

Counting Lambs, Spring Bulbs and Planting Petunias

by Pat Stachon

During the past 2 months, as you know, we have had the most wonderful weather. The most exciting time of the year on my farm is the spring and the arrival of new lambs. It started at the end of February and all 45 mamas delivered by the end of March! Whew!! William the ram was very busy in November!! The ewes have had singles, doubles, and even triplets this year. The triplets can manage with only 2 spigots! Each day I checked 3-4 times for new lambs, inspecting every nook and cranny in the barn for babes. While returning to the house from the maternity ward I would examine the garden for spring bulbs if the weather was decent. Desperate for spring and warm weather and any indication of green I was down on my knees searching for any suggestion of spring.

Between counting lambs and bulbs I planted a few seeds under my "Grow Lights". What a thrill to see the first seeds erupt through the soil. This is the second year I have planted petunias. These minute seeds were planted in February, took a week to 10 days to germinate, and in a few weeks they were ready to separate into flats, - a painstaking task. It is now the end of April and they will bloom soon. It is too early to plant outside so I shall pinch for bushier growth and place them farther from the lights to delay their growth. I should have planted the seeds late February. I bought these 2010 petunia seeds as last year's seeds were taken from single flowers in the garden during the fall and this year I wanted a change, from singles, to "frillies " and doubles. In mid April I also planted annuals and veggies.

It has taken me a few years to get on to indoor growing, and feel now that I have the knack. It is such a thrill to see these little plants growing inside during March, while outside the ground is bare and brown and not very hospitable. Nothing will beautify the bare ground or a new border left by winterkilled perennials as well as cheerful colourful annuals.

Here are some tips for placing your tender little seedlings in the garden. Make sure to only put them outside after all risk of frost has passed. This is crucial. Place your treasures in the shade for cooler temperatures and only gradually bring them in to full light. The outside sunlight is significantly brighter than the grow light. Check the need for watering frequently as the outside winds and weather can dry out your flats in a very short time. Watch the temperatures and your new plantings often and you will have success.

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