

FMR July 3, 2021

A walk in the wild tells us all is happening on time.. a kind of celebration, you might say.

There is little doubt that we are heading for spring but much awaits between now and warmer weather.

I think it is one of the most exciting times of the year.

The ground is wet and most local plants are getting ready to flower, although there is much flowering right now.

Irrigation systems can remain in the off position unless we have a three day berg wind to dry things out a bit!

Towards the end of the month we start thinking about pruning so make sure all those cutting tools are clean and sharp including the lawnmower which probably needs a service!!.

Some believe in early pruning, some believe a bit later but no matter what, most deciduous plants will wake up and flower when conditions are perfect.

It can be a bit confusing when we see certain spring flowering plants in flower now ... but just go with the flow!

Could it be that our winter here is just not long enough or cold enough?

I think it is safe to say that we will still be getting a lot colder before it gets warmer, so it might be wise to prune later towards end July/ early August.

There are many seasoned and experienced gardeners who still don't feel confident when carrying out a bit of formal pruning.

At the end of the day its not so much about the cut, but more about understanding the plant and its habits.

For example- Does it flower on old wood or new current seasons growth?

Deciduous fruit trees and most deciduous ornamentals flower off last season's growth so you can't just hack it all back wildly!!

We need to know our plants a bit better before taking that first cut!!

There is no time like the present to learn about sustainable garden practice.

Today its all about change and your garden is not excluded!!!!

If you have the urge to brighten up your mid-winter blues or greens, then its not too late to pop in some established showy winter/spring annuals.

Primula and Cineraria are still available as are pansies and viola's and more.

If you plant well established seedlings they will carry on right through spring into summer until it gets a bit too hot.

Don't be shy to nip back most annuals if they look a bit straggly, this will get them bushy and they will produce more flowers and last longer.

There is, definitely no shortage of colour right now, be it the many aloes, proteas, pincushions, cone flowers, buchus, bulbs, butterfly bushes and annuals.

Most plants can be put in the ground now as they lap up the rain and establish themselves before summer arrives.

Take advantage of the cooler weather and increasing light quality.

When you're in the nursery keep an eye out for the Felicia's as many species flower all year round .

Besides the well known Blue Kingfisher daisy try the Felicia echinata which also has white flowers.

These and many other daisies such as Gazania can flower from winter to spring and summer. Don't believe Daisies are just short lived Spring colour!!

If you can lay your hands on some Gomphostigma virgata, that's the Otto Bush then buy a whole bunch and get them in the ground now for a full summer flowering.

It is a very worthwhile perennial to have, getting up to a metre in height and flowers for a few months in summer.

Lastly, while you have long term perennials on your mind don't leave out a selection of Pelargoniums which need this time to settle in before flowering in spring and summer.

Please have a look at the full range of perennials that do so well in our Cape gardens

When we have a few dry sunny days, get the mower out and cut the lawn back if it's getting a bit high.

This will allow it to take advantage of the improving sunlight conditions and start some good growth while the weather is still relatively cool and wet.

A good cut now will also get rid of all that dead grass that has worked its way to ground level and is busy cooking up some fungi which could cause a problem later in the hot weather.

Don't wait for the lawn to get a foot high before mowing.

If you feel it needs a light fertilizing, then do it just before it rains so it dissolves quickly and gets into the ground.

It's time to go, so I shall say Goodbye and leave you to get on with it.