

work I promised, or one can hire an experienced drainer to do the job. Whatever, it's a job that must be done.

Drainage fixed, it's now time to look at the soil. To be well drained the soil needs to be of open texture, so if you have a heavy soil that gets soggy in wet weather you must add something to open it up. Sharp sand (pea gravel perhaps) is best for this but perlite and such like will answer very well; supplement these with compost, either home made or commercial, spent mushroom compost if you can get it, or well rotted cow or horse manure. Dig these additives into the garden and marvel at the difference. Clay soils can of course be broken down by the application of a commercial 'clay breaker', or cheaper than that, use Gypsum to do the job. A liberal application will soon have the clay breaking down into a workable medium. If in any doubt as to the suitability of your garden soil then seek advice, perhaps your local nurseryman will help or you can contact your Agriculture Department or Botanic Garden.

Pots and Tubs, and Potting Mixes

Growing in the garden does not necessarily mean that plants must be in the ground, for many great garden designs include plantings in pots and tubs, and those who have but a small courtyard or patio can still grow out-of-doors, and even a window box may be considered to be a garden. A great advantage of pots in the outdoor setting is that they can be so easily re-located. Thus you can change positions as the seasons change to take advantage of the very best location for each particular begonia, or merely to vary the look of the garden, and pots in flower can be put where you want a colourful display. There are wheeled stands available which make the re-location of heavy tubs a breeze but remember to apply a coating of grease to the wheel bearings so that they won't rust.

The growing medium used in pots must be of good quality and open texture, and if a commercial mix is purchased ensure that it conforms to the Australian Standard (refer to Appendix B). This is indicated by a series of ticks on the package, black for standard and red for premium quality. These commercial mixes should contain controlled release fertiliser and trace elements so read the contents statement before adding more. However I do find that all the mixes I have so far tried are a bit too heavy for begonias, and to compensate I add up to a quarter by volume of perlite. Never use soil direct from the garden to fill your pots as it will compact very quickly and deny essential air to the plant roots. It is also a wise precaution to raise pots and tubs used outside so that worms and other soil dwellers cannot enter. Worms in particular, although so valuable in garden soils, are not welcome in pots for they help in the rapid compaction of the mix - and don't think they won't get into pots standing on brick or similar paving! Worms will find their