

March

Lockdown ! a word I'm sure we all detest by now. I think we've all had a good lesson in not to take things for granted and have learned to appreciate the little things in life that we've had to do with out. One of which came to mind while planning the gardening jobs for next month. It's that time of year again for pruning our Willow trees and it reminded me that I too could do with a good trim !

I can't believe it's 6 years since I first set eyes on our willow trees arriving on the back of a massive lorry. They looked so cramped in but had, in fact, been very carefully packed to get as many trees and shrubs on the load as possible without damaging them and it was quite a sight. The beginning of our lovely pond park had arrived on the back of a lorry and it felt quite emotional.



The willows were sad spindly looking things at the time but it was really exciting to think ahead and imagine how they would look a few years down the line when established.

Willows are fast growers and now 6 years on they are looking quite spectacular or at least they do for most of the year.

April is hair cut time for them, short back and sides all over. They go from long haired Hippies to Skin heads, in what might appear to be a very brutal cut. But as you must know by now there is no call for alarm, they soon grow back.

This yearly pollarding is necessary to keep them healthy and

restrict the size of the tree to fit in with the surroundings.

Contractors will be carrying out this work again as they did last year so please be patient if their truck is temporarily in the way. It only takes a couple of days and the job is done.



We have other types of Willow around Loftus too, a shrub form in some of the street beds and the Willow tunnel in the sand park. All three require different pruning treatments.

The shrub Willow in the street beds is given a hard prune this time of year but not quite as drastic as the trees and it also has another light trim late summer when it starts encroaching on to the paths and hanging out into the road.

The Willow tunnel is different again as it grows so fast its hard to keep up with. It requires numerous cuts throughout the summer and weaving in the branches while they are soft and supple is an ongoing job to keep its shape.



Shrubs and plants are budding up ready to burst into life any day now and this includes the grass.

This time last year I was fretting about the leather jacket devastation on the amphitheatre and was putting together an action plan of how to reinstate the areas with no grass left.

This year we are pleased to see the damage is minimal so the action plan we followed has obviously worked. If you are having trouble with your grass this Spring then Look back at my blog March/ April 2020 and follow the advice. It is possible to have a nice lawn despite Daddy longlegs, it just takes a bit of work and knowhow.

We have already done our first grass cut of the year and applied a spring fertiliser. As soon as the weather warms up we will be topping up any bald patches with grass seed. Mowing will continue at least once a fortnight, sometimes more often if the grass is growing fast.

If you want a top class lawn you can go as far as scarifying to remove moss and getting rid of lawn weeds too but all we ask if you are not really into this gardening lark is to keep your front garden neat and tidy. By this we mean mow your lawn every two weeks and keep the edges trimmed.



Don't keep rubbish or bins out the front and if you have a shrub bed instead of lawn, then please keep it weed free and maybe top up the bark mulch to help keep the weeds down.



Don't let shrubs get too big, and remember I'm always happy to offer advice on pruning or any other gardening matters.

Above : first class lawn - Green card

Above : acceptable lawn that would also get a Green card