



Press Room Archive

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Flowers through the letterbox!

Bernard Salt shows you how to create a stunning summer border using plants which quite literally come through your letterbox.

Last summer I built a gazebo, with a leading to it at the top of my garden. The area looked a little bare so I created a border by digging up a 4ft (1.2m) wide strip of lawn alongside the curved path. The border was 60ft (18m) long and I wanted to fill it with half-hardy summer flowering plants to create a cheerful approach to the new gazebo. I had seen seedlings and plants in the Dobies catalogue which I fancied trying out, so I sat down with the catalogue and found five different types - Seedlings, Miniplants, Easiplants, Supaplants and Pot-ready plants. As I had no previous experience with any annuals bought by post, I decided to give them all a try!

Mixed colours

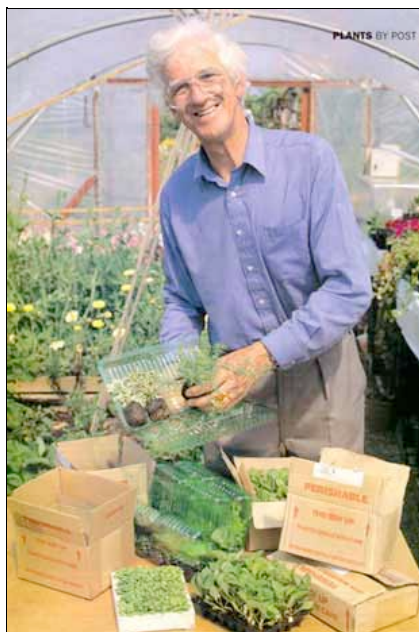
Plants such as salvias and Nicotiana F1 'Domino Salmon Pink' were available in single colours, but most of the other plants were only available in mixed colours. This meant I had to settle for a large splash of mixed colour. There was also a problem with height, as the majority of plants were rather low-growing. I didn't want anything which was very tall in a bed which was only 4ft (1.2m) wide but I did need some height variations. I overcame this problem by introducing individual tall plants as 'spots' in the bed. I used abutilon which arrived by post from Hayloft Plants. It's a good job I started planning my new border in the middle of winter as I was surprised how early the orders have to be placed. Dobies 'grow to order' and you must order many varieties by the end of January.

Perfect condition

Unpacking plants that come by post is an exciting time - mine arrived in perfect condition by first-class post. The seedlings came in white polystyrene trays, the Miniplants in small plastic modules and the Easiplants in larger plastic modules. Pot-ready plants were held individually in specially-designed green plastic containers, each with five plants, all carefully labeled. Plants were protected by polystyrene chips and robust boxes and included easy-to-follow growing instructions.

How to handle miniplants?

Miniplants are seedlings growing in their own tiny cell of compost - great if you find pricking-out a chore. They can also be put straight into small pots. Dobies guarantee at least 100 Miniplants from a pack of 120. Easiplants are slightly larger than Miniplants, and can be put into trays or pots. 40 plants are guaranteed from a pack of 42, and they're ideal for medium-sized bedding displays or for patio plants.



When will they arrive? Dobies give approximate delivery times with each variety they offer. To avoid plants being caught in the post at weekends, they are normally sent out on a weekday (you cannot ask for a specific delivery date). If you are expecting an order of plants through your letterbox while you're away, it's worth asking a neighbour to check your post for you.

Q: *What's the point in buying plants by post when summer bedding plants are so freely available?*

...Ordering by post is very easy and convenient. Not only do you have the pleasure of growing your own, you can grow better, larger plants which fill your borders more quickly. You also know that your plants have been properly hardened-off. Bought bedding plants may be chilled during transport or while displayed. How often have you seen trays of blue-leaved bedding plants on the pavement suffering from a cold wind?

Related Articles

Buying plants by post
Mail-order is ideal for getting those hard to find plants. We look at what to expect when your plants are delivered and explain how to get the most from ordering by post.

Baskets to extend the season
Buy your plants now and grow them on to fill your containers with foliage and spring flowering favourites. Les Rushton and Lawrence Greasley from Plant Magic show us how easy it is to keep your containers.

Ready, steady, grow!
It's all systems go in Bernard Salt's summer garden as he plants out his 'letterbox border' grown entirely from plants that came through the post.

PACKAGING SOLUTIONS

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