

YOUR GARDEN GUIDE TO
Summer

Top hints & tips
to make the most of your
garden this summer

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HERE'S TO AN ENDLESS *Summer*

I'M DELIGHTED
TO WELCOME YOU
TO THE NEW
STIHL & VIKING
GARDEN GUIDE
FOR SUMMER

Here comes summer, with bright days, long evenings and the promise of warm weather. It's a joy to be out in the garden, soaking up all the scents and colours, not to mention spotting the wildlife.

For the gardener it's a busy time as everything is growing; the grass needs regular mowing and the hedges need cutting, although I have to keep an eye open for those nesting birds. Having the right tools for the job make it a pleasure to keep everything ship-shape. And with the STIHL and VIKING cordless range I can be cutting hedges or lawns even while our guests at The Bath Priory are having a lie-in. I'll be sure to be nice and quiet although I can't vouch for all those birds.



JANE MOORE

Head Gardener at The Bath Priory Hotel and winner of the prestigious International Relais & Châteaux Garden Trophy.

WIN A LUXURY OVERNIGHT STAY AT
THE BATH PRIORY HOTEL

For more information and details of how to enter please see page 15.

MY SUMMER TIPS

June is the perfect time to plant out young plants that you've grown yourself or bought from the garden centre or nursery.

Just think of all those 'ratatouille' veg. Plant out courgettes, tomato plants, aubergines, runner beans and French beans. Don't forget that you'll need a wigwam of canes for the climbing beans to twine themselves around almost immediately – they grow that fast!

You can sow beans straight into the ground now if you didn't get around to starting any off indoors. Simply drop a couple of beans into a 5cm (2in) deep hole at the base of each cane of the wigwam.



Sweetcorn too can be sown straight into the ground but again allow a couple of ears per hole in case the wildlife help themselves to a snack.



FOUR FABULOUS *tomatoes*

Young tomato plants are readily available at garden centres and are great for growing indoors or out, in a pot on a balcony or cosseted in a greenhouse. There's nothing tastier than a sweet tomato picked straight from the plant and it's also a great way to get children involved in growing.

GARDENER'S DELIGHT is a long-standing favourite of mine. It's reliable and heavy cropping so although the tomatoes aren't the biggest, there are plenty of them and the flavour is divine.

TUMBLER is such a star for pots, containers and even hanging baskets with its compact, bushy, slightly trailing habit. And it produces plenty of tasty red toms for such a neat plant.

SUNGOLD is one of the sweetest tomatoes I've ever tasted. The small, orange-gold fruits are produced in abundance.

SWEET MILLION is a winner for kids with masses of small, sweet, cherry-sized, bright red fruits that children love. Like Tumbler, this variety grows well in growing bags and pots, which makes it ideal if you are short on space.

KEEPING *trim*

WHEN TO TRIM

A good hedge frames a garden, adds structure to a border and can be a head turner in its own right. Getting a good finish on your hedge is a matter of regular, systematic cutting to keep the growth tight and bushy. The classic evergreen or semi-evergreen hedges such as privet, yew and *Lonicera nitida* can be cut as and when you feel it's needed during the summer months. Fast-growing hedges, too, such as Leyland cypress should be clipped as necessary throughout the growing season but you need to be careful with these not to cut back into the brown, twiggy wood as they will not re-green.



HOW TO TRIM

Hand-held hedge shears are fine for small hedges, but for larger varieties you'll find it easier to use a powered hedge trimmer. No matter what you use, always make sure the equipment is sharp and well lubricated.

Think safety if you're using a powered hedge trimmer: goggles, gloves and long sleeves. Clear away any obstacles on the ground before you start – you won't be looking at your feet – and consider long-reach hedge trimmers for tall hedges.

Even vigorous hedges can be kept to no more than 60cm (2ft) wide as long as they're regularly trimmed. Taper the hedge on both sides so that the base is wider than the top and light can reach the bottom of the hedge.

Take a little time to check that there are no birds nesting before you start cutting your hedge. Not only is it against the law to damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it's in use or being built, but we gardeners like our birds as they love to eat pests. As a rule of thumb, the bird nesting season is usually considered to run from 1st March to 31st July though it may last longer for certain species or multiple broods.



