

# JUNE'S GARDEN

Not quite enough a dedicated gardener

Rain coming down - but lighter.  
Wild fuchsia drip and bounce  
in counterbalance.  
Coral Bark maple red against  
the sky  
branches like coral reef  
brachea  
or lungs tracing blood.  
Some yellow star leaves still  
shine.  
Rain is a reprieve  
holding off all I could do - an  
excuse  
to stay inside I use, blocking  
the branches of my mind that  
say  
those irrefutable words, "In  
Oregon, Mom,  
people work in the rain,"  
spoken  
by my oldest son.

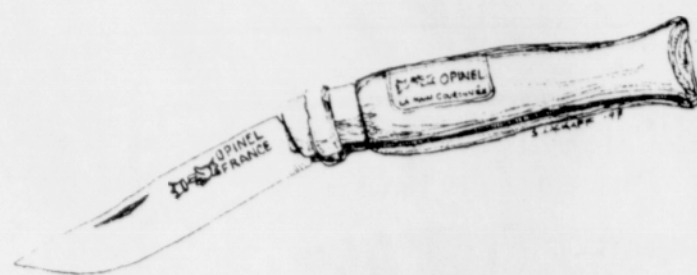
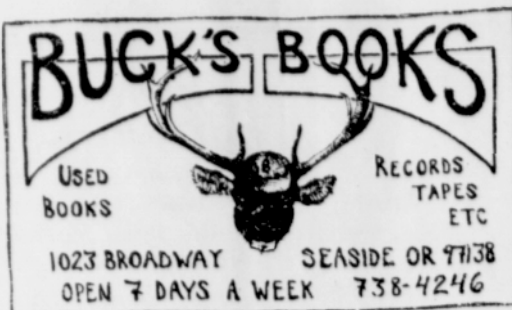
Anne Splane Phillips  
c. 11-96

This poem reminded me of a discussion I recently had with Jeff, my grandson and his wife Elaine, about how to deal with the sea of mud that surrounded the newly-built home they had just moved into.

They had lived in apartments and had never had a garden. Elaine was most anxious to start planting. She wanted a garden full of flowers. She had the enthusiasm, if not the experience, of becoming a dedicated gardener, but my not-so-enthusiastic grandson said, "Elaine, there are months of rain ahead, let's wait until next summer to start planting a garden." Jeff turned his attention to a football game on TV.

I brought out a tablet of graph paper and some garden books to show Elaine different styles of gardens and to help her start a landscape plan. I suggested she buy two large decorative clay pots to plant pansies and primroses in, to satisfy her desire to have some color near her front door, but urged her to take time to draw out a landscape plan on the graph paper.

She drew out the dimensions of the house, driveway and a small patio the builder had provided, then sketched in a flower bed for roses and other flowers. We talked about improving the soil with humus and I showed her plans to build a compost bin and suggested she talk to the nurseries about what shrubs and trees would grow best where they live. We also discussed mounding the soil or having raised beds to give better drainage for the plants. The mounded beds would add a different dimension to their flat yard. She added a fence to close off the back yard and included play equipment for their little boy. "Jeff, come here. Can you build an arbor for some climbing roses like this one," she asked, showing him a picture of one in a garden book.



Since the ball game was over, Jeff looked at the picture and said, "Well, I could try." He studied the plans Elaine had drawn and added a circle in the corner of the back yard and labeled it "W.W. II." He said, "Cookie, remember that tree I used to climb in your garden when I was little? W.W. II is what Grandfather always called that tree."

I laughed and said, "He called it that because it was a Weeping Willow tree and its roots eventually clogged the septic tank's drainage ditches. He said he felt like he had to fight World War II all over again, as we had to take down that tree and have a whole new system built. I think you'd be better off to plant an apple tree. That willow was our second mistake, the first was not having a landscape plan. We were continually changing things around."

"I loved that garden, Cookie. Remember when you'd let me pick a bucket of blueberries and raspberries that you had growing at the edge of your vegetable garden and you made me blueberry pancakes and made syrup out of the raspberries to pour over the pancakes. Get Cookie's recipe, Elaine, and leave room for a raspberry and blueberry patch."

I could see the beginnings of another generation of gardeners developing, as Jeff asked if I had any gardening catalogs he could look at to get some ideas of what kinds of seeds he might want to buy for a vegetable garden.

