

Cuttings of verbenas and geraniums, and many other soft-wooded plants, may still be planted with the certainty of their shooting freely, and still being in time to make good blooming plants during the following summer.

Grass lawns and walks frequently mown and rolled during the months of autumn will present a much smoother and greener appearance during the winter months, because of the extra care bestowed, and as greenness and smoothness are the two first considerations in the management of all well-kept lawns, no reasonable efforts ought to be spared at this season to secure in their fullest perfection the accomplishment of these very desirable advantages.

MAY.

Nature! great parent! whose unceasing hand
Rolls round the seasons of the changeful year,
How mighty, how majestic are thy works!
With what a pleasing dread they swell the soul,
That sees astonished!—THOMSON.

First Winter Month—Transplanting, Pruning, Manuring, Digging, &c.—Sowing limited to Mustard and Cress—Transplanting Cabbage, Cauliflower, Lettuce, Fruit Trees, Forest and Evergreen Shrubs—Winter Pruning—Espalier Training for Raspberries, Gooseberries and Currants—Lift and Store Carrots and Parsnips, &c.—Sea-kale Beds—Rhubarb Beds—Trim Herbaceous Plants—Protect Geraniums, Verbenas, &c.—Commence Planting of Bulbous Flower Roots—Potting Greenhouse Plants—Levelling Lawns.

MAY, the counterpart of an English November, and first month of winter, ushers itself in, not in storms and tempests as in England, but in all the peaceful stillness, warmth, and sunshine of an English August. The nights, it is true, are often sharp and cold; but down to the middle of the month the days generally are bright and beautiful, and it is only towards its close that the first symptoms of approaching winter begin to be felt.

The month, therefore, is still highly favourable to garden operations, though chiefly those of transplanting, pruning, manuring, digging, trenching, and the like; for seed sowing has now become limited to successional sowings of mustard and cress, to keep up the supply of small salading. But transplanting, although applicable to autumn-sown plants of cabbages, cauliflowers, lettuce, and spinach for spring use, now embraces a wider range, and includes gooseberries, currants, apples, pears, cherries, and other fruit trees, as well as many sorts of forest trees and evergreen shrubs; for it is a well-established fact in gardening, that all sorts of trees which are planted when just shedding their leaves at once re-establish themselves, and make much better growth during the following summer than spring-planted ones. Wherever, therefore, fruit and forest tree planting is contemplated, every effort should be made to get as much of it done this month as possible.

The season for commencing winter pruning has now arrived, as indicated by the falling leaves of gooseberries and currants. In performing this operation, first divest the bush of all suckers, for these are generally gross, unfruitful shoots, which only mar the symmetry and vigour of the bush.

The young wood must be thoroughly cleared out from the centre, and the side shoots kept at least six inches apart, so that when the bush is pruned it should present the form of a spacious cup; this mode of pruning being best adapted to admit a sufficiency of light and air, two essential elements in the production of large, high-flavoured fruit.

In pruning raspberries, first divest them of last year's fruit-bearing wood, then reduce the shoots of the past summer to not more than from three to five of the strongest young canes to each plant, and these may be shortened to one-fourth their length, and securely tied to a strong stake, or against an espalier rail, which is a secure and excellent mode of training both raspberries and currants.

Carrots, parsnips, salsafy, and scorzonera roots may now be lifted and stored in dry sand; and the land on which they were grown may be thrown up in ridges, to expose the greatest extent of surface to the beneficial influence of rain, sun, and air.

Dress sea-kale beds with a good sprinkling of salt, and a covering of stable manure; first removing the decayed leaves, and stirring the surface of the bed a few inches in depth.

Clear away also the ripened haulm of asparagus, first loosening the surface, and then dressing the bed with eight or ten inches of fresh sea-weed; or, in the absence of this, give a heavy dressing of salt, and then cover with six inches of well-rotted stable manure, for both sea-kale and asparagus are well known to luxuriate mostly in soils highly impregnated with saline substances.

Rhubarb beds should now be cleaned and heavily manured; for this vegetable, if grown in perfection, requires a much more rich and moist soil than is usually allowed to it.