HL-KM 135° KombiTool Hedge Trimmer (adjustable)
£295

KM 56 RC-E General Purpose (comfort) Petrol Kombi-Engine
£249

HSA 66 Cordless Hedge Trimmer
£225
Tool only. Ask your dealer about battery and charger options.

STIHL HEDGE TRIMMERS ARE AVAILABLE FROM £122.50

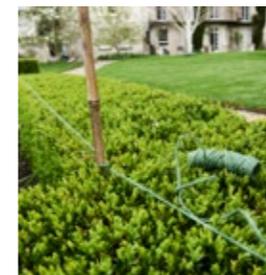
BOX HEDGES

Ideally I'd like to cut our box hedges and topiary shapes three times a year but realistically that rarely happens; partly due to time constraints, but also because of the vagaries of box blight and the weather.

Box blight, a fungal disease which spreads through the hedge by spores, has been ravaging formal gardens throughout the country. To reduce its likelihood, the best cutting time is when the weather is dry so the spores can't spread. But if it's too hot and sunny when trimming, the hedge can become stressed by losing moisture. So picking an ideal time is surprisingly tricky! An essential job after cutting is to blow through the hedges with an air blower to blast out all the little bits and trimmings which could harbour spores.



BGA 85 Cordless Blower
£235
Tool only. Ask your dealer about battery and charger options.



STRAIGHT CUT

Use a taut horizontal string tied between two stout canes to act as a guide when cutting the top of the hedge level. Canes or stakes pushed into the ground can help with vertical lines.

If you're using a hedge trimmer, keep the blade parallel to the hedge and use a wide, sweeping action working from the bottom of the hedge upwards.

BRING IN THE *butterflies*

Take some time this summer to see how many of the UK's 59 resident butterfly species you can spot.

As well as these residents, there are 30 or so occasional migrants you might spot visiting from overseas. While some butterflies



are local to very specific habitats such as chalk downland or coppiced woodland, many are happy to feed on the flowers we have on offer in our gardens. Having said that, you can do more to encourage butterflies into the garden by cutting down on pesticides and planting more native plants and single flowers which are easier for them to feed from.

Look out for Peacock and Red Admiral butterflies, particularly on Buddleia later in the summer. Earlier on you might spot the distinctive Orange Tip, Meadow Brown or Tortoiseshell butterflies, especially on wild plants. The tiny Holly Blue is also relatively common although it's small and quick moving which makes it hard to spot.

Kitchen gardeners will be familiar with Small and Large Cabbage White butterflies and I must confess to a love-hate relationship with them as their ravenous larvae have reduced my kale to stalks before. Most butterfly larvae aren't so destructive though, feeding on wild plants, nettles and thistles, which is a great excuse to leave a corner of the garden unkempt.



Best Buy
Which?

Leaf blowers September 2012

PORTABLE *power*

The cordless power system from STIHL & VIKING could change the way you work forever; effortlessly, quietly and emission free. So not only will you be happy, but your neighbours and the environment will be too. Our incredibly efficient electric motors ensure every ounce of lithium-ion battery power is used to give impressive, long-lasting performance. And our batteries are interchangeable between every STIHL cordless tool and VIKING mower.

So whether you're a hobby gardener or a professional, with three acres or a town house plot, our cordless power system will revolutionise the way you work.



FREE BATTERY BAG*
WORTH OVER £20
with any STIHL cordless tool purchased.

MSA 160 C-BO
Cordless Chainsaw
£279 (Excl. battery and charger)



HSA 66
Cordless Hedge Trimmer
£225 (Excl. battery and charger)

FSA 65
Cordless Grass Trimmer
£195 (Excl. battery and charger)



VIKING MA 339
Cordless Lawn Mower
£309 (Excl. battery and charger)



CORDLESS TOOLS FROM £195.
SPEAK TO YOUR STIHL AND VIKING DEALER ABOUT BATTERY AND CHARGER OPTIONS.



WHAT IS QUIET MARK?

Quiet Mark is the international mark of approval from the UK's Noise Abatement Society, awarded to the quietest high performance technologies that reduce unwanted noise in our environment. Every product in STIHL & VIKING's cordless power range has received the Quiet Mark award, making them perfect for use at home or in built-up areas.

www.quietmark.com



Quiet Mark's Quiet Treehouse, designed by Blue Forest, will be a show feature at this year's RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show.

*Terms & conditions apply. See your dealer for more details.

