



# ALLOTMENTS & GARDENS ASSOCIATION SALISBURY

## June monthly planner of jobs to do

June is the month that the whole year aspires to. It is the culmination of spring and contains summer in all its billowing innocence before heat and time start to fray the garden at the edges. None of this is to do with specific weather. Hot June days are a joy, but the garden will still glow and look fabulous in a month that can be dogged by rain and unseasonal cold. This is because June is dominated by green. Yes there are lots of wonderful flowers - especially roses - but the intensity and freshness of green is what characterises our gardens throughout this month - from lush grass, to the borders and new growth appearing on crops. The vegetable garden is burgeoning but - certainly in the first half of the month - is still slow to provide much of a harvest. This is why crops such as early broad beans or peas, which have been sown the previous autumn or at the very beginning of spring, are so welcome and taste so fresh and good.

### BASIC GARDENING JOBS

- **In** June a million gardens are humming with the sound of mowers keeping the grass trim and under control. If you want to support wildlife it's good to restrict mowing to paths and try to let as much grass as possible grow long, underplanting with wildflowers and bulbs. This looks beautiful and is so much better for insects and all forms of wildlife than a neatly mown lawn. However, it is important to time the cutting of this long grass, to maximise the performance of the bulbs next spring and of the grasses themselves. Nothing should be cut until after the longest day, on 21 June. This gives the bulb foliage time to feed next year's bulb and subsequent flowering, before it dies back. If the weather has been hot and dry, the grass can then be cut, but when it is damp it can sometimes be left till as late as mid-August. Whenever you make this first cut of the long grass, collect it all up and take it to the compost heap. This stops it adding nutrition to the ground, which would encourage lusher, coarser grasses at the expense of the flowers. Clean off grass clippings from your mower after every cut.
- **For** all the dominance of green, the borders are, of course, filled with flower, but their tone tends to be softer and less exotic than the blooms of late summer. Certainly June is the month of the rose with its ramblers, hybrid teas, climbing, floribunda and old shrub roses. To make the season extend as long as possible always deadhead assiduously. The secret is to treat it as a pruning rather than tidying process, cutting right back to the next side shoot or leaf, however far they might be.
- **Hand** pull weeds growing between plants before they grow large
- **Sow** seeds of perennials such as honesty, wallflowers and sweet rocket in a greenhouse or outside to boost your flower borders next year.
- **Stake** flopping plants
- **Keep** some fleece handy to throw over your most precious tender plants if frost is forecast
- **Deadhead** flowers regularly using clean, sharp snips or secateurs
- **Save** money by sowing seeds now to grow your own plants ready for autumn planting. Autumn and winter flowering plants can be used in beds and containers after the frost-tender summer flowers have finished. Buy seed in the garden centre, allotment shop or find a seed catalogue with a good range of pansies, wallflowers, forget-me-nots and primulas. Sow in modules filled with seed or multi-purpose compost. Label and water them, then put them in a sheltered frame or unheated greenhouse to germinate. Keep seedlings well-watered as they grow and protect them from slugs and snails.
- **Give** your hanging baskets some extra attention. They should be fresh and in full glorious flower now but you want to keep them strong right through the summer season. It will make life easier if you can have your baskets on a pulley so that they can be lowered to a comfortable height for you to work on them. Once a week pick through the plants to deadhead the oldest flowers and snip out fading leaves. Next, water with a high potash liquid feed to encourage flowering and strong, compact growth. Water

regularly throughout the week too, particularly in the warmest weather, as the roots, being crowded into a shallow basket will quickly dry out.

