



Hello and welcome to *our September newsletter*

Welcome to The Natters September newsletter. For those parents among us the end is almost in sight! Stay focused on the last minute panic buying of uniform and labelling everything in sight because we will soon be waving our little darlings off for the new school year.

This month for the garden we give you step by step guidance on how to divide your perennials for free plants next year. We will help you choose the best plants to go in baskets and containers for winter colour. Along with sharing our top tips on supporting our little ones on their return to school.

The September transition....

The September garden is often one of peace and tranquility. As the burst of outdoor action that summer brings starts to slow down, I always find that spending time maintaining the garden in September the most rewarding. The vegetables that we lovingly grew through summer are now in abundance. Make

sure to keep harvesting as this will help to give you crops for as long as possible. The smaller jobs that we do in the garden now on the lead up to winter, will definitely make absolutely sure that you have a healthier and more productive garden in the spring. So make the most of the mild weather and get out there!

Heritage open days 6-12th September...

Heritage open days are running all over the UK in September. In Lincolnshire there are a number of interesting tours going on in and around the city.

Tours of 'The Wonky House' on Michaelgate are running on 12th September. For more information visit:

www.heritageopendays.org.uk



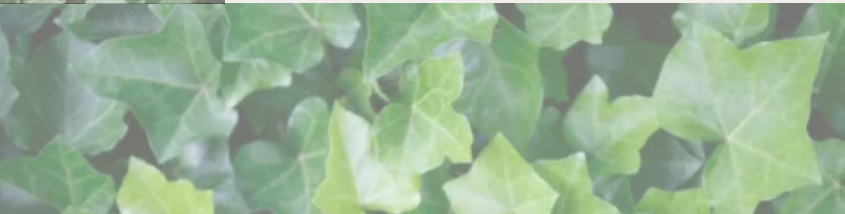
Prepare for winter colour...

Your summer hanging baskets will now be ending and all the blooms will be starting to fade. Now is a really good time to replant your baskets with hardy winter plants that will give you a stunning colorful display over the colder months. Just because it is grey outside, doesn't mean your garden needs to be too.

Just remember to empty the whole basket and reline with new moss or coir matting, then refill with fresh compost. This is important as all of the nutrients in the soil will have been used up by your summer flowers. It is also good practice as this can reduce the spread of any pests or diseases present in the soil from contaminating new plants.

Here is a selection of our favourite winter hardy plants that look great in any hanging basket or planter:

- **Pansies** - These are a great staple to inject a splash of colour all winter. Be sure to purchase frost hardy varieties such as 'jolly joker' which has a fantastic palette of orange and purple.
- **Skimmia japonica** - Skimmia plants make fantastic container plants. The foliage is evergreen and varieties such as 'Rubella' (pictured) have beautiful red berries over the winter. In the spring these small evergreen shrubs can be planted out into the garden or moved into bigger pots on their own.
- **Heuchera** - I absolutely love Heuchera. They come in a variety of orange, yellow and green shades. They have evergreen leaves which look fantastic when planted together.
- **Cyclamen** - Cyclamen will flower all winter long. Although the flowers generally come in shades of red and pinks, the white variety can be striking when planted alongside other green foliage similar to that of a Skimmia.
- Any hanging basket needs trailing foliage to add more interest. Trailing winter flowers are extremely limited, even plants such as Creeping Jenny won't tolerate a hard frost. Stick to traditional winter trailers such as different varieties of **ivy**. There are so many out there. Give them a go.



Is your child bouncing off the walls?...

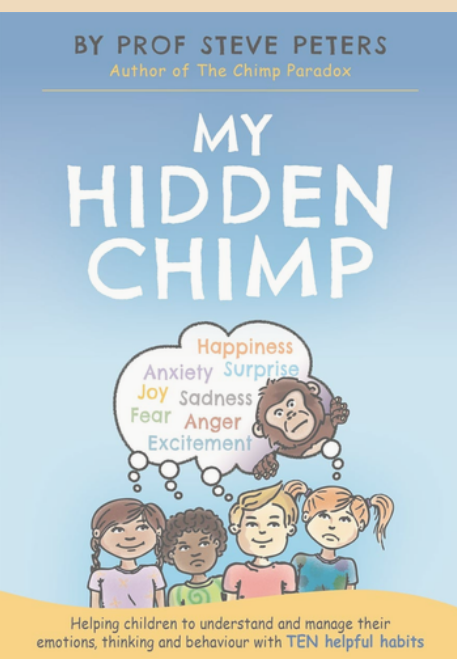
Having now prepared all three of my children for their educational journey, I can clearly see that they have all coped with it very differently. My girls now aged 12 and 9 both took it all in their stride.

Although we have had the usual end of week fatigues and having to literally drag them towards the end of each term.

They were definitely ready for a break at the end of the academic year and their behaviour was generally pretty predictable!!!

Our youngest child Bryn, is ready to start his second year in primary school, and dealt with school life in a VERY different way!! Initially we thought his erratic after school behaviour was perhaps a 'boy thing' or because he is the youngest in the year. However, after speaking to other parents, it seems he may not be alone and this behaviour is a perfectly normal way to help him unwind after conforming during the school day.

After reading up on this, it seems that this after school meltdown is actually called **after-school restraint collapse**. There is some really reassuring articles and useful tips on the **BBC Bitesize** page which is part of the Parents **Toolkit**.



Not all children are talkers...