My thoughts were how I wish Jeff had known his great grandfather and my grandmother, as they had both had raspberry patches at their homes.

Jeff and Elaine's enthusiasm was catching. This spring I'll plant some blueberry bushes alongside my raspberry patch. After all, I have a great grandson who will soon be old enough to pick berries for pancakes and syrup.

It was still lightly raining and they had the start of a landscape plan. Jeff said, as we put on our rain clothes, "Let's go out and look at your garden, Cookie, what's a little rain."

February is the month to prune back roses and summer blooming Clematis. I wait until the last part of February. Pruning forces new growth and the new growth can be burned by wind storms and night frosts if pruned too early.

### Steps to prune your roses:

1. Inspect rose bush. If it has grown suckers from the roots, dig down and pull them off the roots.
2. Prune away all dead, broken or diseased canes. If the canes are not white or green inside, cut lower.
3. Cut away thin, straggly canes. These will not support blooms and will waste the bush's energy.
4. If canes are crossed and rubbing together, cut the smaller one back. This will strengthen the remaining canes.

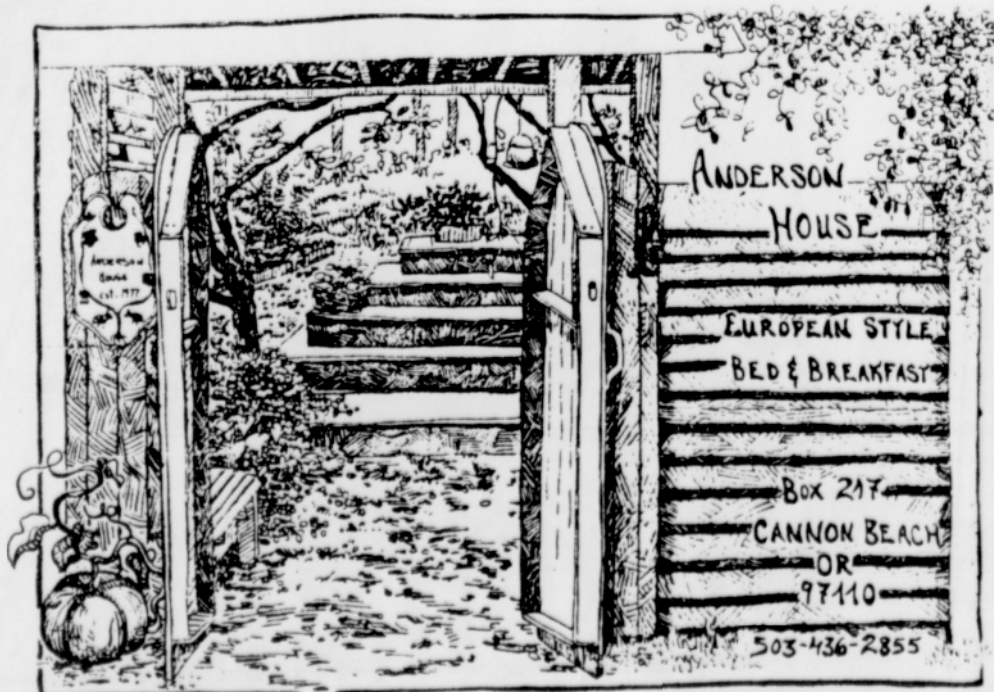
Once you have cut out unwanted growth, prune back the main canes above the nearest healthy, outward-growing bud to the desired height. Roses that should be pruned in this manner include Hybrid Teas, Floribundas, Old-fashioned shrub Roses, Species Roses, Grandifloras.

I cut back my summer-blooming, purple-flowered Clematis 'Jackamanii Superba' to about 3', where new growth later in the spring will soon cover the picket fence and send out hundreds of blooms in the summer.

The spring-blooming Clematis montana can be pruned after it blooms. It flowers on old wood and is hardy, so should be thinned or pruned to rejuvenate or reduce the size.

I also have a Clematis dio-scovifolia (C. peniculata) sweet autumn clematis I have pruned in the fall after it bloomed, cutting off all growth, leaving about 5' of stems, as this clematis is extremely hardy and could soon become an aggressive vine if left unpruned.

Please send your comments, questions and suggestions to June's Garden, P. O. Box 74, Cannon Beach, OR 97110.



I am not a vegetarian because I love animals; I am a vegetarian because I hate plants.  
A. Whitney Brown - American editor, publisher