



It's glorious June

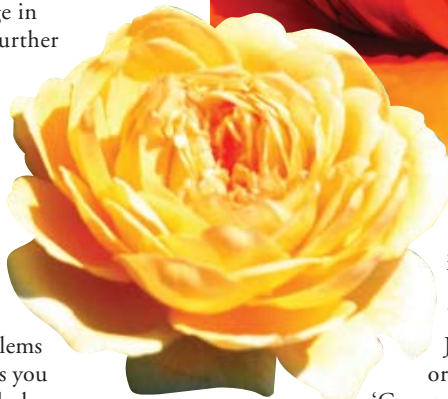
Sir Roddy is waiting for his Oriental poppies to burst into song

THERE are certain perennial plants that give pleasure for several months even before their flowers open because of their good-looking foliage. I am thinking particularly of oriental poppies (*Papaver orientalis*) which burst into song during this glorious month of June. I always pray that it doesn't rain while their flowers are out as they resent it and are damaged by it. The minute the flowers fade so does the foliage, which is easily removed in its entirety along with the flower stalks with a twist and a tug, meaning that you are not left with a messy plant. The plant loves you for it and bounces back with renewed vigour the following season. This will appeal to the tidier gardener. Oriental poppies come in a wide range of colours. If you're looking for a plant with flowers of true red (most have orange in them) you need look no further than *Papaver orientalis* 'Beauty of Livermere'.

Get your leeks in by the beginning of June at the latest. Small plants are easily bought for very little when you consider the prolific crop that is produced all the way during winter up to February. If you have problems with carrot fly which leaves you with carrots full of brown holes, you can try inter-planting them with onions which can confuse the female carrot fly and prevents her from laying her eggs at the base of the foliage in her characteristic fashion. Although I have never done it myself, rows of French marigolds planted between rows or in amongst blocks of carrots will have the same effect, or so I have been told. I have also seen carrots sown in amongst petunias and other annuals in a border for the same reason. Why not? After all, this root crop does have attractive foliage. Drawing soil up around potatoes this month for those planted in March or April will increase the crop.

June is famous for its roses. Their showy extravagance at this time of year makes up for the fact that they are ugly plants for seven months of the year. The fashion for island beds devoted to bush roses is, luckily, over. I find the most pleasing way to grow them is in amongst other plants in the

Oriental poppy.



mixed border. This is exactly what I have done in a new border where 'Just Joey' (coppery-orange and pink) and 'Crown Princess Margareta' (with similarly coloured flowers), two of my favourite roses, enjoy the company of a whole variety of herbaceous perennials. Climbing roses will have put on numerous new, soft shoots, and this is the time to tie them in when they are soft and pliable. This is no easy task because it is a fiddly job that needs to be undertaken wearing thick gloves up a ladder. I keep all my broken shoe laces for tying back climbing roses. Green string is no good as it perishes after a couple of seasons. Just because you have a North-facing wall it doesn't mean that you cannot grow a climbing rose up it. Try 'Madame Gregoire Staechelin' (pink) or 'Mrs Sam McGredy' (coppery-orange flushed with scarlet). Make time to give a close look at the new shoots on your roses. Early detection of greenfly, which are easily removed by rubbing them off with your fingers, will help to prevent serious

infestations later on.

June is a very busy month. Despite the fact that the last few Junes have not exactly been 'flaming' it can prove very dry. It has almost become our duty these days to collect our own water which is so easily done with water butts fed by down pipes from gutters. Even if it does rain, containerised plants will need a daily water. For the neatest hedge it will need to be trimmed this month and again in August. However yew, hornbeam and beech are best left alone until the end of the summer. Keep strawberries well watered in dry spells and nip out runners as they appear. Pinch out the leading shoot on your broad beans: such soft growth is a favourite with blackfly. Start cutting herbs for drying for winter use; mint, chives and parsley all keep well in the deep freeze. Keep an eye open for the greatest enemy of the nasturtium and brassica-grower – the cabbage white fly. Give some thought to all those indoor plants that have given you so much pleasure during the winter. Once the threat of frost is past they will thank you for a holiday out in a shaded part of the garden once they have been re-potted and given a good feed. This is the most luxurious resort they could imagine. ■