

Gardening

WE HAVE a slight problem. The past winter has been the wettest for years and the soil is sodden. As I write this in mid-March we are enjoying a fine dry spell which will help to dry out our gardens. However, it will be some time before we can really go to work for walking on wet soil is the worst thing we need for seed sowing. And it is seed sowing time.

The first thing to do is to break up the surface of the seed bed with a fork or spade to help it to dry out. Use a plank to stand on as this will spread the weight of your body. The soil will not need much fining for the larger seeds such as broad beans and peas and these should be sown as soon as possible. For the small seeds I recommend plugs. Plastic trays, not expensive, with 60 compartments are available and can be used for all seeds that can be handled individually and I am thinking, particularly, of brassicas and lettuce. Use multi-purpose compost and keep moist. The plug tray can also be used for very fine seeds, especially those of flowers.

Sow the seeds in a pot and when the seedlings are big enough to handle transplant them singly into plugs. When the plugs are ready plant into the ground. There is little disturbance of roots and rarely a failure. When you get the knack you will use plugs for ever.

You will have pruned your roses but please have a last check to ensure that you have removed all weak growth. And a reminder: **PULL OFF** all suckers – if you cut them they will come again.

The pruning of clematis will vary according to variety so please check. As a general rule the large flowered hybrids do not need pruning except for the removal of weak growth. Montanas should be left alone – they are at their best when rampant.

Spring will soon be with us so may I use the words of Browning. "Oh to be in England, now that April's there". Enjoy your gardening and may we hope together for good crops and lovely flowers.

A.V. Mitchell

Fifield at Home

26th June 1999 – 12 noon to 4.30pm

Everyone is welcome to join us in Fifield for our village open day.

There will be something for every member of the family to enjoy.

Gardens open

Stalls including books, toys etc.

Refreshments including a lunch-time barbecue and teas.

Pony rides, bouncy castles and lots more for the children.

For further information please contact:

Rachel Cappuccini on 01993 832199