

## GARDENING

**S**UMMER is almost spent and the shorter autumn days are almost with us, ahead lays a long winter. One is almost too busy to enjoy the long summer days, and ironically, short winter days drag by slowly and seem so long; something to grumble about I suppose. We seem to be happy when we have something to grumble about; what about this summer then? Too hot, too dry, no late frosts, plenty of storms, so little to grumble about, so I will have a grumble about changing names. (Laid down by the International Code of Nomenclature for Cultivated Plants (1980) and the International Code of Botanical Nomenclature (1988).

After a lifetime spent in gardening and the habit of referring to my plants by their common names, I find it annoying that marguerites are now, correctly I'm sure, either '*argyranthemum frutescens*' or '*chrysanthemum frutescens*', and the garden flower we know as geranium must be referred to as '*zonal pelargonium*'. Geranium refers to our roadside friend the cranesbill. I rue the day that someone writes *primula vulgaris* for the primrose and *endymion non-scriptus* for the bluebell. Personally, I mourn the passing of marguerite; seems strange without them.

I went to the Chelsea Show, a very good show, but so hot, so dry, so crowded and no beer; one could literally say "It left something to be desired"! The sweet peas looked the worse for wear by mid-day on Tuesday, and the tulips looked as

though they had had enough of it all, and I don't like pink delphiniums at all. I must be old-fashioned or just old.

Plenty of rain early on in daffodil time, so plenty of grass and plenty of mowing. A dry spell followed, which caused a lot of hurried digging and planting. Some storms resulting in gardens full of vegetables and plenty of soft fruit, so why grumble? What of the necessary jobs like pruning? Early and spring flowering shrubs want pruning immediately after flowering, currants, gooseberries, raspberries - cut out all the old fruiting wood. Strawberries - after layering the runners required, plant next year's bed in August. Another job that month is to put in some geranium (I mean zonal pelargonium) cuttings around the growing plants; they will root before lifting time. Prick out all the biennial seedlings (wallflowers etc.).

Buy a few bulbs for Christmas flowering, and prick off universal pansies, and when you are looking for something to do after mowing, try a little weeding; it is a wonderful pastime, and not nearly as tiring as chasing behind a mower. Enjoy your summer holiday away from it all - your garden will show how much it has missed your tender care!

A.V. Mitchell.

