



THE GARDEN

A continuing theme in this column is the requirement for this ageing gardener ('ageing'? Who am I kidding? Over 80, I've definitely arrived!) - to modify our $\frac{2}{3}$ acre. We've already got rid of our Rose Garden and changed it to a mini apple orchard with rough grass. We've also used weed mat to cover our Gravel Garden. The first change we made, allowing the grass to grow unmown around our lawns has been very

successful. The cowslips and snake's head fritillary have enjoyed the moister micro climate provided by the longer grass and looked more natural than in a flower bed. My lack of interest in a lawn probably makes me a traitor to my sex. I know grass sets off the borders well, but unless you want it for the children to play football on, for me it's a lot of work for very little reward. But our lawns are cut by a contractor professional, and this means that I don't have to lift a finger to maintain large areas of the garden. Who knows? As senility begins to take a firmer grip, we may even have to grass over even more of the garden.

Those members of the Hort Soc who joined us for the visit to Arundel Castle in April saw just how breathtaking mass displays of tulips in a well-designed garden can be. On a much more modest scale, tulips were the stars of our own garden, both when massed and grown informally in rough grass. We also saw where we could have planted more. We place our bulb order in September, but by then can't remember where were the gaps we had wanted to fill. So this year we made a note of where we could add more bulbs for 2020, or make some changes where the colours didn't really work. Just mustn't lose the list!

Those of us with a polytunnel, greenhouse or suitable windowsill can enjoy home-grown vegetables throughout the entire year. If you want to try growing tomatoes for the first time, choose one that has a good flavour; don't touch varieties like 'Moneymaker', a completely tasteless tomato and only sold in supermarkets because it has a long shelf life. 'Gardener's Delight' and 'Sungold' are two widely-available cherry type tomatoes and well worth growing.

One of the hardest decisions we've had to make to reduce work in the garden was to get rid of most of our roses. We managed to keep a few, old-fashioned varieties with good scent and disease resistance. We also added a couple. In recent years we grew climbing French beans on a rustic arch leading to the vegetable garden. But last year we replaced these with Rosa 'Phyllis Bide'. We also removed a sickly Ceanothus 'Italian skies' and planted rose 'Gloire de Dijon' - you can see a superb specimen of this lovely old rose on the facade of Pashley Manor (and illustrating this article). Ours came into flower in early May and will repeat flower throughout the growing season. We grew this rose back in the 1970s, but gave up when every specimen we bought sickened and died. The whole modern stock had become diseased, but this has now been eliminated, so we're trying again. So far, so good.

Now for some June garden jobs:

Fill any gaps with annual bedding. Plant them out, together with cannas and dahlias, now the danger of frost is passed. Make sure they are well watered and kept moist during dry weather. It isn't too late to sow a few fast growing, late-flowering hardy annuals such as Calendula, Godetia and Clarkia.

If you want to grow your own spring bedding for next year, - wallflowers, pansies, and Bellis perennis - sow them between May and July to flower next spring.

Cutting back, pruning and dividing

Spreading and trailing plants can become tatty. Trim them back after flowering to encourage fresh growth and new flowers. Cutting back clumps of spring-flowering perennials can give you a fresh flush of foliage.

Cut back and deadhead Oriental poppies after flowering. Cutting them right back to ground level stimulates growth of new foliage, - perhaps even some new flowers. Mulching and feeding helps to support new growth.

Euphorbias look a lot better if spent flowers are removed, cutting the flowered stem back to ground level.

Pinch out the leading shoots on plants such as Chrysanthemum and Helianthus to encourage bushy plants.

Cut back tender shrubs such as Penstemon, Caryopteris and hardy fuchsias.

Prune deciduous magnolias once the plant is in full leaf. If this is done in winter, when the tree is dormant, dieback can occur, and pruning in late winter or spring can result in bleeding. Midsummer is the time to do it.

This month is a good time to clip evergreen hedges such as privet (Ligustrum), box (Buxus) and Lonicera nitida if necessary. If they are not too woody, shredded clippings can be added to the compost heap. We'll have to burn ours, however; some of our box is affected by blight and we don't want to spread the disease to the unaffected hedges.

Ken Mines