

## TIME TO GARDEN

**T**HERE IS BELIEF IN SOME country people that the blooming of the blackthorn (*prunus spinosa* or sloe to most of us) in April and May is accompanied by a cold spell, generally with frosts. As I write this in early May such a spell, usually called "Blackthorn Winter" is with us. We expect it, we eventually get used to it and in time ignore it. However, these late frosts can cause considerable damage especially to the blooms of blackcurrants and strawberries and the buds of wisteria. Let's hope.

As this piece is for the June / July issue I must look ahead and give you a few dates to remember.

On 21st June sow another row of runner beans. They will be right for picking in early September. Then around the 14th July make the last sowing of early dwarf peas and at the same time, if you have room, sow winter spinach, carrots, French beans and lettuce, preferably Little Gem, for autumn use.

The biennials for next year's flowering should be sown in June and July and I suggest wallflowers, daisies, sweet williams and Canterbury bells. Winter flowering pansies, especially the universal strain, seem to do well and enjoy life if sown in July.

If you want some spring cabbage for next year, sow around the end of July.

And now to pruning. Most flowering shrubs give a better show if the old flowering wood is removed each year soon after the blossom has finished. But there are exceptions.

Buddleias and also one of my favourites, the wisteria, are best left to March when all the old wood should be removed. This lovely plant needs all long growths to be cut back half way in August and then back again to nice fat buds in March. Those plants and trees of the rosacea family such as roses, apples etc. should wait until March.

And a little about cuttings. Most shrubs will root from cuttings taken of half ripe wood in July and August as will members of the dianthus family. Use a cool frame or a wooden box with a sheet of glass over it so that you have close conditions. Remember to shield against sunshine otherwise your efforts will come to nothing.

There may be a hose-pipe ban so use your grass mowings and other suitable materials as a mulch to retain moisture. Brassicas love it and it is cheap.

Good gardening  
A.V. Mitchell.

### **The Fulbrook Fête**

**will be held on the 20th July at 2.30 p.m. at Field House,**  
(by kind permission of John and Elizabeth Sharpley).

**Admission 50p.**

**All the usual stalls and attractions.**