

AFTER germination, young seedlings need warmth, light, water and, most of all, room to grow. Once the young leaves are fully developed, transplant the seedlings into pots. If they are left too long, they become weak, drawn and prone to pests and diseases and are slow to recover after transplanting. Always handle seedlings by their leaves to avoid crushing the stems. Discard thin, weak or damaged ones as they often collapse and rot, possibly spreading disease. After pricking out, always water the seedlings well and provide shade for a few days until they have had time to recover. Here we show you how to do it.



1 Only transplant those with plenty of root



2 Handle only by leaves to avoid stem damage



3 Water them well to settle the compost



4 Shade your seedlings to aid their recovery

WHAT'S NEW

CAMPANULA Iridescent Bells has soft, deep purple buds that open to silvery-white, bell-shaped flowers with a pale lavender flush. It flowers from June to November in a border or a pot and despite liking some shade it will grow in full sun. It goes on sale from £7.99 next month.



WITH STEVE & VAL BRADLEY

peterseabrook

WE GET SET FOR CHELSEA

THE Sun's entry for this year's RHS Chelsea Flower Show has already won a huge fan – a badger.

Sadly, the creature took a fancy to some of the plants destined for our display, but we've bounced back.

Along with **CO-SPONSOR** we are sponsoring a garden to celebrate 50 glorious years of Britain In Bloom – and with the City of Bath being the first winner in 1964, our exhibit centres on the southwest.

Divided into four distinct sections, it will feature the varying conditions, skills and interests found in the **FIVE COUNTIES**.

It will be staged in the Great Pavilion at Chelsea next month, then move to Gardening Scotland, from May 30 to June 1.

Last week, Steve visited award-winning show designer Jon Wheatley and top vegetable grower Terry Porter, right, to see how the plants were progressing.

Warm weather and good sunlight are helping black-fruited tomatoes and purple-leaved sunflowers.

Jon has high hopes for the show: "We have some cracking plants growing for this exhibit."

Terry added: "We've timed the vegetables just right this year."

Broad beans are well ahead in Devon and London schools, with autumn-sown plants already flowered and beginning to set pods.

Among the outside gardens at Chelsea, the Royal National Institute for the Blind design, inset, sponsored by Countryside Properties, brings back the high-rise walkway much missed since the departure of our Sun Flower Street, and the bird's eye view it provided over the displays.



Best of the South West

YOU ASK STEVE

WHEN is the best time to prune a big mahonia shrub?
H PARFITT
Hornchurch, Essex

The best time is immediately after the flowers have died off, then it should produce blooms the following year without any problems. It can cope with hard pruning and recover. After pruning, feed with general fertiliser, such as Growmore, at about 4oz (100g) around the plant.

HOW can I avoid my carrots being attacked by root fly?
E PLEWES
Harrogate, Yorkshire

Early sowing in late March and late sowing in June will avoid the first generation of this pest. Covering the crop with insect screening will help or you can apply Grow Your Own biological control from Nemasys to soil around the crop to kill maggots.

CAN I use my coffee grounds in my garden?
W TURNBULL
Bristol

Coffee grounds are a good source of slow-release nitrogen (about 2 per cent by volume). They can also be used as a liquid feed, applied at a rate of 30g (1oz) in 4.5l (1gal) of water. Coffee grounds can also be used as a barrier to slugs and ants.

WHAT can I do to stop peach leaf curl ruining my nectarine tree?
J MCLEAN
Redditch, Worcs

Prune out bare, dead sections of branches and stems. Spray with Fruit And Vegetables Disease Control from Bayer or Bordeaux Mixture from Vitax as the leaves open (not during flowering). It's important to spray before autumn leaf fall to prevent spores surviving the winter.

● If you have a query, write to: Sun Gardening, 3 Thomas More Square, London, E98 1XY. Twitter @valgardening. Website sungardening.co.uk.

WHAT'S ON

TODAY is the last day of the Orchid and Botanical Art Show in RHS Halls, Vincent Square, London SW1P2PE. The Cardiff Flower Show is on today and tomorrow.

TIMELY TIPS

NOW the days are getting longer it is time to sow your courgette, cucumber, melon, pumpkin and squash seeds.

Do it in the next week or two and they will germinate quickly in the warm and are best sown in half-filled pots.

More compost can be added when two seed leaves stretch out over the rim.

The stems root into this extra compost and produce shorter, more stocky plants.

WE always look for new, interesting plants to grow for a season under home conditions before recommending them.

This week we have a novel trailing mini-sunflower for hanging baskets, the front of window boxes or around the edges of containers.

Trailing Sunflower Inca Gold flowered for months in my hanging basket, right through into winter. It looks fine grown

SAVE £11
on trailing sunflowers

alone and mixed in as "filler" with others; just keep them well fed and watered.

OFFER 1: Five young plants of Trailing Sunflower Inca Gold for £9.99 (saves £2 on list prices).
OFFER 2: Join up with a pal for

ten plants for £12.98 and save £11.

Both offers include post and packing charges.

To order, make your cheque out to T & M and send it with your name, address and details of the offer you want to **Trailing Sunflower Offer**, Dept SU447, Po Box 162, Ipswich, Suffolk IP8 3 BX. For credit card orders, phone 0844 573 6013 quoting SU447 or order at thompson-mogan.com/su447.

