

## GARDENING

**T**HERE WAS ABUNDANT RAIN in the spring but, unfortunately, we had cold winds and frost as well, with the result that many plants were burned off except for those having the protection of a wall - wisterias had little or no flowers. Fruit around here is poor. Few strawberries, and because of drought conditions, a miserable crop of raspberries. With water at a penny a gallon raspberries would be a luxury indeed.

We really do have something to moan about this year. In the wet spell, slugs and snails had a carnival time and when the weather improved aphids arrived in thousands. The Prince of Wales tells us to wash them off with a hose pipe but the people who provide the stuff with which to wash them off, reply by banning hosepipes. We are told to encourage ladybirds but the poor little spotted beauties will all die of pot bellies if they consume all the greenflies - poor little beggars.

What needs doing in August and September? It is mainly pruning as shrubs pass out of flowering. Cut out ruthlessly all the old flowering wood and to jog your memories here are a few - weigelias, deutzias, lilacs and philadelphus (commonly called syringa which is the botanical name for lilac!). Cut out the old fruiting wood of blackcurrants but leave the red and white currants for spur pruning during the winter.

After fruiting, cut the old wood of raspberries and loganberries at ground level and then tie in the new growth.

Apples and pears require the reduction of summer growths by half and this also applies to wisteria. Plums and cherries should always be pruned in summer and never in winter. This prevents gumming. Prick out the spring biennials when they are large enough to handle, and there is a reminder that the seeds of members of the primula family should be sown as soon as gathered.

Most shrubs can be propagated by inserting half ripe cuttings in pots of compost kept in a shady cold frame. There seems to be a good show of holly berries this year - a reminder that Christmas is not many weeks away .

So enjoy what is left of the summer and with all it's frustrations, your gardening as well.

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(Editors Note: Our contributor has a moan occasionally, but there is evidence that he produces beautiful plants and lovely gardens too.)

