

The common spotted orchid, *Dactylorhiza fuchsii*, has self-seeded in the garden over many years. Avoid deadheading the plant to encourage this type of display.

# PICK OF THE PLOT

It's all about flowers, fruit and fantastic weather for **Tamsin Westhorpe** at the magazine's Herefordshire home garden Stockton Bury this month ▶

PHOTOGRAPHS JOHN CAMPBELL

## JOBS THIS MONTH

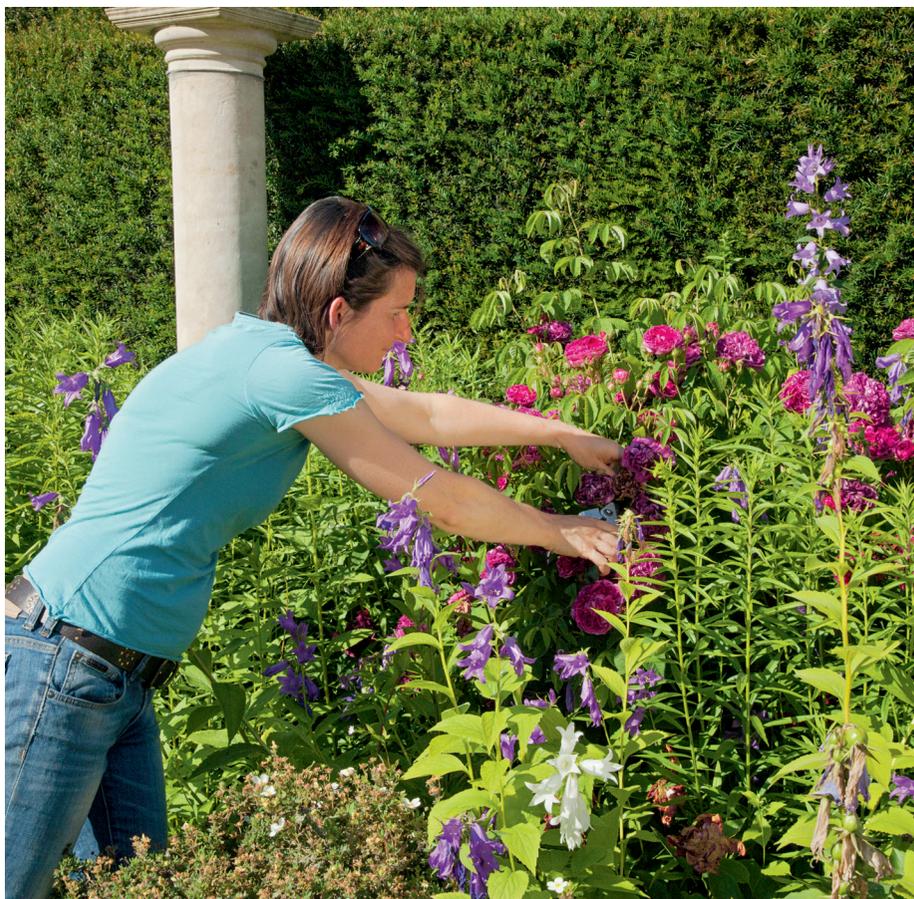
**BELOW** Deadhead roses on a regular basis to encourage a second flush. However, avoid deadheading roses grown for their hips.

### Deadheading

There are flowers at every turn here, and as one fades another appears. As I walk around the garden, I deadhead the roses by snapping them off just under the flower to encourage a second flush. Later in the summer, I will leave them to fade on the plant, as the hips that follow add so much to the winter garden. One of our top hip-producing roses here is the shocking-red *Rosa* 'Geranium' (moyesii hybrid). Others include *Rosa rugosa* and *Rosa filipes* 'Kiftsgate'.

When gardening on such a large scale, it is impractical to be too vigilant when deadheading - after all, tramping through to the back of borders can do more harm than good. In a smaller plot, you could consider cutting back perennials in late May to encourage a second flush of flowers, an act that is known as the 'Chelsea chop'.

I always make time to deadhead annuals grown in containers, such as the scented-leaved pelargoniums in the greenhouse. If I can reach shrubs, such as the lilac, I will attempt to deadhead, as the blooms are uncomfortable on the eye once faded. Other plants that you many like to deadhead include acid-loving rhododendrons and camellias.



### Storing onions & garlic

Onions planted in autumn or spring should be ready for harvest at the end of June or into July. It is easy to spot when they are ready to lift, as the tips of the leaves turn yellow and might topple over. Once lifted, step one is to completely dry the garlic or onion bulbs. Lift your crop on a dry day, pull off the soil and leave to dry until the foliage has withered and the outer skin has started to turn brown. We have a handmade chicken wire mesh frame that we sit over an empty wheelbarrow. The onions are laid out on the frame. We can then wheel the barrow to a sunny spot in the garden, or race them undercover if it starts to rain. Throw out any onions that show signs of fungal disease. Step two is storage. I have yet to perfect the onion plait, so ours are simply laid out in a dry, frost-free, yet cool place. Be warned that you might encounter a few mice with very oniony breath!

