

Gardening

club



with DAVID DOMONEY

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Q&A



I'm new to turnips, give me top tips

It's time for me to try something new - so how do I grow turnips? **Steven, Poole, Dorset.** **DAVID:** Sow early turnips outdoors in cloches as soon as the ground becomes workable in spring. They mature in six to 10 weeks so, to provide roots over an extended period, make three-weekly sowings. Turnips grow best in moisture-retentive soils and should be kept well watered before dry weather.



Prickly issue with roots of my cacti

When is the best time to repot my cacti? **Alex, Glasgow.** **DAVID:** Cacti should be re-potted as soon as the roots show through the drainage holes of its pot. Repotting is best in spring, when the cactus is enjoying active growth. Water the plant two days before repotting - this will ensure that the roots are moist but not saturated.

TIP of the week

Fill an indoor watering can from the tap and leave it to stand for a few hours before using it to water houseplants. This will bring the water to room temperature, which is preferred by most indoor plants.

GET IN TOUCH

For loads more hints and tips on gardening visit daviddomoney.com or follow me on Facebook at @DavidDomoneyTV or on Twitter @daviddomoney

It's World Health Day, so here's a pain-free prescription to help nurture your physical wellbeing... and give your home a healthy look, inside and out

Celebrate World Health Day with some home-grown antidotes to today's most pressing medical matters. From insomnia to headaches, and air purifiers to nutrient-packed performers, there's something to deal with everything. And, even better, you can grow them all in the garden or inside.

VITAMIN BOOST

Jam-packed with potassium, folate, vitamin C and vitamin B6, blueberries more than deserve their status as a superfood. Studies suggest they may have a positive impact on everything from heart disease to obesity.

They can be grown easily at home and, with established bushes in 2lt pots costing as little as £13, they'll soon pay you back with pounds of berries for years to come. Choose a sunny, sheltered spot on your patio for best results.

Pick a self-pollinating variety such as Nelson as a mid- to late-season cultivar that's very hardy, or place two plants next to one another for cross pollination.

For a large health lift, pick berries right before eating and add to your breakfast muesli topped with natural yoghurt - or turn into a scrumptious tart.

Tip: For fun with the kids, choose Pink Lemonade or Pink Sapphire pink cultivars (available at most garden centres), which deliver all of the health benefits in a ballerina-pink, all singing all dancing package.

TOXINS

Ever get a headache, tight chest or stinging eyes while cleaning? That's because home cleaning products release pollutants into the air.

But never fear, Sansevieria trifasciata, mother-in-law's tongue, is here. NASA research found this plant excellent at removing airborne toxins, lapping them up with its leaves as it photosynthesises and, in turn, releasing fresh oxygen.

A bonus is that, unlike most plants, it recycles the air overnight as well - so you can breathe easy with this beauty in your bedroom.

Happy in full sun or partial shade, moisten the soil once every other week and allow water to drain away completely for best results.

INSOMNIA

A third of the UK population could do with some Valeriana officinalis for a



CLEAR THE AIR
Mother-in-law's tongue



GOOD NIGHT
Valerian



Your berry best



SALAD DAYS
Lettuce growing aids wellbeing



TEA TIME Beat antioxidants with Camellia sinensis

promoting better sleep. It also comes without the side effects of sleeping pills, so it's a double plus.

If you fancy trying it, plant now in seed form for harvest from July to October. Once the roots are ready, dig them up and dry them out in the sun for a few hours to dry.

Grind with a pestle and mortar and pop a spoonful into hot water to make a bedtime tonic to aid sleep.

Tip: Cats love Valerian. About 30

minutes after ingestion, it has a soothing effect. So sprinkle some on Kitty's breakfast before their next trip to the vet.

MENTAL HEALTH

Salad leaves grow quickly, giving you an immediate sense of achievement, boosting your emotional wellbeing.

Sow spinach, lettuce or rocket seeds now - directly into the ground where they will crop - and watch as the

young plants peek their heads above ground almost straight away.