- **Make** sure your flowers are shown off perfectly by neatening border edges. If you have a lawn edge, make it straight with a half-moon tool and cut it short with shears. Pull up any weeds that were hidden beneath overhanging grass. Paths and patios abutting borders can be swept, weeded and scrubbed free of algae.
- **Water** is a precious resource so target the plants that need it most through the summer months and try to water in the evening. Pots and baskets need regular watering even when it rains. Either twist the rose on the watering can face down, or remove it completely, so you can soak the roots, well through the composted surface. Do the same with new plantings in the borders until they are growing well. Lay porous pipes on the soil in large beds, to water efficiently at ground level. Encourage deep roots by soaking occasionally rather than sprinkling every day. However established borders need no extra water.
- **Finish** planting out bedding as soon as possible it - will deteriorate fast if left in pots and modules.
- **Take** cuttings from pinks pulling off the tips, removing the lower leaves and planting round the edge of a pot of multi-purpose compost.
- **Following** their flowering season, the foliage of spring bulbs dies down and they gradually disappear from view. Now is the time to lift and divide any that flowered poorly due to being overcrowded. Simply replant them at the same depth as before.
- **Make** use of your water butt whenever you can, the water from it is free and better for your established plants.
- **Plant** out tender annuals like petunias, salvias, nicotiana and many others once the frosts are over. Southern counties can dare to get them out in mid-May but it's wise to keep them back until this month to be sure they'll go straight into growth with no damage. If you snip off the first flowers the plant will strengthen then flower soon after planting. Use a trowel to plant and firm them in before watering. Use traps or ferrous phosphate pellets to protect the soft shoots from slug damage.
- **Hoe** off weeds on dry, sunny, windy days and leave them on top of the soil.
- **A** healthy lawn is not only a good background to the rest of the garden, it can also be a feature on its own and mowing keeps it in good condition. Clip the edges, too, to stop grass invading borders. For the best results, adapt your mowing routine to weather conditions. **1.** Set the mower blade height close for much of summer but if grass is stressed by a dry spell, adjust the blade for a higher cut. **2.** Mow regularly to strengthen the grass and help it compete with broad-leaved weeds and moss. **3.** Use a cylinder mower for the best stripes. **4.** Collect grass clippings in the mower's grass box and add them to the compost heap.
- **Clip** back box hedges to springy foliage towards the end of June. Box bushes are not a priority to feed each year, but bronzing is a sign they may be under stress from lack of water and/or nutrients so providing these will help reverse symptoms. Watering with liquid seaweed through the season keeps leaves healthy and green, particularly if discoloured by sun and wind exposure.
- **Plant** out hardened-off dahlias. They will start making strong growth, so it's a good idea to stake them before they flop or get damaged by the wind. One proven method is to surround each plant with three canes and wrap string around them to hold the plant in place. Add new layers of string as the plant grows.
- **Direct** sow seeds of wallflower, forget-me-nots and pansies in spare beds for transplanting later.
- **Water** a new lawn. Established lawns don't need watering and will recover after a draught.
- **Use** liquid lawn feed if your lawn is no longer green enough for you.
- **Train** climbing and rambling roses.
- **Keep** your topiary in shape with regular trimming. Start by putting a sheet around the base of the plant to make the collecting of the clippings as painless as possible. Use clean, sharp shears and aim to clip into the outer two thirds of the present year's growth. Keep the blades of the shears flat to the surface and be careful not to dig in with the tip. The aim is to increase the number of shoots that grow from each cut stem, which, in turn, will create a smooth surface that maintains the shape of the topiary. Yew, holly and box are exceptions that will grow back from deeper cuts if reshaping is necessary. Pick out any clipping that are left sitting on the horizontal surfaces.

## **PESTS AND DISEASES**

- **Rub** off any greenfly you see growing on plant stems. They will rapidly multiply if ignored.
- **Look** out for leaf-rolling on roses, indicating sawfly, and pick off any affected leaves.

