

Stratford sub Castle Garden Club June 2021

It's funny how three problems, all lumped together, can work a treat.

Bear in mind that all the plantable parts of our garden are full so when I bought some 'Charlotte' seed potatoes the more cynical half of the Richards' partnership said 'Where are they going?' The more optimistic half of the partnership replied, somewhat airily 'Oh, I will think of something.'

This was problem number one. The other two problems had been fermenting at the back of my mind for some while. Firstly, what should one do with old plastic tubs that are no longer terracotta coloured, but rather pink and brittle because of light degradation and are no longer suitable for display at the front of the house. The other problem was the area of dry soil under the lovely tree, *Acer platanoides* 'Drummondii'. Nothing would grow there and I regretted the loss of planting space. Well, the picture shows it all, the Charlotte potatoes are in the tubs which are now parked under the Acer. It is in a south-facing corner so there is plenty of light under its uplifting branches and I am sure the tree will appreciate the water that drains out of the tubs. That is a relief, I did think of something.



This spring, the cold weather is giving us a bonus in that flowers are lasting for ages. I have got a 'Forget me not' rhythm going on at the moment. I have just one large patch of these flowers but further along the same border and spaced out, there are two large Brunnera 'Jack Frost' which have identical flowers but up-market long lasting beautiful leaves. When the Forget-me-not flowers fade I shall pull the plants out, shake them vigorously so that the seeds fall onto the ground, and then there is a clear space to stand on to pick red and black currants. This works well as the flowers reappear the following year, better than ever.



The tulips have been and still are, in mid-May, amazing. I love experimenting and so I bought some packets of double flowered orange mix tulips to plant among the yellow wallflowers. They were like huge peony flowers about 8cm across. They were regularly beside my plate, in a vase, at lunch time. I also bought, in December, reduced in the sale at B&Q, some packets of 'Lily flowered' mixed tulips.

They are in my new, narrow border at the front of the house and some of them are very exotic in shape and colour as you can see from the picture.

As I write, I feel that there should be a fanfare, as hundreds of dusky pink flowers are about to open on the Montana clematis, 'Broughton Star' and just in front of it, right on cue, the *Hesperis Matronalis albiflora*, (white Sweet Rocket) is starting to flower. I claim no planning here as I had no idea that they would flower exactly together but the dusky pink and clean white flowers complement each other.

Thank you so much to those of you that came to my plant sale. £345 has been sent for Cancer Research. As you probably guessed, from the number of people staggering out with heavy bags,

fifteen minutes after the start time was too late for the best bargains. Two and three litre pots of quite unusual plants were going for £3 or £4 donations and I had seen similar at £8.99 in Garden Centres. Back in January I had dug up, divided and potted up lots of my plants, ready for redesigning some areas. They didn't all fit back in, especially as I added some new varieties, so there were lots to spare. My Fitbit counted that I did 18.000 steps the day before the sale and I didn't leave the garden! That Fitbit is always optimistic but that was just carrying plants from the back to the front garden, ready for the sale. Gardening is definitely good for you.

The new garden table and chairs will be here soon. Purchased in March, I had an email, shortly after, to say that the table had been delayed in the Suez Canal. Just my luck!

See you soon,
Dorothy