

## GARDENING

**I** OFTEN WONDER just what life in the villages will be like in the twenty-first century, and if the country cottage will be overtaken by suburbia. We will see the disappearance of the vegetable plot to be succeeded by lawn and table and chairs and a large umbrella reminiscent of the pub garden. If you think that rather cynical, well, tell me when you last saw a potato clamp in a cottage garden; its place is taken by the very snobbish patio, shades of Italy and pasta. The potatoes are now bought at the "freezer", already cut up into strips for labour saving, tasting only of salt and oil. We are all forgetting what taste is, if that is not so, then please tell me what is nicer than an early potato, say Arran Pilot, dug fresh from the garden and cooked!

Flavour, or if you prefer it, taste, seems to be among yesterday's forgotten words, for potatoes today are 'mushy' and tasteless. French Golden Delicious are the best seller in apples, we call it French only because the French grow it — it is really American. Cox's is British and the best flavoured apple to boot. Our potatoes are best flavoured if you leave out the ones the commercial growers grow. English peaches and nectarines; if you have never had an English peach or nectarine then you have no idea what they taste like. Buy a tree and you will agree with me. Also try more home grown vegetables and fruit before, yes before we all forget what they taste like, so get the fork out of the shed and dig!

Today we sow tomato seeds for cold greenhouse growing, the seeds are dear, up to eight pence each, so don't over estimate your requirements. Put in a few early cabbage seed, and carrots, peas, lettuce, radishes; ask the lady of the house her weekly requirements and sow accordingly. For instance, should she use three cabbages or four lettuces a week, sow only in short rows. Sow the more tender things like marrows, runner beans etc., the first week in May, it is most disheartening to see things blackened by frost.

With the demise of the kitchen garden, the area around the house has to be cultivated or a certain amount of friction will generate over the boundary fence, so once again the financial side of the garden becomes of paramount importance, and paid assistance is astronomical, nothing under a fiver an hour, so do it yourself. Beg off your neighbours for a few perennials — only small pieces or cuttings, sow a few packets of hardy annuals and buy a few shrubs — and remember this, the popular ones are the best, your parents were very discerning people. A spring or summer evening with the scent of flowers is something to savour. A lilac, a philadelphus, a laburnum, a rose or two, a peony, violets, lupins (from seed), phlox and any of the lilies, to name but a few.

It is possible to have a shrub to flower every month of the year, and heathers will also, but you have to select them very carefully.

(continued overleaf)

For instance every Christmas I cut a handfull of pink cherry blossom, the variety is PRUNUS SUBHIRELLA AUTUMNALIS ROSEA, in case you want to try it, and of course, in a sheltered shady corner there is always the maligned Christmas rose HELLEBORUS NIGER, which will flower without fail on the very day.

Now a word for those desirous of growing 'organically'. Your organic systems don't prevent scab or maggots

in apples or pears, maggots in raspberries, big bud in black currants, mildew in strawberries, leaf curl in peaches, aphids on plums, carrot fly or flea beetle, or club root in brassicas — so buy in the necessary insecticides and fungicide.

I backward cast me e'e on  
prospects drear,  
An forward tho I canna see,  
I guess an' fear.

A.V. Mitchell.

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## WYCHWOOD SINGERS

At the recent jumble sale a total of £267 was raised for choir funds. We would like to thank all who helped in any way and those who came on the day. We are grateful for your support. We now look forward to the Summer Concerts.

May 14th — A concert in Chipping Campden in aid of the Arthritis and Rheumatism Council for Research.

June 11th — 10th Anniversary Concert at Kingham Hill School.

Tickets for both concerts will be available shortly.

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## BBC RADIO OXFORD 95.2 FM — "VOICES OF OXFORD"

BBC Radio Oxford has recently launched a major new series of programmes, putting the listener in the forefront of the story of the past. "Voices of Oxford" is a 24 part history of Oxford from the 1930's to the late 1960's. Told by local people in their own words, the programmes contain rich and fascinating accounts of their lives as evacuees, as activists knocking down the infamous Cuttleslowe Walls, as youngsters dancing at the Carfax Assembly Rooms, as opponents of Mosley's Blackshirts, as squatters and as Welsh invaders!

"Voices of Oxford" is a successful collaboration between BBC Radio Oxford and its listeners. The producer, Conrad Keating says, "Our listeners have been a constant reservoir of stories and memories. It's like going fishing: you throw a net over an idea, pull it in and see what you've got. It's the most exciting and vivid history there is". The programmes are broadcast on Sundays at 11.30 am. and repeated the following Tuesday at 11.05 am. The series ends on June 28th. BBC Radio Oxford can be heard on 95.2 FM.