- **The** caterpillar-like larvae of the Solomon's Seal Sawfly will strip the plants leaves fast, only leaving behind the ribs. Pick these off if you see them and leave them on the bird table. This will preserve your leaves and interrupt the pest's lifecycle.
- **Look** out for black, red and yellow asparagus beetles, vine weevil, raspberry beetle larvae, woolly aphids on apples, powdery mildew, slugs, snails, greenfly and blackfly.
- **Remove** rose leaves that show signs of blackspot to stop it spreading. Burn these leaves do not put them in your compost bin.
- **While** ants are part of the garden's ecosystem. A nest producing an ant hill can kill off the grass beneath it. You can buy biocontrol nematode, which kills ants, if you're not prepared with the lawn damage.
- **Check** for gooseberry sawfly caterpillars, lightly shake the plant to see if any fall off.
- **Pest** and diseases to look out for this month are chocolate spot on broad beans, mildew on marrows and courgettes The pests of brassicas are white fly, cabbage white caterpillars, and cabbage root fly which lays its eggs at the base of the plants stem but you can buy or make discs that you place around the stem to deter the laying of eggs. Black fly attack broad beans, runner beans and French beans and greenfly attack a number of different plants.
- **Mullein** moth caterpillars usually appear on verbascum or buddleia. They can completely decimate the foliage, so be vigilant and pick off any you find. Birds love to eat them.
- **Pear** midge causes young pear fruits to turn black and fall off. The adults lay their eggs in April and May, and the grubs feed inside the fruitlet. To help reduce the problems next year, dispose of any affected fruitlets you find.
- **Lily beetle** can strip plants very quickly. Either remove these bright red beetles by hand or spray with an insecticide.
- **Raspberry** beetle is best sprayed when the first pink fruits are seen, using a suitable insecticide.
- **Plum** moth can be sprayed to keep plums free from maggots. Work out when is the most effective period spray by using a pheromone trap.
- **Codling** moth can be sprayed to keep apples maggot-free. Use a pheromone trap to determine the most effective period to spray.
- **Asparagus** beetles and their larvae can often be spotted on the ferns. Either remove by hand or spray with suitable insecticide.

### WILDLIFE

- **Attract** a host of creatures to the garden that will pollinate your flowers and help keep plant pests under control. Encourage aphid eaters like hoverflies, ladybirds and lacewings by growing flowering plants, particularly yarrow and dandelion. Get to know what the pupae look like, as this is the main feeding stage. Ground beetles feed on slugs at night and need some cover in the day. Provide plenty of different habitats for all of them with hedges, abundant flowers, some long grass, log piles and bunches of twigs.
- **Keep** feeding birds, supplying clean water and scrubbing the bird table clean to stop the spread of diseases.
- **Check** for birds nesting before you trim/cut hedges.
- **Keep** an eye on wildlife ponds and top them up with water if we have a dry spell.
- **Add** more wood/branches to rotting wood piles.
- **Check** for wasp or hornets nests in hedges and sheds. The Council will get them removed for free if they are on allotment land owned by them.
- **Hedgehogs** will have babies this time of year so check old compost heaps before turning or moving.

### VEGETABLES/HERBS

- **Chard** is a fantastic vegetable because it will produce harvests from now right through to the end of next spring. Plain Swiss chard has a good flavour and is the most hardy type. But the coloured varieties do look good and beautiful enough to grow in a flower bed.
- **Thin** out seedlings in stages, carefully removing a few weekly.
- **Sow** more broad beans to harvest at the end of summer.
- **Late** June is a great time to harvest garlic as the bulbs should have swollen and leaves will starting to turn yellow. Leave the bulbs in trays in a sunny spot outdoors to dry off, although if wet weather is forecast put them indoors.

