

### A stowaway praying mantis.

Those of you who listen to my podcast on a regular basis, know that one of my hobbies is gardening. Whenever I have a free moment, I'm out there planting, weeding, or sowing seeds. It is September now, and the season for growing is just about over. There are still some Autumn flowers that are appearing here and there, but, judging by what you find in the shops, the time for gardening is coming to an end. You probably also know that the end of a season is, in shopping terms, the perfect time to find bargains. I popped into a local do-it-yourself store the other day that has a garden center. I quickly scanned the area with plants for anything with color that still looked plantable. I finally found a table that had bright orange flowers which still looked like they had a lot of life in them. I was in luck! These flowers were Summer flowering plants that nobody wished to buy. They had been put in the corner, and some were on the floor, and were at a very reduced price. I bought them and drove home, already knowing where I was going to put them. As I was digging the soil, I looked over at the biggest plant and saw something amazing. There was a huge praying mantis sitting right on top. I picked the plant up, and the insect turned its head towards me. Creepy! It didn't move though, even while I took the plant out of the plastic pot and put it in the ground. It seemed to be quite happy on the plant. It must have been a stowaway from the shop. I had put it in the car without even realizing. I think it's good luck, because these insects are great for the garden. They are serious predators who will eat most insects. It could have been a bad bug that I brought home from the garden center, but instead it was a garden helper.

Grammar notes.

Useful phrases: judging by..., to scan, to be in luck, a stowaway.

1. Judging by his negative attitude, he doesn't like living here.
2. The police quickly scanned the parking lot for any movement.
3. We arrived at the airport just in time. We were in luck; people were still boarding the plane.
4. The captain of the ship discovered a stowaway on board. He was a young man trying to get to the next port for free.