



The first Carpet of Flowers was created in 1971 as a way to promote begonias. Each square metre of ground contains more than 300 flowers.

Brussels, Belgium, carpet of begonias.



Butchart Gardens, Vancouver Island, Canada. October 2008.

Unless otherwise indicated, all photos are in our garden.

Azaleas

On right is one with two colours from one plant.



Bluebells

These die off for the six months of summer and then come again, and spread a bit each winter.



Camellias

This leaf shows a lack of iron.



Hydrangeas

Whites, small leaved ones, and some other hydrangeas apparently won't change colour. If your soil is high in aluminium, some will be blue and hard to change from blue. Acidity, high aluminium, high iron to a lesser degree, high potassium (K), low phosphorus (P), most fertilisers, and high organic matter, all help maintain blue colours.

Most soils contain aluminium, often too much for ryegrass to thrive without ample P and Calcium (Ca) which, with phosphorus, suppress the availability of aluminium. Lime can change some hydrangea flowers to pink, but they can go back to blue after the Ca and P have been used, and aluminium becomes dominant again.

Al is not required for plants, so, if soils have to be made more acid to achieve blue flowers, rather than use aluminium sulphate, use what is low in your soil and in plants' leaves, such as elemental sulphur, acidified phosphates, iron sulphate, Ammo (30-0-0-14) which is 50% urea and 50% sulphate of ammonia, or peat and other organic matter, such as grass clippings. The fertiliser used will also affect the colour. An acid fertiliser, low in phosphorus and high in potassium, is helpful in producing a strong blue.

If pink is required, avoid potassium and grow them in pots, because potting mixes based on peat don't usually contain much aluminium, so your hydrangeas are less likely



to revert to blue. Apply lime, or better still LimeMag (lime and serpentine) at 3 kg per 10 m² as required, which is usually every second year. This is more than most of the garden will need.

This exceptionally good hydrangea on the shady side of our house (they like part shade) had the old dead flowers along the bottom looking attractive, and a new flower on top, and coloured leaves. It was in



11 year limed soil, and got more lime. There are ferns on the left and self sown pink and white Impatiens behind it.

These two photos show 18 month old plants grown from cuttings off the one above. Both had lawn clippings twice and lime at 3 kg per 10 m², and reactive phosphate based fertiliser with deficient trace elements. See Gardens > Fertilisers.



The pink ones got another lime application. From this I learned that

adding calcium, serpentine, boron and deficient trace elements gives stronger stems, which makes sense, because a lack of calcium causes wilted weak leaves in most plants. The double limed pink ones stood up straight while the single limed ones lodged. They are in the park adjacent to us, which would not have had any lime for at least 30 years.

Drying hydrangeas

It is not which method you use, it is when you harvest them! Newly opened blooms don't dry well in the open air, so wait until the blooms go dry. The petals should have faded a bit and feel papery. Cut them, strip the leaves, and air-dry them in baskets or vases with or without water, or hang them upside down in fresh air out of direct sun.



Lily of the Valley on the right of an Azalea and an orange tree behind it.

Roses

A common spray used on roses to control insects is Shield which contains 4.4g/litre mycolbutanil and 9.6g/litre tau-fluvalinate as a suspension concentrate.

It contains a synthetic pyrethroid insecticide and a systemic fungicide that works by both skin contact and stomach action where the insect is killed by spraying or eating the sap or leaves. The fungicide is absorbed into the plant's system and is translocated around the plant to control disease. It is used to control

mites, whitefly and most common rose pest & disease problems including aphids, black spot, rust and powdery mildew.

Evidence indicates that repeated or prolonged exposure by humans to this chemical could result in effects on the reproductive system with possible risk of harm to the unborn child.

Avoid contact during pregnancy. Keep out of reach of children. Avoid skin and eye contact and breathing in vapour, mists and aerosols. If skin or hair contact occurs, remove contaminated clothing and flush skin and hair with running water.

Ripcord seems to be a safer insect spray, but treat all products, even organic ones as possibly dangerous. Use BB-12 to halve the amount of spray required and to get a better result. See Lawns for full details on using BB-12.

Dusting citrus trees with agricultural lime twice a year does the job much better. Growing the strong smelling marigold plants under trees and tomatoes discourages white flies which spread blight. Try lime on roses.

Waratahs

The flowers on these easy to grow Australian plants are beautiful and last for weeks. This one is two metres high.



Flowers that seed themselves easily in the garden -

- Californian poppies
- Busy lizzies
- Sweet William
- Calendula (English marigolds)
- Iceland poppies

Cosmos attract Golden finches as seen here through our lounge window.



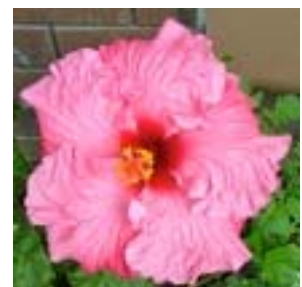
- Primula
- Antirrhinum
- Forget-me-not (this can be a bit too vigorous)
- Cornflower



- Other plants in bed by window -
- Penstemon (perennial) various colours, pink, pink & white, purple, blue
- Alstromeria (pink, tall, with group of flowers on end of stem)
- Dianthus

Hibiscus

More to come.



Pot plants

This Amaryllis is from one bulb that flowers like this every year. After dying back, Auriel gives it a tablespoon of bulb fertiliser and places it in shade under some low shrubs or trees.

They are inclined to lean over. A bamboo or fibreglass rod tied to it with green 0.5 mm Rubber Ties keep it vertical.



Irrigation

See Gardens & Lawns > Vegetables > Irrigation.