## REMEMBER TO...

Hoe off annual weeds in the veg patch - they will soon dry up and die. ▶





**IN SEASON**

**COOL, CALM COLOURS**

The garden offers a soft mix of pastel colours at this time of year. On bright sunny days, they offer a cooling effect in the garden. Clematis, campanulas and geraniums join this June collection.

**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT**

*Astrantia major* 'Buckland' is a free-flowering perennial reaching about 60cm; *Lychnis coronaria* 'Alba' is a short-lived perennial with soft, silver foliage; *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* (common spotted orchid) self seeds throughout the garden, preferring a position of dappled shade; *Iris spuria*; *Colutea arborescens*; *Schizophragma hydrangeoides* var. *concolor* 'Moonlight'; *Lilium martagon* (Turk's cap lily) enjoys a position of sun or shade in a sheltered area; *Diascia personata* flowers from May through to October and enjoys a sunny spot.





IN DEPTH

Tomato care

We grow our tomatoes in terracotta pots. They are placed in a sheltered south-facing position by the back door so that we never forget to water them, and so they're handy to pick. As long as you water them little and often, you should avoid split fruits. Feeding is also important - start to feed with a high potash feed once the first truss of flowers has formed. The potash will encourage flowers and fruit.

The best temperature for tomatoes is between 21-24°C, so if growing in a greenhouse, throw open the doors on a fine day or you'll end up with fried tomatoes!

Pinching out tomatoes is important if you are growing cordon or vine varieties. Bush varieties tend to know when to stop producing new shoots, so don't need pinching out. By pinching out side shoots, you are diverting the plant's energy into producing flowers and fruits rather than endless foliage. Pinching out is simply a case of removing the small shoots that appear between the main stem and the leaf stem - they grow out of the joint. Your guide as to when to start pinching out is when the first flower truss has formed along the leaf stem. Use your fingers to pinch out.

**LEFT** Pinch out cordon and vine tomato varieties to encourage more fruit.

**FAR RIGHT** Pick sweet peas regularly to encourage more flowers.

**BELOW** If you harvest young broad beans, they taste great raw.

Sweet peas are filling the garden with scent, and to keep their display going, I pick them almost every day. Leave them unpicked, and they will soon set seed. As the days go by, the stems get shorter, but I have plenty of egg cups to display them in. In the row next to the sweet peas are the broad beans, and they are ready for picking - lovely eaten raw or cooked.



## PROPAGATION STATION

### Strawberry runners



**ABOVE** Strawberry plants only perform at their best for about four years, so the runners are handy to replace the parent plants in time.

The plant that shouts 'June' to me, more than any other, is the strawberry plant. I have clear memories of going to the 'pick your own' place after school with my mother as a child. Stepping into the June frame here is a highlight of my year. It's a veritable fruit bowl of raspberries, strawberries, gooseberries, cherries and apricots. Most of the fruit is eaten straight from the plant - no cream or sugar required to add to their flavour.

As I wander up and down the lines of strawberries, I am always on the lookout for runners. These are really easy to spot. They are long stems shooting out from the parent plant that carry a baby plant on the end. In most situations, the baby plant will root in the bed, but to ensure this happens you can simply pin the stem down to the soil so the baby plant can form roots. Alternatively, you can pin the runner into a pot of compost if you wish to plant them elsewhere in autumn. If you do choose this method, make sure you remember to water the pot through summer.

By August, most plants should have rooted, so they can be cut free from the parent plant. Avoid allowing more than about four runners to develop from one plant, as you might well lose out on fruit to harvest.

Follow our step-by-step guide by visiting [www.theenglishgarden.co.uk](http://www.theenglishgarden.co.uk) and watching our video 'How to propagate strawberries'.

