56 SUNDAY MIRROR SUNDAY 05.08.2018

Q&A

Is it brown and out

for my new conifer?

Why is my newly-planted

conifer turning brown?

DAVID: Conifers go brown for

a range of reasons, including

not enough light or exposure

summer we're having, I'd say

to cold winds. But given the

lehydration is most likely.

If the brown patches are

nsignificant, you may be able

to rescue it by watering once

or twice a week from now on.

If that doesn't do it, I'm afraid

you're looking at replacing it.

I want marrows by

How can I ensure the best

vield from my marrows?

the barrow-full...

Daniel Martin, London

DAVID: In this heat, the most

important thing for marrows

and other cropping vegetables

is a steady water supply. It will

help stop marrows splitting.

Feed plants with a high-

potash liquid (such as tomato

feed) once a week to help it

produce strong vegetables -

to keep the plant producing

right through to October.

and pick mature fruit regularly

**TIP** of the week

Roses are in the same family as

strawberries - and their petals

are edible. Try rose petals in

cooking where you might use

strawberries - salads, jams and

drinks, or as edible decoration.

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tips on gardening visit

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Our gardens rely on a fragile ecosystem teeming with life that we often don't spot. Get my lowdown on how to keep the bugs while losing the slugs

am a huge fan of flower shows their wealth of attractions make them a brilliant family day out. And one of my favourites is the marvellous Southport Flower Show.

If you're planning a visit this year, be sure to check out the breathtaking show gardens, inspired this time around by the "curious garden" theme.

And of course you'll want to visit the Grand Floral Marquee, packed to the brim with unusual plants and a great place for top green-fingered tips from some of the nation's best growers.

Another unmissable feature at Southport is the Celebrity Theatre. partnered by Everest (everest.co.uk).

Running from August 16 to 19, the show has a fantastic line-up of talks from horticultural heavy hitters such as Monty Don, Carol Klein, Christine Walkden and myself – as well as TV presenter Anita Rani and CBeebies uperstar Justin Fletcher.

If you're coming down, pop in and say hello. The theme for my talks is The Living Garden.

I'll be taking audiences on a journey of discovery concerning the garden as an ecosystem, giving gardening tips

### Slugs cause around £8m of crop damage every year in the UK

along the way. Here's a sneak preview but, to hear more, grab yourself a ticket and head to Southport.

#### Slugs

A common garden pest, slugs have been around in the UK since the end of the last ice age.

As a nocturnal species prone to drying out, slugs spend most of their lives underground. They only venture out in the cool and wet - which is why we see hundreds of their silver trails the morning after a cold rainy night.

As we all know, slugs love to eat plants, causing an estimated £8million of crop damage a year in the UK.

One way to protect your garden is with "sacrificial" flowerbeds to tempt slugs away from your prized blooms.

Nasturtium, hostas, petunias, dahlia and delphiniums all work well.

Or just fill your garden with plants slugs dislike. These include plants with tough leaves they find hard to chew (geraniums or ferns) or those that taste bitter (spurges or foxgloves). For more top tips on slug control. see my website, daviddomoney.com.

#### Microbes

Microbes are miniscule forms of life so small that they're measured in millionths of a metre – and a gram of





garden soil can contain as many as a million of them.

Common microbes in gardens include bacteria, algae and fungus. Microbes are essential to the health

of our gardens. They eat dead creatures, animal waste and decaying plant matter - and put the nutrients



ORKSHOPS Carol with Notcutts colleagues



back into the soil. To create a microbe- or make a compost tea - a liquid full to lean honey bees. We have stripy tence. Yet bees are now in big trouble. friendly environment, mix lots of of billions of beneficial microbes. black and white bees and gristly In recent winters, we've lost as much organic material, such as manure or Added to soil or sprayed on foliage, it orangutan-like bees. All play a hugely as half of the bee population in some compost, into your soil or cover it with is the ultimate microbial boost. important part in our ecosystem. areas of Europe. natural mulch such as bark chippings. Bees The good news is that this is an area They pollinate our crops, our garden plants and our wild flowers – helping in which gardeners can have a truly Microbes slowly break this down. adding moisture, air and nutrients to The UK is home to more than 250 to keep us fed and ensure the next incredible impact. vour soil in the process. Or you can buy species of bee, from fuzzy bumble bees generation of plants comes into exis-Planting flowers that provide nectar

## to cultivate a healthy attitude towards wildlife

Entries for Cultivation Street 2018 close birdfeeder. She tells me: "I love to tomorrow - so get yours in guickly for a educate people on not killing wildlife. chance to share the £20,500 of prizes. they put down affects bees and slugs, Carol Watson is a sales assistant at Notcutts garden centre in Tunbridge and then the birds if they eat the slugs. Wells, Kent, where she gives talks, leads So it's about a better alternative."

workshops and helps community groups and schools with their projects. The mum-of-two, who entered our garden centre ambassador category, loves watching visitors to her garden

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# with DAVID DOMONEY



BIT OF A BUZZ Bees go wild for lavender



Buddleia Sungold is a yellow flowering Butterfly bush that is simple to grow and will be covered in an abundance of yellow flower clusters on arching stems throughout the summer.

The amazing fragrance attracts butterflies and bees. Its eventual height can be 3metres but like all Buddleia you can prune hard in March to keep it to a manageable size. Supplied in a 9cm pot.

You can buy one for £7.99 or order three for the price of two, only £15.98.

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SLIME TIME Slugs com

Carol, 51, who has three allotments, added: "Cuttings are a great free or low-cost way to plant. And propagating works well as a workshop event." Carol has also been helping teen

gardeners at nearby Oakley School, She said: "We provided seeds and plants. "So many don't realise the weed killer but mostly taking cuttings from their

own. They were a remarkable class." We'll be revealing our 2018 winners and runners-up in these pages from September 2, so make sure you pick up

vour Sunday Mirror. Follow Cultivation Street on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. See cultivationstreet.com for full details. and pollen for bees throughout the season is a brilliant way to support them and help bolster their numbers.

Good plants to achieve this include globe thistles, lavender, buddleia and wallflowers. Foxgloves, too, are a big hit with bees.

And if you have herbs in your garden such as chives, thyme, oregano and sage, an effort-free way to feed the bees is by letting some of the stems flower.

For more about bees and how you can help them, listen to my Grasping the Nettle podcast on YouTube. For more info and tickets, visit

southportflowershow.co.uk.





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