



My Garden Makeover

By Sue Holliday

Charlie and Tommy they are not, as Gail so eloquently stated. Gail and Chris are the owners of Virginia Bush (see below), the company that did a makeover of my garden.

It all started because I wanted to have an area at the rear of the garden where I could sit and enjoy the last of the sun on a summer's evening.

Chris made a visit to assess what could be done and it all snowballed from there. I decided that the fence and back gate should be renewed and the lawn could do with an overhaul. Chris advised on other changes and with that I said, "Oh hell, lets revamp the whole thing." Oh boy, I did not realise what I was letting myself in for.

I never thought I could get emotional about a garden. The first day I returned from work to find only the trees and one shrub remaining. That was a shock, to see all my plants and shrubs packed into tubs and bags. The realisation of

the size of the space we had to work with made me realise how overgrown my garden was.

Chris and his team worked very hard in very hot weather to achieve a lovely result. His remit was to create a peaceful area where I can relax and enjoy the odd glass of wine. That was certainly achieved. Chris has very strong ideas of how a garden should look; he often nagged me about the number of pots I had on the patio.

All in all this was some experience. I now have a garden that looks good all year round and has colour and texture from the plants and shrubs that Chris insisted went in. I must admit at the first viewing I was not happy with some of the shrubs but now after several months I have to admit Chris's choice was right.

Garden Procrastinations

By Virginia Bush

Gardening is the last thing I thought I could be passionate about. My interest started in my early twenties, when I found myself labouring for a plants woman. To my amazement I was drawn into this world, and the more I was immersed the more I was hooked. Now I have a constant need to better my abilities and knowledge.

January is an odd month for gardening. There is nothing much happening, so get on with recovering from last month's exertions. Concentrate on getting over the shock of getting back to work. Good, that's January done.

February, mush, you lazy dogs, time to work! First, tidy that mess up in the garden. Mounds of soggy leaves in the nooks and crannies, bits of paper and the empty bottles (never heard of recycling?)

Nearly all lawns benefit from aeration; my favoured method is hollow tine aerating. You can buy a contraption resembling a garden fork from garden centres but being a lazy person I hire a machine like a large manual lawn mower. The lawn is pierced with hollow tubing to a depth of 10 to 15 cm at intervals of 25 cm and the soil core is removed. In theory the soil core pops out from the top of the tines when you push.

Once the whole area has been pierced, rake in sharp sand. It improves the drainage and the general condition of the soil, which benefits the lawn.

I have spent most of this week abusing people's lawns. I now push a small handful of sand into each hole with my thumb and forefinger, whilst 'squat waddling' along the lawn. I know that sounds a pain; the first 1000 were, but I got into the groove and the next 9000 flew by. It was very informative regarding the different 'feel' of lawns.

If your lawn is absolutely abysmal you're probably wasting your time. What you need is a new lawn, rotovating the whole area, adding grit/sand or good soil as needed. The cause has to be addressed rather than treating the problem.

That's all for the while, but hopefully I'll soon be droning on again...



Mary Goulbourn and her doorstep (copy of Michaelangelo's David) Photo by Toni Morgan.

Best Foot Forward

By Daphne Chamberlain

Mary Goulbourn, chiropodist and podiatrist, could have worked on the QE2. Instead she chose Cory's Pharmacy, where she has run her own practice for the last five years. With clients aged from 3 to 103, she still has plenty of variety in her working life.

"Immediately I started, I knew this was the career for me," she says. Her first choice had been textile design, but it didn't bring her the satisfaction her brother talked about getting from dentistry. Dentists, though, can't have two-way conversations, which is part of the pleasure of Mary's current work.

She likes a homely atmosphere. However, the lava lamp, paintings on the walls and classical music in the background, plus sugar-free lollipops for well-behaved youngest clients, shouldn't mask the fact that a visit to 'have your feet done' is an appointment with a professional.

State registered chiropodists take a full-time three-year degree course. This includes chemistry, anatomy, physiology, medical physics (covering X-rays and ultra-sound), pathology and general medicine. Mary studied at University College, London, and the London Foot Hospital in Fitzroy Square, which was the first foot hospital in Europe. She has seen hip and knee operations, and watched the work of orthopaedic, dermatological and vascular departments.

Walking the walk

Podiatrists are trained to study how people walk, to make corrective insoles and to carry out nail surgery, and at the moment she is investigating the use of homeopathy and acupuncture.

Chiropody (pronounced kiro-pody) is a Greek-based word, meaning 'hand on foot'. An acquaintance with a client's foot can reveal a lot about that person's health, sometimes being the first step towards treating medical conditions. Numbness or pins and needles

in the feet, for example, could possibly be a sign of diabetes.

"Don't be frightened to visit a chiropodist," is Mary's message. "Please don't tackle your own feet with razor-blades or scissors – and keep them out of very hot water, which weakens the skin. I do visit people who can't come out, and Cory's – a really nice, long-established pharmacy with a fantastic team of therapists – is open in the evenings."

The Cory Pharmacy is at 166, High Road. Please contact 020 8444 2123 to make an appointment.

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