Globe artichokes may now have their decaying stems and leaves cut away, the surface loosened with a fork, and the ground around strewn with litter, to protect their roots from the injury they are likely to sustain from the frost.

Herbaceous plants which have done blooming will now require to be trimmed; decaying annuals removed; fuchsias, geraniums, verbenas, and other similar plants will now require to be protected. The planting of bulbous roots may be commenced, and the flower borders neatly dug, to give them a freshness of appearance pleasing to the eye, which will in some small degree compensate for the absence of floral display.

Deciduous trees and shrubs which have fully completed their growth and perfectly matured their young wood to its extremity, and from which the yellow leaves of autumn are beginning to fall, may now be very successfully transplanted, for early autumn planting is invariably the most successful; for the descending sap of trees enables them at once to form new roots, and establish themselves ready to start into a growth in spring not unfrequently as luxuriant as that which is obtained from trees which have been one whole season established.

The gaiety of the greenhouse will now be nearly over for the season, most of the old-established geraniums, fuchsias, verbenas, and others of a similar class may now be closely pruned in, and transferred to smaller pots by having the ball of earth reduced, and their roots reasonably trimmed; a dry atmosphere may be maintained with a free circulation of air every fine day, and watering at the roots will not now be required more than once a week: under this treatment the plants will almost entirely rest from growth for two months, being thereby better fitted to start into a vigorous growth in spring.

Vineries should have an abundance of air every dry day, to thoroughly ripen the young wood of the vines, and thus fit them for the important operation of careful pruning, for the proper performance of which see next month.

Grass lawns may now be levelled by lifting and relaying the turf; or new lawns may in this way and at this season be advantageously formed; for the frequent showers will preserve the colour of the newly formed sward; and if the turf is closely fitted it will rapidly unite at this season, and very soon form a smooth even sward, requiring one or two close mowings and rollings, which will enable it to preserve a fresh and agreeable appearance until the recommencement of growth in early spring.

JUNE.

In Winter, awful Thou! with clouds and storms
Around Thee thrown, tempest o'er tempest roll'd,
Majestic darkness!—THOMSON.

Winter Weather—Pruning and Transplanting—Apples, Pears, Plums, &c.—Planting of Forest Trees, Evergreens, and Ornamental Shrubs, Thorns, Privets, &c.—Native Shrubs—Planting—Onions, Eschalots, Garlic—Regulation of Beds—Manure—Wood-Ashes—Rhubarb—Asparagus Beds, Salt Dressing—Plant Bulbous Flower Roots. Anemones, Ranunculus, Lily of the Valley, &c.—Pruning Vines—Ornamental Shrubberies—Protection of Choice Plants.

GLOOMY days, frequent rains, occasional frosts, and now and then a well-known "southerly buster," are significant symptoms of the return of winter. These, however, are quietly borne with, because, when compared with our recollections of an English winter, the corresponding season here appears of comparatively short duration; and, besides, has the redeeming merit of affording an occasional beautiful day.

Seed sowing is now entirely suspended, but suitable weather will afford opportunities to continue pruning and transplanting; for now is the season for pruning all sorts of apples, pears, plums, and other fruit trees, the young wood of which should be shortened back one-third of its length, and all the weaker shoots spurred in, removing every branch which either crosses another or seems to interfere with the symmetrical form of the tree. Excessive pruning, however, which new comers are too apt to indulge in, ought not to be allowed; for severe pruning only fills a vigorous tree with a rush of young wood instead of fruit, thus proving that pre-acquired home ideas of pruning are too often, in New Zealand, very much at fault.

The transplanting of all sorts of fruit trees may be continued; and the present is also a suitable season for the planting of all sorts of forest trees, evergreens and ornamental shrubs, and also for thorns, privets, sweet-briars, and other plants suitable for hedges, as well as such of the native shrubs and trees as are known to bear removal. These are all best transplanted at this season; for dull days, a moist atmosphere, and occasional rains, may be all regarded as circumstances favourable to successful transplanting.