

GARDENING

WE HAVE HAD no appreciable rainfall for a month and a breeze from the northern quarter which has hastened the drying out of the ground, as a result one sees shrubs and small trees looking the worse for wear, the lawns are brown and once more we have something to moan about.

Let us talk about the pleasant side of things. Shrubs have been marvellous; for the past two weeks the air in the evenings has been full of the scent of the thousands of philadelphus flowers, and the roses are magnificent, cascades of colour from the taller types and ramblers are at present the best ever, in fact all of the rose tribe have been and are, in a word, fantastic.

Also worthy of mention were the various types of pinks (dianthus), even the old sweet william has surpassed its usual show, and the amount of apple blossom was also lovely. Oh yes, give thanks for a show the Almighty put on for us this season which is and was something to remember ninety six by!

Now prepare for ninety seven. Choose a cool shady corner and try some shrub cuttings, they require only some gritty mixture, peat and sand; cuttings from early summer usually root freely but they must be protected from all sunshine for a month.

Use cuttings about as long as your fore-finger, cut immediately beneath a leaf, place round a five inch pot and water in.

Rose cuttings are made of old flower spikes, cut off the dead buds, take the size by about three leaves down, take off the bottom leaf, make a good clean cut below the leaf bud and put into the ground up to the next leaf, firm it in and leave it until next spring - cheap and easy.

Having made your last seed sowing of the year, "Remember July 14th", transplant your spring flowers to mature a bit, and have some nice sturdy plants ready to accompany the tulips and daffodil bulbs into your spring beds - and after last spring's wonderful pansy display, don't forget the pansies.

Give your wisteria, apples and pears a half prune in August, and cut out all of the old flowering wood of most deciduous shrubs - evergreens are usually reduced in size in early May; there are exceptions but they are very few.

One parting thought. I think that bark wood chips mulch ruins the look of your garden; a garden is a lovesome thing God wot, don't make it look rubbishy!!

A.V. Mitchell

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