture I give my heartfelt thanks. I am amazed that I merit all this - my renewed thanks.

April and May are the months when we make the greatest contribution to our beautiful gardens for the summer and autumn months, so have your seeds ready for sowing, work hard at pruning, planting, staking and tying, mowing the lawn, cutting the hedges and so on - there is so much to remember.

Soon the earth will be workable and when you fork over your beds and borders remember to divide such herbaceous plants as phlox, marguerites, michaelmas daisies and helenium - use the outside growth of the clumps, for that is young and has the best future.

Sow a few annuals; there are so many to choose from - asters, nicotianas, marigolds, verbena, alyssum, clarkia, cosmea, cornflower, godetia, larkspur - take your pick. Most annual plants are now sold as seedling plugs and most useful and successful they are, but please be sure that they are fresh from the grower. If you have not already done so, finish off the pruning of wisteria, apple and pear and roses.

Now let us turn to the vegetables. I plant potatoes under a south-facing wall in February and we shall enjoy the new potatoes at the end of May. Remember this for next year, but for now plant right away and if you have a warm situation plant carrots as well, followed by a few seeds every fortnight. Sow runner beans when May is in double figures with a last sowing on the longest day. Sow dwarf beans until mid-July and also the last sowings of carrots, turnips, summer spinach and early cabbage and note that pheasants love the last named.

I wish you success with not many frosts in May.

A.V.Mitchell

MILTON-U-WYCHWOOD EVERGREENS

Meetings start on April 11th 1997, 7.00 - 9.00 pm in the Village Hall.

New members aged 55 and over are always very welcome.

For more information please telephone me on 830474.

J.Dore (Secretary).