

## Gardening

**N**OW IS THE TIME of the year when attention must be given to pruning – yes, again – and the propagation of cuttings from your own shrubs and plants.

Most flowering shrubs produce flowers on the wood grown in the previous year. So as soon as flowering is over cut out the wood that has borne the flowers. This will leave space and air for the growth of new wood to bear the flowers for the following year. At the same time there can be a general tidying up bearing in mind that the retention of new wood is the main consideration.

Red and white currants fruit on old wood so the aim should be to build up a bush with five or six main branches. Short lateral growths should be spurred back to three or four buds and leaders cut back annually to half their length. On the other hand blackcurrants produce the best fruit on the young shoots produced during the previous year, so in September remove as much old wood as is considered sufficient.

Gooseberries bear the best fruit on one year old growth so be drastic with the old wood when you prune in September. Raspberries present you with a simple task. They fruit on wood of the previous year's growth so all that is necessary is to cut out the old wood which has fruited and tie in the young shoots for next year's supply. Do this as soon as fruiting is over.

Wisteria needs pruning in August. Shorten side shoots of current year's growth to within five or six buds. Roses require dead heading, the exception being ramblers which require complete removal of the old wood and for the young growth to be run up when it is bendable.

Now to propagation. If you do not have a cold frame available, acquire a wooden box, dimensions about 20 x 13 inches with the depth of seven or eight inches. The large side will be open. Fill this box to about two thirds with a moist gritty or sandy compost and as a cover a pane of glass will be needed. The glass must be a good fit so that the box is as airtight as possible. Take cuttings of the young growth not more than three inches in length and plunge them into the compost. A rooting compound can be used but is not essential. Cover tightly with the glass and be sure that the cuttings are not exposed to sunshine. They should root in about three weeks. It is worth trying this with roses and if you wish, with currents and gooseberries.

Another way of raising roses as plants on their own roots and so avoiding the pest of suckers from the stock at the base of the plant is to do this. Select a main growth of about two feet long and remove this with a good clean cut. Take off any dead head and side growths. Then in an available space plant this to a depth of about half its length, leave it and next year, hey presto! a splendid bush results. No cost!

Geranium cuttings will root readily if planted in a bed alongside the parent, as will most fleshy bedding plants. With a box and a pane of glass you can produce your own plants and not only save money but also increase your interest in gardening.

Enjoy ourselves – it is all worthwhile.

A.V. Mitchell.