

## GARDENING

I AM WRITING THIS in the evening of July 11th. At 5 o'clock this afternoon the thermometer on the shady north facing wall of the garden showed 51 degrees Fahrenheit, that is just about 10.5 Celsius. Christmas is often warmer than that and for tonight the weather forecasters are talking of ground frosts in low areas. Where has our summer gone?

The days pass relentlessly and the traditional last day of sowing such things as french beans, carrots, peas, winter spinach and lettuce, July 14th, is only three days ahead, so next week's work is already lined up.

The seedlings of all the hardy biennials such as wallflowers, forget-me-nots, sweet williams, polyanthus, and canterbury bells should now be planted in their summer/autumn quarters, the nursery bed.

Cut out all the old flower wood of shrubs when they have finished flowering and be fairly ruthless. I include such shrubs as lilac, philadelphus, deutzia, forsythia and weigelia. Shorten the growths of wisteria back to 9 to 12 inches and then leave them until March to be cut back finally to three or four buds. Prune out the old fruiting wood of blackcurrants, gooseberries, loganberries and raspberries. You should cut out the old flowering wood of rambler roses and tie in the new growths in the positions you want them.

And now a few tips on propagation. Take geranium cuttings and plant them around the parent plant where they will root, but please remember to

bring them in by early October. Cuttings of dianthus (carnations and pinks) and of the shrubs I have recommended for cutting back after flowering, taking half-ripe wood of about 4 to 5 inches, should be inserted in a 50/50 mix of sand and peat or of perlite and peat.

Use the cold frame or a box with a pane of glass or polythene as cover. Keep as airtight as possible and shade from sunlight. Rooting hormone helps.

Cinerarias, schizanthus, calceolarias and hardy primulas are best sown in August.

I have noticed that miniature or 'pixy' roses in five inch pots are becoming very popular. I suggest that you keep them outdoors when they have finished flowering. Plunge the pots into the ground to prevent them drying out and give them an occasional feed. Bring them indoors around Christmas time and prune them back. They will last for years.

I wonder why people (you and I) no longer dry lavender flowers and put them in the airing cupboard to give such a lovely smell to sheets and pillow cases, and make going to bed a real pleasure.

Or am I getting too old to notice?

Good-night!

A.V.Mitchell.

