sowing seeds and chitting dahlia tubers

Posted in All posts, Dahlias on 18th March 2014

What a fabulous start to Spring we had this last weekend, with beautiful blue skies and warm sunshine. It certainly seemed to lift everyone’s spirits, and encouraged my husband and I to really crack on with preparing the garden for the new growing season.

First to be tackled was the annual cleaning of the greenhouse. Always a daunting task, but with the help of the high pressure hose, it went from green and murky to pristine and sparkling in no time! The perfect start for new undercover seed sowing, so sweet peas, celeriac, and some all year round lettuce varieties were the first to be sown.

Trays of chillies and tomato seed varieties have been brought inside, where the warmth should get them germinating nicely. Raised beds were weeded and dug over, with onions, shallots, peas and broad beans going in and a sowing of French Breakfast radishes which will produce the first delicious and encouraging
harvest that we so look forward to. As I may have mentioned in a previous post, I am finally creating a cutting
garden at the back of the kitchen garden this year, which is something I have planned for a long time.

Top of my list has been Dahlias, encouraged by Sarah Raven’s enthusiastic write ups and promise of buckets
of beautiful cut flowers from mid summer through to the first frosts. Earlier in the week, I also attended an
enjoyable and informative talk given locally to me by the Vice President of the Dahlia Society which was very
inspiring, although I shall not be planning on competing with his annual planting of 800 competition standard
plants!

A small selection of varieties will be just right to start with, and these are the colours and types that caught my
eye...
Following the advice from the talk, I have laid them on top of compost in seed trays to basically ‘chit’ like a potato before planting up in individual pots when the first shoots start to appear. When they are then about a foot or so high, they should be ready to plant outside. Apparently this method will produce flowers much earlier than planting under the soil straight away. Always good to learn something new!

Not a particularly relaxing weekend by any means, but a productive and satisfying one enjoyed in the glorious early sunshine of Spring. There is no better feeling than to stand back at the end of the day and admire all the hard work, preferably with a glass of something white and chilled, to make it all worth while.
I do hope you are all enjoying this gorgeous weather and happy gardening!

Sophie x