

Hello all, once again and welcome to summer

Although we are having problems keeping the garden under control, particularly at this time of year when we can practically see things growing, it does look very nice at the moment and smells even more so.

I stopped growing most varieties of roses years ago; they are not friendly, the thorns attack us if we try to weed around them and they attract a myriad of pests. There is always the bad to balance the good. The birds come to them to eat the pests which is a bonus. The other problem is black spot, altogether too much work. The only rose which I currently grow is a modern shrub called Nevada. It is a lovely white single rose with arching stems packed with flowers. It flowers most of June, and has a later second flowering over the summer when the blooms are less profuse and are flushed with pink. It is far too big for my garden, but as long as I am able to cut it back I am not going to discard it.

As I have said, the garden is really heavily scented

during May and June with lily of the valley, honeysuckle, the previously mentioned rose and mock orange. On a still, warm evening the perfume is overwhelming. I remember taking a bunch of honeysuckle to work for someone one evening and another colleague asked me if she could have a cutting. I explained that it had to be layered and would take about a year. I duly layered it into a small pot and gave it to her. She thanked me and over the years I've heard how well it has performed. Then *many* years later she asked if I remembered giving her that tiny plant which now covered almost her entire house. Then she added: "Do you know what I thought when you gave it to me?" I didn't. "I thought you were the meanest person I had ever met."

Not a great deal of wildlife news has come my way lately other than reports of pheasants in gardens. I don't know if they have in-



creased in number recently, but one neighbour has had two males in her garden with *five* females.

One neighbour saw a stoat in Iffin Lane while walking her dog and my daughter saw one in about the same place when she walked up to the farm for eggs.

My husband and I are still squirrel watching

despite the fact that they rob birds nests, they are very entertaining. At least I can see what they are. I am waiting for two cataract operations and am unable to see anything too well.



My daughter was driving us up the road when we both saw a bird at the same time. Whilst I could tell that it was different, there was no way I could put a name to it. In fact it was a jay, wonderful colours when you can see them! Unfortunately also a predator of small birds.

I have not seen a thrush yet this year, again this may be because I cannot recognise them, but I know they are here because of the singing. Fantastic, particularly in the mid afternoon. I know that I have said this before, but the dawn chorus is nowhere near what it used to be. In the days when I was working the chorus was incredible. In order to record it one year I set

the alarm for 4.45am and hung a microphone out of the bedroom window (I'm afraid that I was too lazy to get up). The result was great, I'd like to listen to it again, but for the life of me I do not know where it is. Like so many things lately.

That year we had a nightingale in Iffin Lane, the only time I have heard one here. It is also on that tape. I really must try to find it.

My immediate neighbour has acquired some new cats after the death of one of their pets, a mother cat and two kittens. Unfortunately one of the kittens seems to be very deaf.

They are very worried in case this one gets run over and have requested me to ask everyone to be extra careful when driving in Iffin

Lane. Unfortunately not everyone driving up or down Iffin Lane is local. The girls in this family have picked up several dead or dying cats on the lane over the years. We will hope for the best.

That's all for this time.

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My VIEW

By JOAN GOWER