- **Encourage** bushy growth on aubergines, chillies and sweet peppers by pinching out the tips once they are about 20cm tall. Remove first flowers to encourage more flowers and fruit.
- **Remove** side shoots on tomatoes as they appear and to get best crops feed them regularly when you water.
- **Plant** into veg plot last of plants you started inside; winter cabbage, autumn cauliflowers, leeks, Brussel sprouts, sprouting broccoli, outdoor cucumbers, sweet corn, courgettes, squashes and celery.
- **Earth** up potatoes to stop them turning green and to protect them from a late frost.
- **Harvest** rhubarb for the last time to allow it time to replenish for next year.
- **Veg** to be sown outdoors: salad leaves, spring onions, French beans, beetroot, carrots, lettuce, peas, radish, runner beans and swede.
- **Broad** beans, asparagus, turnips, kohlrabi, first early potatoes and carrots should be ready to harvest towards the end of June.
- **Pick** peas when the pods are fat but the peas are not yet visible., and mange tout when the pods are 5cm long.
- **Prune** shrubby herbs now to keep a neat, compact shape and produce more fresh shoots this season. Harvest the shoots of sage, thyme, marjoram and hyssop, string them up in small bunches, and hang somewhere airy to dry. Keep annual and soft-stemmed herbs like mint basil and sweet marjoram producing fresh shoots by cutting throughout the season. Some herbs such as coriander and dill will need to be sown again into any gaps you have in the vegetable patch. Sow Florence fennel direct in beds.
- **Harvest** salad by snipping a few leaves as soon as they are big enough to eat, they should re-sprout in a week or so giving more crops.
- **Sow** plenty of fast-growing crops to extend your pickings through the season. Radish, carrot, salad leaves, dwarf beans, spinach, beetroot and turnip can all be sown in short drills every two to three weeks to keep you in fresh produce. This successional sowing is a useful technique for gap filling amongst slower crops. Keep sowing until late August and towards the end of the summer sow in larger numbers as the growth rate will slow right down by the end of the autumn so the more plants you have the better.
- **Trim** the roots and leaf tops before dropping leeks into holes, leaving just one third of the leek above the surface. Soak well.
- **Dig** a large hole, add compost or rotted manure. Water the hole before planting the courgette plant. Firm in and water again.
- **It** is a bit late to sow summer cabbages so choose a winter variety such as January King, Tundra or Noelle. Peas can still be sown, choose an early variety such as Douce Provence, Kelvedon Wonder or Early onward. Rake the ground before planting and rake in some general fertiliser like Growmore or fish, blood and bone.
- **Remember** to plant your sweet corn in blocks and not rows to assist pollination.

#### TREES/SHRUBS/BULBS/FLOWERS

- **Cut** back rudbeckias and heleniums, to stimulate extra but later flowers.
- **Plant** out ornamental bananas, now the risk of frost has passed.
- **Deal** with rose suckers swiftly. Identify where suckers come from at the root and snap them out as they'll grow back if you cut them off. Suckers are shoots that grow from the root stock of a grafted rose. They stand out from the main growth, usually they are straight, vigorous, paler, have more leaflets and they always appear from right at the base of the plant. Suckers often turn up after the ground has been disturbed so avoid planting or digging close to an established rose.
- **Anemone coronaria** tubers are normally planted in the autumn for spring flowering, but if you plant them now, you'll get an autumn display of blooms. Soak the tubers in water for a few hours before planting as this gets them ready to grow - they'll need a deep container, as they have a deep root run. Cover the knobbly corms with a 4cm layer of soil or compost. It is almost impossible to tell which way up the corms go but the roots and shoots will emerge the right way in the end, so don't worry.
- **Keep** cutting sweet pea flowers for the house and they will keep producing more. Feed your plants with tomato feed every couple of weeks and keep them well watered in dry spells.
- **Pelargonium** cuttings taken now will root rapidly, as long as they are given good drainage and kept in bright light. They are an easy and economical way to increase your stock of plants. A small propagator is helpful but not essential - even a windowsill can be used to raise new plants. Within a couple of months they will be ready to pot on and overwinter for flowers next year.

- **Lilacs** are mostly neat growers and don't need heavy pruning. They also set next year's flower buds on the shoots that extend soon after flowering, so prune only if the plant needs it and do so immediately after the flowers have gone over. Just remove anything that's damaged or crowded, and trim shoots growing out in the wrong direction back to a strong bud. After pruning, soak the ground around the shrub, add some general fertiliser and mulch - this will help the shrub to recover.
- **Preserve** the coloured variegation of your plants by pruning out all shoots that are a plain colour. Variegation is caused by cell mutations that can be random, genetic or the result of a bred-in virus infection - the last can result in very stable colour variations. Plants with less stable random cell mutations can suddenly send out reverted shoots that are either all green or all white. Green shoots dominate while the white shoots provide no energy and will weaken the plant.
- **Prune** *Clematis montana*, cutting a little this year and saving some trimming for next year.
- **Make** more shrubs by taking shoot-tip cuttings.
- **There** is still time to plant chrysanthemums.

