

## GARDENING

**S**EPTEMBER, and quite a cold northerly wind blowing, in fact the temperature is only 45° Fahrenheit. May the runner beans escape frost for at least another two or three weeks, and then it will be endless brussels sprouts, but I'll not complain for last winter I had none. The hot dry weather finished the entire winter greens section off, not so this year, thank goodness – in fact it has been very dry but a good season so far, so count your blessings. For instance, one of the better years for roses and there were so many ladybirds, hungry ones at that, and they devoured all the greenfly, so we had no reason to spray to clear the roses of them.

The summer flowers were good, if a week or so late, as were the new potatoes. The summer commenced with a marvellous show of pansies, we did not have the heart to destroy them, as a result summer bedding was somewhat late.

Now it is harvest, wonderful crops in the fields and good harvest weather, so we have farmers with smiling faces. Fruit has been plentiful so far, and the apples and pears are just a wonderful crop, so no wonder we are happy and grateful. Yes we are very, very grateful, and also for a pleasant sunny summer. We know the farmers are having a hard time cattle-wise, but surely nature decrees that if you can make carnivores into herbivores it does not mean one can reverse it and make herbivores into carnivores, so the outcome is very unfortunate for some farmers and animals.

Now to gardens and gardening. Bush fruit, gooseberries, currants, etc., are not making a lot of growth,

but still prune back to about three basal buds. Raspberries and that family are making rather poor growth, so perhaps a good drenching will put that to rights. Plums and tree fruit will be better for the lack of soft tender growth; plums of course are better pruned in June, and peaches, apricots etc., are also happier with a hot dry season, as are figs.

The biennials have had a hard time but they will benefit from it if the weather is very cold. Now for a few "don't forgets". Put in a few lavender, rosemary, rose, currant and gooseberry cuttings outside under the shelter of a south wall, and put in penstemon and pinks in a cold frame or in a box with a pane of glass over it; use a sandy soil. Now for roses. Ramblers – cut out all old flowering wood down to the new growth, which will provide the flowers for next year. Climbers (which are not ramblers) – replace old flowering wood with new wood where possible, and spur prune the remainder. Reduce in size until March then prune again.

Now a few words about clematis. With the large flowered summer varieties, tie in the strongest growth and reduce them to the required height and length and remove any weak growths. The late flowering small varieties and jackmanii should be cut down to one foot in March. The montanas, which are very early and vigorous, should be reduced to the required size immediately after flowering. Most other climbers in your garden should be cut back to the required size.

Hope we have a lovely autumn.

A.V. Mitchell