A lot of children manage to vocalise and express their emotions as part of developing their individual personalities. There are some children and young adults who find it difficult to recognise and deal with their emotions. There is absolutely no one size fits all approach to helping children deal with feelings.

We were recommended 'My Hidden Chimp' by Prof Steve Peters, as really useful tool in helping understand our middle child's reluctance to speak about how she is feeling.

We worked through the book together and discussed some of the exercises in there. It really helped her to open up and learn to talk things through with us. A really useful find which we highly recommend.

Don't be scared to split...

Dividing perennials is a common gardening practice that offers several benefits, promoting the health and vitality of the plants and enhancing the overall garden landscape. Dividing perennials regularly will ensure your healthy, vigorous plants will continue to perform year after year. It also offers the opportunity to multiply your plants.

Here are key reasons why we divide perennials:

- 1. Health and Vigour:** Over time, perennial plants can become overcrowded or root-bound, leading to reduced growth and flowering. Dividing them helps rejuvenate the plants, encouraging new growth and improving their overall health.
- 2. Encourages Blooming:** Dividing perennials can lead to more abundant blooms. When plants are crowded, their root systems compete for nutrients and water, which can hinder flowering. Dividing them gives each plant more space to thrive and increases their chances of producing flowers.
- 3. Promotes Stronger Roots:** When perennials are divided, the process can stimulate root growth and strengthen the root system. Stronger roots enhance a plant's ability to absorb nutrients and water, resulting in a healthier plant.
- 4. Aesthetic Appeal:** Dividing perennials helps maintain a tidy and attractive garden. Thinning out overcrowded areas allows for better air circulation and light penetration, leading to healthier, more aesthetically pleasing plant displays.
- 5. Propagation:** Dividing perennials is an effective way to propagate new plants. You can create more specimens from an existing plant, increasing your garden's diversity without the need to purchase new plants.
- 6. Control Size and Shape:** Some perennials can become invasive if left unchecked. Dividing them can help control their size and shape, keeping them within desired boundaries in the garden and preventing them from overtaking other plants.



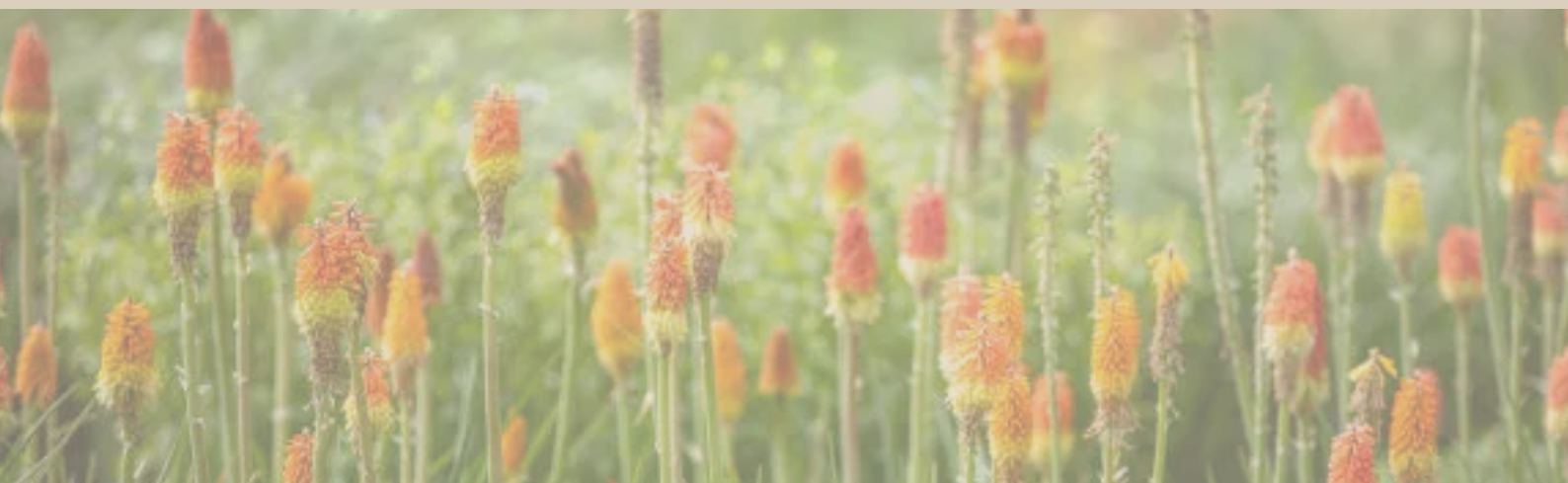
7. Seasonal Refresh: Dividing perennials is often done in the spring or fall, aligning with their natural growth cycles. This seasonal refresh allows gardeners to rearrange their garden layouts, introducing new color combinations and varied heights.

8. Improved Soil Quality: When dividing perennials, the disturbance of the soil can introduce air and nutrients to the roots, enhancing soil quality and promoting microbial activity, which benefits all nearby plants.

9. Pest and Disease Management: Overcrowded plants can be more susceptible to pests and diseases. By dividing and spacing out perennials, gardeners can reduce the risk of such issues and promote better plant health.

10. Time for Seasonal Care: Dividing perennials allows gardeners to assess the overall condition of the plants and soil. This provides an opportunity to amend the soil, add compost, or perform other necessary maintenance tasks.

Overall, dividing perennials is a beneficial practice that can lead to healthier plants, more vibrant blooms, and a more visually appealing garden. Regular maintenance through division not only enhances individual plants but also contributes to the garden's longevity and beauty.



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