Ensure the soil is full of well-rotted organic additives, and also watch out for slugs and snails.

The first young leaves will be ready to harvest in just two to three months.

As more re-grow in their place, you'll have a constant supply of mini-wins to boost your emotional health.

And that's not forgetting the con-

tinued supplement to your dinners with this mineral-rich homegrown veg. **Tip:** Sowing lettuce leaves in a window box saves on space, keeps the slugs at bay and gives you fresh salad to pick for use in scrumptious BLTs.

ANTIOXIDANTS

If you're up for a challenge, you might consider growing your own antioxidant-rich tea with Camellia sinensis, an evergreen shrub with tremendous potential.

Studies suggest that antioxidants can fight free radicals that contribute to chronic diseases.

For a good tasting brew, choose a mature bush of three years old or more from your local garden centre.

Start harvesting by plucking the first two bright green leaves and buds as they appear on each branch.

It makes an attractive plant, either indoors in a large pot or in the garden. A handful of fresh leaves will make a single cup of loose-leaf tea.

Once oxidised to the level you require, pop leaves in the oven to dry at 90C for 15 minutes and then steep in hot water to make a loose-leaf tea that is completely fresh.

So there you have it - five incredible grow-at-home plants to drive your health into top gear and maintain it, this World Health Day.

Creating a soothing hospice haven



INSPIRATION Helpers at Highland Hospice Gardens

The national Cultivation Street campaign provides a perfect chance for schools, communities and garden centre staff to come together.

Often these relationships create something amazing and, at times, are even life-changing.

Three of our ambassadors at Simpsons garden centre in Inverness - Siobhan, Dale and Graham - are shining examples of what can be achieved from such a relationship.

They joined forces with the city's Highland Hospice to develop a relaxing and tranquil outdoor space for patients living with life-limiting illness.

The finished design is a place in which they can tap into the soothing



and remedial effects of nature - complete with an all-access path to encourage patients to freely explore all that's on offer.

It's a safe haven inviting their loved ones to join them in quality time away from the stresses of everyday life.

Andrew Leaver, head of fundraising for Highland Hospice, said: "We are keen to add raised beds where patients can grow fresh herbs and vegetables.

"We are establishing a therapeutic arts programme and would like to see

more of our group activities undertaken outside - Highland weather permitting of course."

Siobhan added: "The advice and inspiration a garden centre can offer is invaluable to the project and seeing the end results is the most inspiring and humbling feeling.

"Creating this garden was a great experience. Knowing the difference it will make was a pleasure."

Highland Hospice is one of the many gardens across the UK entering the brand new Gardens for Better Health category in the Cultivation Street 2019 competition, sponsored by Calliope.

To register your interest, visit cultivationstreet.com.

OFFER of the week

Blueberry Top Hat is a versatile and compact shrub with white flowers in spring, developing fruits come summer before its foliage goes reddish-green by autumn.

One of our best-selling varieties, the Blueberry Top Hat will thrive in a patio container and grows to just 50cm. Produces fruit from July to August - 9cm pot plants supplied.

You can buy one Blueberry Top Hat for just £7.99 or buy TWO for £15.98 and get a further one free.

Delivery within 14 days. To order by debit/credit card call 0843 922 5000 quoting SMTG016 or send a cheque (made out using blue or black ink) and payable to 'Garden Offers', to: Mirror Blueberry Top Hat Offer (SMTG016), PO Box 64, South West District Office, Manchester, M16 9HY or visit mirrorgardenoffers.co.uk.

GADGET



Time to stop kneeling and start wheeling...

This wheeled garden seat will take some of the strain out of weeding - especially if you're getting on or you suffer from mobility problems. Its chunky wheels help it glide effortlessly over the ground as you weed borders, and it's just the right height for tending raised beds or pruning bushes or shrubs. It also has a tray for tools, and the contoured seat swivels 360 degrees to save your back! I found it for £59.00 from coopersofstortford.co.uk.