

RATED > GARDENING



By Matt James

>ASK MATT

Email your questions to matt.james@netw.co.uk

I'm dreaming of a GREEN Xmas

MY GUIDE TO GIFTS FOR YOUR GARDENER

GARDENERS always get gimmicks for Christmas—ones that end up at the back of the shed.

So here's my Santa list Top Ten, guaranteed to please the green-fingered.



barrow—perfect for gardeners with little storage. (£31, gardenandleisure.com).

4. Something to burn rubbish that looks



HOT: Stylish brazier, £59.99



HANDY: Folding barrow for £31



FINE: Compost sieve, £44.99



TASTY: Grow veg, £109.90



FLOWER POWER: Novel trowel, £4

good—a stylish safety brazier (£59.99, rawgarden.co.uk).

5. Get lumps out of home-made compost with the Rotasieve (£44.99, gardendirect.co.uk—hope my wife is reading this!).

6. An indoor veggie garden! The AeroGarden con-

TOPS OF THE WEEK
LAST chance to plant tulips and spring bedding. Bog up leaves for leaf mould. Pressure wash drives and paths to stop them being slippery. Check glasshouse heaters and vents are working properly. Order next spring's veggie seeds. De-gunk terrazzo pots with a weak vinegar solution. Tie in climbers and wall shrubs to stop wind damage.

tains a microprocessor to grow salads, herbs and tomatoes in your kitchen (£109.90, aerogarden.org.uk).

7. Good gloves are so important. Get leather ones from plantmenow.co.uk for £5.94.

8. Our feathered friends will love the stylish Birdball Birdhouse (£29.95, greenandblue.co.uk).

9. Stocking fillers: A Grow Your Own Mushroom Kit (£1.99, greenfinders.com) or Heirloom tomato seeds (£9.95, sandedge.com), or a quality grain wooden dibber for £3.50 (urbangarden.co.uk).

10. Finally, dare I say, The City Garden Bible by yours truly. Published by Transworld, you can order it for £18 (free P&P) from notbookshop.co.uk or call 08700 707717.

Q WE have a water butt, should we drain out the water in case of heavy frosts?

MICHELLE TWIGGER, via email
A IT'S not usually necessary but, if you live in an area that gets severe weather, frozen water can warp the plastic. If you do drain your barrel take the opportunity to scrub inside and out with soapy water.

Q I AM a novice gardener. Can you tell me whether it's too late in the year to lay grass.

PATRICIA, via email
A It's a little late now, however you could get away with it as long as the ground isn't waterlogged or frozen. I'd wait until mid-March when conditions are ideal. You'll have more chance of success then.

Q I ENJOYED your article on tulips, where can I get the variety called Maureen?

BILL YOUNG, via email

A A PACK of 10 bulbs costs £3.50 at jacquessamand.com. Or £30 for 100 at WalkersBulbs.com. Get them in the ground asap.