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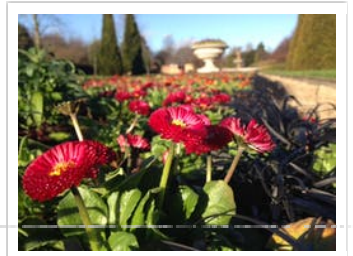
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winter bedding and regent's park garden

Posted in *All posts* on 24th January 2014

Walking along a crisp London street last week my attention was caught by two window boxes containing striking bedding Cyclamen...

ADVICE



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C.persicum which is not really hardy but normally looks happy enough into late winter – longer in a warmer city micro-climate. While I am normally attracted to sultry coloured big blooms, the hardy much more modest little cyclamen – C. coum – that is just popping up at this time of year wins me over hands down. These little jewels like a humus rich soil that does not totally dry out in the summer and cope with shade well, lifting a dull January day with their beautiful blooms that vary from pale pink, rich purple to pure white. To ensure they establish well buy them in the green, although they may be pricey they will soon bulk up in number with more of them popping up each year. At home we have them in a large terracotta pot providing a beautiful under planting to our standard lolly pop bay tree.



My favourite London Park is Regents Park with London Zoo's exotic inhabitants to be found upon its edge. The bedding displays within the stylish and historic avenue gardens of the park are always some of the best to be seen, with their gardeners combining typical winter bedding plants (which this year include bright raspberry jam Bellis Daisies and jolly Union Jack red and blue Polyanthus) with low growing perennials that give good accompanying foliage such as Heucheras and Ophiopogon planiscapus 'Nigrescens'. In the raised planted fonts stems of bright Cornus alba 'Siberica' has also been used to give the ground hugging display some height.





At work we are slowly coming to the end of a long season of pruning, roses are at large within my department and we are taught to give almost all of them a short back and sides! Don't be afraid to prune mature roses, an educated hacking each year does them the world of good. A rose that is left unpruned is not a flower factory, it is those that are trimmed and fed well that give the best show. The best start is to have a good pair of **secateurs** that are sharp and clean – if you have several roses, then clean the blades between attending them, as many diseases are spread via unclean blades. In the case of climbers look at the growth in front of you, how many of the stems look old and chiselled? Then look at the young growth – could they replace some of the tiered ones? Look where the outward facing buds are, if there are few buds to be seen, cut above the lines upon a stem (nodes) from these buds will sprout in the spring further encouraged by pruning.

It's a job in which the more you do, the more confident you get at it. It's well worth going to see a masterclass of pruning to help get you off to a good start, it's not rocket science but it is a skill in gardening that is well worth some good education and your roses will thank you for it! Out in the borders *Helleborus x hybridus* are still mostly in bud, the whites are the first to open it seems, with the **freckled pinks** and divine sought after purples arriving later. But the more robust *H. argutifolius* with its tough serrated leaves is out en masse showing off its fresh lime-green flowers – a welcome nectar source for emerging queen bees. I like this tough do-er as the hens can't ruin it, the leaves are too hard to bother pecking at so when I get my own garden I intend to have these along with cardoons planted around my chicken coops!



Happy gardening and a happy new year!

Thanks for reading,

The logo for Arthur, featuring the name 'ARTHUR' in a stylized, handwritten font. The 'A' is large and has a long, sweeping tail that extends to the right. The 'R' is also large and has a similar tail. The 'T' is smaller and has a short tail. The 'H' is also smaller and has a short tail. The 'U' is smaller and has a short tail. The 'R' is also smaller and has a short tail.

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