## FRUIT

- **Tie** in blackberry and hybrid berry canes as they grow.
- **Remove** fruitlets on apples, pears and plums, for fewer but larger fruits. Take damaged and misshapen ones first then the smallest.
- **Plums** and cherries should only be pruned in summer and never in winter because of the risk of silver leaf disease. Just cut out any dead diseased or overcrowded branches.
- **It's** time for harvesting strawberries, red and white currants, gooseberries and blackcurrants. The first of the raspberries and blueberries will also be ripening now. Pick strawberries, gooseberries and raspberries individually. Hold the fruit gently to avoid bruising and discard any that are showing signs of rot. Pulling currants off the sprigs crushes the fruit so snip off the whole sprig then pick through them back in the kitchen ready for eating, cooking, bottling or freezing.
- **Water** figs well if there is no rain. Although fig trees come from the Mediterranean, they need a good supply of water in summer to give a crop. Also, wearing gloves, pinch out the shoot tips now.
- **Cut** back vigorous strawberry runners as they grow through summer to leave more energy for the main plant to develop a larger central crown. Snip the runners off back to the main plant and use a trowel to remove any young plants that have started to root into the ground. As the strawberry harvest comes to an end, a bit of work on the patch now will benefit next year's crop.
- **Gooseberries** and red and white currants can be pruned by cutting back this year's side shoots to four or five leaves from the base.
- **Plant** out melons pinching out the tips once five leaves have formed.
- **Tie** in wall-trained fruit trees and remove shoots that are sticking out.

## GREENHOUSE/COLD FRAMES

- **Sow** celeriac, celery, okra and French beans under glass.
- **Keep** removing side shoots from cordon grown tomatoes and make sure you keep up with watering in hot weather because shortage of water causes a condition called 'blossom end rot' which shows as a round black patch on the base of the fruit.
- **The** greenhouse doors can stay open all the time now.

## HOUSE PLANTS

- **Look** out for red spider mite infestation. This pest, which causes leaf mottling, is deterred in humid places such as shower rooms.
- **Sow** seed of winter-flowering house plants such as cineraria and calceolaria.
- **Give** houseplants a holiday by leaving them outside in warm weather-they'll benefit from the natural light and air.
- **Avoid** placing plants on sunny windowsills. Most houseplants will burn easily and prefer bright, but indirect light.
- **Feed** houseplants with plant food as they begin a period of fast growth that needs fuelling during the summer months. You can apply it at the roots, adding liquid feed to your watering can every fortnight. Alternatively try spraying the leaves directly, as these can absorb specially designed 'foliar' feeds. Always follow the instructions very carefully.
- **You** can take leaf cuttings of sansevieria, begonia rex and streptocarpus. Step 1. Select a young healthy leaf and remove it from the plant as far into the crown as you can without damaging remaining leaves. Step 2. Place on a clean surface and cut the leaf across into 4cm sections. Insert them into pots of

seed compost, base end down and firm in along the cutting.. Step 3. Soak with tepid water and place the pots in polythene bags or a propagator, which can be ventilated to prevent fungal disease on the soft tissue.

- **Wipe** houseplant leaves with a damp cloth to remove the surface dust. As houseplants collect dust it makes the leaves dull but can also block pores and reduce photosynthesis. Support under the leaf or branch with your other hand. Use rainwater to avoid the unsightly white limescale deposits that tap water leaves behind. You'll remove a few plant pests and at the same time your tropical plants will thrive from the humidity. There are some natural oil products and leaf shine sprays available to give a perfect finish.