

## Gardening

**S**PRING COMES in fits and starts and it is heralded in this coming month of February by a change in the sky. Even though we may have some horrible weather the light will be increasing rapidly and on some days there will be the hint of a sunset – just a streak of sun and then a brief lingering of colour, perhaps orange and pink and green. And usually in February there will be at least one mild, sunny day with the crocuses in bloom. March as usual will have grey chilly days alternating with those of sunshine and welcome warmth. No doubt there will also be a cold north wind at times.

We gardeners have to fit our activity into the changing weather patterns, preparing soil when it is fit to work, sowing seeds when the soil warms up and generally preparing. We are going to be very busy. Most help comes to us with the increasing light and warmth.

Now at the beginning of February, if you have not already done so, you should be planning and deciding which vegetables and flowers you intend to grow.

Seed catalogues come free and already garden centres and other shops have displays of seeds, corms and bulbs for spring planting.

Maybe there is still a little shrub pruning to do and remember that March is the month in which you attend to your roses.

There are still two months in which you can divide the herbaceous plants but only do this when the ground is in reasonable condition. Remember that it is the young outside growth that should be transplanted.

St Valentine's Day, 14th February, is my birthday. Traditionally it is the day on which the birds mate. They too know that the changing light brings a new life for practically everything.

Hope springs eternal in the human heart.

See you in two months time.

Val Mitchell.

