

SIZE MATTERS

All plants establish themselves better, when they are planted whilst young and full of life. It doesn't matter whether the plant is a tender summer bedding specimen or a larger shrub and tree. The rules are exactly the same whatever plant you have.



Young plants are better able to establish themselves and acclimatise to their new environment, than older plants can. It is also cheaper to purchase young fresh plants, because the bigger it gets and the longer it stays in the nursery, the higher the price gets.

Buying and establishing one or two larger specimens to give your garden immediate impact, is a skilled job. Unless you have the time or commitment to care for these new introductions, it will be a waste of time and false economy to be truthful. Large and semi-mature plants can take many years to fully establish and recover from the stress they went through when it was moved. During the same period as it takes a large specimen to establish, a younger and smaller specimen planted at the same time will probably have caught up and be of comparable size and vigour. It may be even more impressive than its larger counterpart in the long run.

But if you take my advice and plump for buying a smaller plant, you must take into account the optimum size that the plant will grow to. Trees and shrubs need room to develop properly without the need for constant pruning to keep them in check. So often you will see huge Monkey Puzzle trees or Weeping Willows planted in the centre of a tiny front garden. To choose these plants for this situation is liable to create a major headache and a substantial dent in the wallet for whoever has to deal with the problem in the future.

If you don't know how big the plant is going to get, ask the person you are buying it from. Or better still, do your research before you go to the garden centre and only buy that which is suitable and appropriate.

It is true that a small plant can be lost in a large area, but in a decade it could dictate and dominate the whole plot.

"What do we do with the empty space in the meantime while we wait for the main plant to grow?" I hear you exclaim. The solution is this, plant short term in-fillers, which can be moved elsewhere where the main plant expands.

You could plant annual bedding, which is replaced seasonally. An alternative would be to plant up the vacant area with herbaceous perennials, removing them as the each becomes crowded out.

Size is important when planting something that could live for decades. Future gardeners will thank you for your foresight as the plant grows, increasing in size and beauty without creating more problems.

Good gardening
STUART MABBUTT

Northcourt Centre, Abingdon is having a Craft Fair!!!
8th April 2006, 10am—3pm
£10 per table—book now!
Contact: Trine Lucy, 32 Norman Avenue, Abingdon
OX14 2HJ
01235 535243

February Crossword Answers by Alisa

ACROSS: 1 Active 2 Milton 6 Toad 7 Yarmouth 10 Stimulated
13 Log 14 Valentine 15 Ski 16 Cornflakes 19 Trousers
20 Swan 21 Beyond 22 Dorset
DOWN: 1 ASTA 2 Toast 4 Trundle 5 Wallingford 8 Metrical
9 Implores 11 Eggs 12 Risk 14 Victory 17 Elwes 18 Knot
March 2006

OXFORDSHIRE ADVOCACY DEVELOPMENT GROUP

I think that we've all had times when we have needed the help of a friend or colleague to get our voice heard, either when we have felt too unwell to fight our corner or just unsure as to what our rights were. Well, many people all over the county are in need of this kind of support and often do not have anyone to help them. That's when they may ask for the help of an advocate.

Advocates are people just like that 'friend or colleague' who are willing to put their own agenda to one side and support someone to say what it is they want, and to be listened to by those who have the power to change things. It is a rewarding and enjoyable role, helping people to speak up for themselves who may otherwise sink deeper and deeper into difficulties.

Oxfordshire Advocacy Development Group (OADG) runs two advocacy schemes using volunteer advocates (and a third, ADAPt, which is staffed by a paid advocate). You could become part of this growing team, working either on short term advocacy (OSTAS – Oxfordshire Short Term Advocacy Scheme) or with people with learning disabilities (CAPOLD – Citizen Advocacy for People of Oxfordshire with Learning Disabilities).

People with learning disabilities are often not offered choices or helped to have a say in decisions made about them. Advocates can support them to speak up and say what they want. It can be a wonderful experience to help someone be part of a decision-making process and to see the change it makes to their life when that decision is followed through.

You could be involved in helping this happen.

All our advocates are trained, supported, supervised and paid expenses. You can also do an accreditation through us with the Open College Network. There is follow up training throughout the year for established advocates and opportunities to work with other schemes provided by OADG. All our advocates are checked by the Criminal Records Bureau.

If you are interested in helping someone be listened to, please contact Helen at CAPOLD (01865 741293 or capold@btopenworld.com) or Jenny and Naomi at OSTAS (01865 250102 or ostas@btopenworld.com)

Quilting Exhibition

Sewell Centre Gallery, Radley College, Abingdon
10 - 5, Saturday 25th
10 - 4, Sunday 26th March 2006

Raffle of Liberty Lawn Quilt & other Prizes for
The Abingdon Alzheimer's Club

"Any Basket"
The £20 Prize, Cotton Club Exhibition Challenge

Doughty's Fabric on Saturday
Three Shires Books on Sunday

Cushion & Bag Raffle,
Bring-and-Buy Table including Books
(proceeds to Oncology Unit, Churchill Hospital),
Quilters Guild Information & Sales Table,
Excellent refreshments! (proceeds to Flexicare).
Further details from Judy Harris (01235 543053)

***** 11