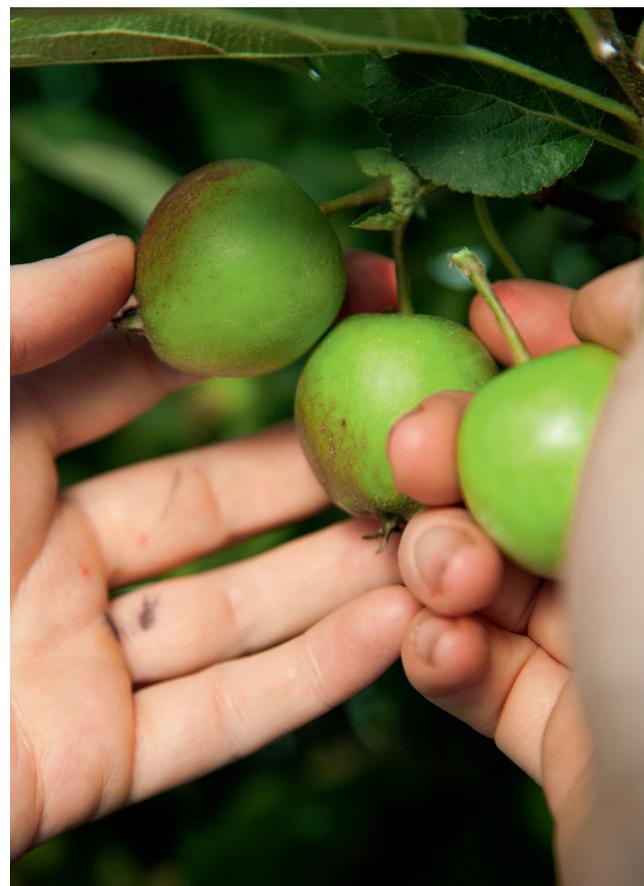
## TOP TASK

### Thinning apples

We have a row of dwarf eating apples in the kitchen garden, and at this time of year many of the newly formed apples drop. This is quite normal, and is referred to as 'June drop'. Apples usually grow in a cluster at the end of the fruiting spur, and it is a case of survival of the fittest. There is only a limited amount of food and water, so each apple is eager to survive - the weaker ones fall. This is a good thing, otherwise we would have crops of lots of very small fruits rather than a lesser crop of juicy specimens.

If you are keen to have a perfect crop and the apples don't seem to be dropping, then you can simply thin them out yourself. Where there are three or more apples fighting for space, reduce it to a couple.

The June drop also prevents branches from snapping under the weight of the crop. It is vital that you thin the fruits on your young specimens, as a bumper crop in the early years can set the development of the tree back. ▶



**ABOVE** If you have large clusters of apples together, remove the smallest to encourage crops of larger fruits.

## in the garden: june



**ABOVE** The pigeon house garden offers plenty of colour in June with delphiniums, alstroemeria and hardy geraniums leading the charge. The garden can be enjoyed from the recently converted viewing gallery.

### Designed for plants

The pigeon house garden offers views over the cider orchard and is home to a medieval pigeon house. I recall this area just being home to my grandmother's chicken runs and a muck tump, so the transformation is remarkable.

After more than 15 years of growth and editing, it is wonderfully mature and at its peak. But, as with most gardens, change continues - a recent introduction is the glass front to the restored building at the end, so visitors can enjoy a view down the garden, whatever the weather.

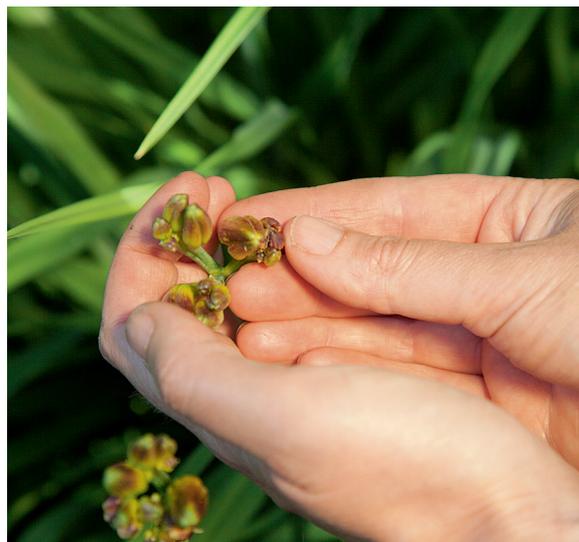
Stockton Bury is a plantsman's garden, so the design is all about plants. The beds are curved, which allows room for a healthy mix of small trees and shrubs. Narrow borders offer very little scope for layers of planting. In this particular garden, the lawn and borders are given equal space, and the curves in the lawn lead you slowly down the garden. If the lawn and borders were straight and formal, it would speed up the passage through the garden and plants would be missed.

## LOOK OUT FOR...

### *Hemerocallis gall midge*

Gall midge is a relatively new problem - the midge arrived in Britain in 1989. If your day lilies are failing to produce flowers, then this midge (*Contarinia quinquenotata*) could be to blame. The midge is a tiny fly that lays eggs on the flower bud of hemerocallis. The larvae then go on to feed on the bud, and the bud is left disfigured. As a result, the bud fails to open. The foliage of the plant remains unharmed. There is no chemical control, so all you can do is pinch off the distorted buds. In a small garden, just take a turn around the garden and pinch off any disfigured buds as you go.

The RHS is tracking where this pest is an issue, so if it's in your garden, take a few minutes to fill in the survey at [www.rhs.org.uk](http://www.rhs.org.uk)



**ABOVE** Hemerocallis gall midge is easy to spot - look out for the disfigured buds and pinch them off.

## ON TRIAL: Bosch cordless trimmer

The new cordless grass trimmer from Bosch (ART 30-36 LI) arrived in time to trim the long grass. The body is lightweight at just 4kg, but I would have appreciated a shoulder strap.

To put it together, I had to tighten one screw. It comes with a 36V lithium-ion battery and charger. Simply plug in and charge the battery for an hour and a half, then slot the battery into the casing at the top of the trimmer - easy. Fully charged, it should run for up to two hours - just make sure you push the battery in firmly, or the power cuts out.

The cutting diameter offered is 30cm, and it comes with a semi-automatic line feed, which is very handy.

This is a neat trimmer ideal for those who dislike working with petrol tools or fear cutting through a cable. I would recommend it for a small garden where short bursts of trimming are required, or for those who have never been brave enough to use a petrol trimmer. Priced at £224.99. To find your nearest stockist, visit [www.bosch-garden.com](http://www.bosch-garden.com)

