



THE AMATEUR GARDENER

by Vanda Lawrence

Last year our neighbour planted 28 different tomato varieties, just for interest, so he could compare one variety against another. He has very kindly passed this information on to me so that I can share it with you – Thank you Daniel !



Variety	Appearance	Colour	Productivity	Taste	Season
Bison	Medium	Red	Good	Good	Early
Irma	Medium-large	Red	Good	Good	Early
Bulgarian Triumph	Medium	Red	Good	Very good	Mid-season
Clémentine	Round, cherry	Orange	Very productive	Good	Mid-season
Coeur de boeuf reifred	Large-v.large	Rose-red	Good	Very good	Mid-season
Dagma's perfection	Medium-large	Variegated	Medium	Very good	Mid-season
Gary O'Sena	Large	purple-red	Good	Very good	Mid-season
Grosse rouge du Portugal	Very large	Red	Good	Very good	Mid-season
Old German	Large-v.large	Variegated	Medium	Good	Mid-season
Patty's surprise	Large-v.large	Pink	Good	Good	Mid-season
Peron Sprayless	Medium-large	Red	Medium	Very good	Mid-season
Pierrette	Medium-large	Red	Medium	Good	Mid-season
Pink Ping-Pong	Round, cocktail	Pinky-red	Good	Good	Mid-season
Zeas sonnabend white	Medium-large	Yellowish	Medium	Good	Mid-season

Variety	Appearance	Colour	Productivity	Taste	Season
Belize Pink Heart	Medium, heart-shaped	Purple-pink	Good	Good	Late
Belle du Collège	Med-large	Red-brown	Medium	Good	Late
Boloto	Med-large	Green	Good	Good	Late
Brandywine Black	Med-large beefsteak	Red-brown	Medium	Good	Late
Daniel's	Large-v.large beefsteak	Pink	Medium	Good	Late
Ernesto	Large-v.large	Red	Medium	Good	Late
Hungarian	Med-v.large	Pink	Good crop	Very good	Late
Marceline	Large-v.large	Variegated	Medium	Good	Late
Marmande Jaune	Medium	Yellow	Medium	Good	Late
Negib Jaune	Medium	Yellow	Medium	Good	Late
Orange fleshed Purple Smudge	Medium	Mottled	Medium	Very good	Late
Purple Hillbilly Royal	Large-v.large	Purple-pink	Good	Very good	Late
Russe Rouge	Large-v.large	Red	Medium	Good	Late
Siberian gold	Medium	Yellow-orange	Medium	Good	Late



So it seems that choosing a tomato variety could be as difficult as deciding which variety of potatoes to plant! Talking of which, I hope you've made your decisions and your seed potatoes are chitted nicely? Then let's get planting ...

In England they say 'Easter' is the time to plant potatoes, so here in France you might already have planted your 'first earlies' which take about 100 days before you can harvest. 'Second earlies' take 16-17 weeks so you can harvest from late June – beginning of August. 'Main-crop' potatoes will be ready to lift 18-20 weeks after planting ie July-October. Remember though that there is no absolute right or wrong; so much depends on site, soil and weather. Last year our Rosabelle earlies were rubbish so we're hoping for more success this year. This year, for the first time, we're trying 'Bintje' main-crop because I read that they are nice large potatoes, good for roasting or baking in their skins.



Two years ago I mentioned taking cuttings for a new hedge and rooting them in a container of water with a piece of willow added - the chemical released from the willow supposedly encourages the cuttings to root without using hormone rooting powder or gel. Well, it worked and I now have a little hedge growing. It's nice to have a success story to share every now and then.

Our weather has finally bucked up and we've had some lovely sunny days, but this of course means that the mosquitoes are with us again. Plant Citronella, Horsemint (aka Beebalm), Marigolds, Ageratum or Catnip. These are all mosquito repellent plants which will help alleviate the problem if you plant them near doors/windows and outside seating areas in your garden.

Another friend recently mentioned that his French father-in-law did all his gardening jobs 'according to the moon'. He thought it was an annual booklet with lists of plants/seeds to deal with each month. I've done a bit of research and found the following computer link which might be of interest: www.graines-et-plantes.com where you then choose 'calendrier lunaire'. It's quite fascinating to see each month, day by day, which type of plant should be planted and there are days when no gardening should be done at all ... goodness me! According to this calendar there are days when the moon affects the root systems of plants; other days when fruit and seed production are affected or stems and leaves of plants; the moon also affects flowering plants and vegetables on certain days too.

Well, I seem to have well and truly side-tracked myself this month, so instead of listing jobs to do I'll just say au revoir until next month and hope you have enjoyed looking at gardening from a different angle for a change. I'll think of you all when I'm just sitting in the garden (what's that?) on days when the Calendrier Lunaire tells me I must not do any gardening.

Keep smiling

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