

GARDENING NOTES

(By Mr. J. Joyce, Landscape Gardener, Christchurch.)

GARDEN OPERATIONS FOR JULY.

This month work in the garden must be a continuation of that of June. All the pruning should be got over as soon as possible, and also the digging and manuring of all ground, which will be needed for spring crops. It is a great advantage to have the ground in good order when the time comes for planting, and if the digging is not done in the winter months, there is not the time to do it properly in the spring. Any trees which are getting too tall and shade the garden ought to be cut back and lowered. If trees are pruned and headed back whilst young, they form better shelter and grow into a better shape than if left to grow freely at first and then cut back, as such treatment makes many kinds look unsightly.

Apples, pears, and plums ought to be pruned and sprayed during fine weather. Peaches, apricots, and cherries should be left for another month. In fact, cherries require very little pruning, especially if they are in good bearing order. Trees, which are trained to walls and fences, ought to be loosened and left exposed to the weather, as the rains and frosts destroy insects and blights. Gooseberries should be well thinned out. There are usually too many branches left to grow in the middle of the bush, which make it hard to pick the fruit. The tops of the branches should not be headed back too much, as this causes the bush to throw out too many shoots. Black currants require little pruning, only a thinning out of old or unfruitful branches, so as to encourage young wood. Red and white currants will stand hard pruning, as they usually bear on spurs. Where the grub has destroyed the buds of raspberry canes, it is advisable to cut away all the canes close to the ground, and lose one year's fruit—that is, if they are badly affected. This will encourage good, healthy, clean canes for the following year. It is wise to cut away the old canes after the fruit is picked, and burn them so as to destroy the grub, which burrows into the cane. A good spraying of the young canes at the proper time would be an advantage. Vines in greenhouses should be now looked after and pruned, and the house cleaned, if necessary. The vines should be treated to a good dressing of sulphur, mixed with soft soap, so as to make it adhere, and all old loose bark should be cleared away beforehand. Sulphur is a good remedy for mildew, so plenty of it sprinkled about the vineery will not be amiss. Vines are usually pruned back to one eye, that is, the lateral or side shoots. The house should get all the air possible during the winter months. A good circulation of air, night and day, will greatly benefit them until the time comes for starting them into growth. If the vine border should need renovating, now is a good time to do it. This is done by clearing away the old soil, and replacing

it by a mixture of turfy loam, rotten manure, and a good sprinkling of rough bones, all well blended together.

All the necessary planting of trees in gardens, shrubberies, etc., should be pushed forward as soon as possible. This is a good time to shift any shrubs or trees from one part of the garden to another. They should be always lifted with a good ball of earth attached to the roots, according to the size of the head. Very often it is an advantage to cut back some of the head, especially if the roots are not in proportion, and, if needed, the tree should have a good stake to make it secure from the winds, for if a newly planted tree is allowed to sway about it has a very poor chance of growing. If the soil is dry it is wise to give the roots a bucket of water at planting. This settles the earth around the roots, and gives the tree a good start. If any part of the garden needs draining, now is a suitable time to carry out the work. When stagnant water is allowed to lie during winter, it will make the soil stiff and lumpy in the summer.

This is a good time to prepare for the laying out of lawns or gardens, but it is always wise to cultivate such ground the previous year. If this is done the soil is easier to work and is free of weeds. If a crop of potatoes is taken off the ground the season before it helps to break up the soil and keep it in a good state. But, on no account should weeds be allowed to grow or go to seed that season, for if this is permitted it will be most difficult to eradicate them afterwards. Lawns must not be sown down until August or September. When borders of grass look unshapely and uneven they ought to be well rolled, and the edges nicely trimmed with a sharp spade, or turf cutter, which is made for the purpose. It is a great improvement to the edgings of walks and borders to have them neatly trimmed. Trim hedges and cut well in at the sides and, if possible, to a point at the top.

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