

# GARDEN NEWS

## SLUG ALERT!

After the weather this week, we may not believe it's spring, but plants feel the days getting longer and the sun's angle more direct. Take a careful look and you'll see some new green shoots emerging here and there throughout the perennial bed – happy equinox!



Of course, slugs find this new growth enticing as well. Delphinium canes, especially, need to be watched with care as they emerge in the spring; it's time to start hand-picking or baiting slugs and snails so they don't eat up the succulent young foliage. For more information on controlling slugs and other spring delph care, you can visit our complete delphinium care page.

Early thinning is also essential to ensure strong beautiful delphinium blooms later this season. When spring growth is 2 to 3 inches high, select the strongest shoots (one for newly planted seedlings; three for second-year plants; five for older plants) and cut off all others at ground level.

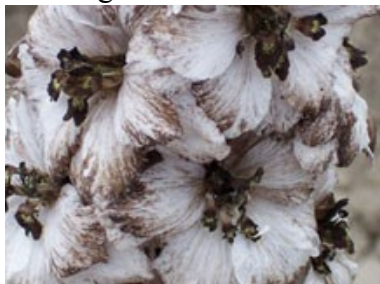


Take advantage of thinning your delphs to start a new planting by making "Irishman's cuttings." As you cut down unwanted shoots, scoop a little of the crown with it (to ensure it has the cells it needs for hardiness) and use as a cutting. A little extra work to propagate the "Monarch of the Perennial" border!

For centuries, Irishman's cuttings were the only way to propagate named clones of true English Delphiniums, because here in the States we cannot import crowns from Europe. delphiniumAmerica's named seed varieties, such as Pacific Giants, had become weak due to poor breeding techniques. But over the years we've been fortunate to get to know world class seedsmen. delphiniumWe've begged, pleaded, and bribed some of these superb seedsmen to obtain handcrossed seed backcrossed to named clones for spectacular English Delphiniums. During the past 14 years we've grown over 300 named crosses of the 6 to 8 foot tall hybrids, all sourced from members of the British Delphinium Society.



This week, the latest product of this collaboration – the result of 20 years of careful breeding – will be available at retail nurseries in the Pacific Northwest. Our



remarkable new hybrid Delphinium elatum produces highly varied blooms in delectable shades of deep brown, lighter cocoa, and ivory, each bloom veined, picoteed, or stippled, some with a light cherry-pink undertone. We call it..... 'Chocolate.'

If a 'Chocolate' delphinium isn't enough to convince you to start working those beds, consider that we're also shipping gourmet garlic starts (4 inch pots with 5 starts each) to local nurseries this week. Garlic must be planted by the shortest day of the year for harvest the following summer, but if you forgot to sow yours back in the fall, don't worry, we've done it for you! Just transplant the starts 8 inches apart into a prepared bed and you can still plan for a mouthwatering July harvest of hot, spicy 'German Red' (for the true garlic lover); gleaming white, robustly flavored 'Music' (a delicious roasting variety); or the eye-catching 'Nootka Rose' (a Northwest heirloom ideal for braiding). We're also growing 'Spanish Roja,' 'Chesnok Red,' 'Georgian Crystal Purple,' 'Inchelium Red,' 'Early Italian Purple,' and 'Silver Rose.'



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