

Buying plugs and plants online, look out for bad packaging

Buying plants online can be both convenient and cost-effective, especially if you don't have a greenhouse to grow your own seedlings through spring but there are some things to think about if you take this route.

The growing season in Scotland is generally a lot shorter than elsewhere in the UK, when Monty Donn and his dog Nigel (on gardener's world) are out getting excited about planting up for the new season, gardeners in Scotland are usually still wearing hats, scarves and gloves. This means we don't get the chance to start until much later and then winter weather comes much quicker for us meaning our tomatoes stop ripening and other plants stop producing. Due to a particularly nasty bout of weather this year, spring is only just coming to Scotland now and for the first time, my greenhouse is bare with little hope of getting plants to take in time to produce. As it's the first year I've suffered this way, as a gardener I took it pretty hard, thinking that was the end of this season's hopes but luckily it's not.

It did take a bit of soul-searching, but this week I decided that if I was foiled by the weather and unable to grow, I could make use of all the lucky folk in warmer climes and buy young plants from them which I can then nurture and grow so that we still have our home grown veggies this year.

In doing this though, I have learned a valuable lesson that I thought I should share here for anyone else who may be considering buying plants online. That lesson is – ask! Ask because how that plant is going to be sent to you and how it will be cared for on route is important. Before you buy

anything, ask them how it will be packaged, how long it will take to arrive, what happens if the young plant dies on route?



This week I bought peppers, chillies and tomatoes all with various degrees of success. Some came boxed securely with the plants in pots which were then wrapped in cellophane to prevent them from spilling their soil, the pots were then secure in the boxes with room all around them keeping them safe.



Others came in envelopes which had been crushed and bashed damaging the plants. Others didn't arrive in the timescale expected and were dead when they arrived.

All in all, it was a mixed bag but a valuable lesson learned.

Images from a video where I chat about this on youtube.