KEEP ON mowing



Regular and consistent mowing is by far the best route to keep a lawn looking good – cutting little and often is the mantra. Try to avoid the temptation to leave it for a fortnight because it hasn't grown much and then find that you're chopping lots off the top. If you're not careful the lawn will go yellow,

patchy and bald in places. It's much better to just remove a boxful and regard the mowing as a bit of a weekly workout.

Although it's a bit tough on the lawn, let's hope that July and August bring us some glorious weather. In hot conditions, set the mower level slightly higher than normal and reduce the frequency of cut to help the grass preserve moisture. Also, lawn growth slows down in late summer, so raising the cutting height slightly will help the grass cope with the inevitable wear and tear.

Don't forget, you can complete the job in style – use a grass trimmer on edges and hard-to-reach areas to give you the perfect finish.



TO WATER OR NOT TO WATER?

It's a tough call – whether to water the lawn or not. I must confess that at home I rarely bother about brown patches developing on the lawn as I know it will recover quickly when the autumn rains arrive.

At The Bath Priory it's a different matter as no one wants to look out on a brown, dry lawn if they treat themselves to a stay in a nice hotel. If the weather looks hot I slow right down on the mowing and start watering the main lawn before it becomes a problem.

A good check to know when you've watered enough is to place a jam jar on the lawn and leave the sprinkler running for 13mm (1/2in) of water to collect in the bottom of the jar. This is the optimum amount to avoid wasting water, while still wetting the roots thoroughly.

Don't forget that new areas of grass, whether sown or turfed in the spring, will need extra watering to keep them going through their first summer.



MAKE YOUR OWN MEADOW

Starting your own wildlife meadow in a rough patch of the garden is easy enough. Managing and improving it is where the skill lies and it takes several years before the meadow settles in.

According to experts, to create a meadow properly you're supposed to scrape off the nutrient rich topsoil and sow a meadow mixture into the tilled subsoil. But who's got the space or inclination to deal with mounds of topsoil? Instead I just stopped weed killing and treating one of our lawns, instead allowing it to grow long, letting the grasses and the lawn 'weeds' like Clover, Selfheal and Stitchwort develop and flower. I also added small plants

and plug plants of wild flowers common to this area such as Wild Cranesbill, Knapweed, Scabious and Cowslips but kept the planting confined to one corner so it could be watered with a sprinkler if the weather turned hot. Now those plants have seeded themselves throughout the meadow creating a haven for wildlife and a valuable food source for bees and butterflies.

Come the end of the summer when the seeds have scattered, which is usually around August bank holiday, I start to mow the meadow down with a strimmer, raking up the hay and adding it in layers to the compost heap.



VIKING MB 448 TC

This top-of-the-range mower is both striking to look at and simple to use. Its self-propelled motor makes it easy to use in any garden. The unique mono-handle makes it simple to fold and store away for those short on space and the 55 litre grass box is easy to open, empty and clean. All in all it's the perfect mower with a unique design which gives you a superior finish.

£479

THE MULCH MOWER

Mulching mowers shred grass clippings very finely as they cut and then disperse them into the lower layers of the turf, where they act like mulch to help the lawn retain moisture. Because the clippings are fine, the end result is not unsightly, especially later in the season when the lawn gets very dry, and the mulch helps to keep it green rather than brown. You can use a mulching mower all season long if you want, but I tend to use it in the high summer months when I'm cutting very little off the tops of the grass and the clippings pretty much disappear.



VIKING MB 2 RT
£439



CHOOSING A MOWER

Buying a new mower is a bit of a minefield – there are so many choices and variations it's hard to define what you need. Here's my quick guide:

ELECTRIC MOWER Great for smaller gardens as they tend to be light, efficient and store compactly but they require a handy power source.

CORDLESS MOWER Perfect for those with a small to mid-sized lawn, cordless mowers are lightweight and compact. Simple to use, they require no fuel or trailing cables.

PETROL MOWER Heavier duty and suitable for larger gardens but also more robust. In some, the engine only powers the blade and you have to push the machine, which is too much like hard work in a larger garden; so make sure you buy one with self-propulsion to give it some 'drive'.

ROTARY MOWER These are the mowers that most of us have. A single rotating blade snips off everything in its path, even coarse grasses and flower stalks. The finish is neat and tidy or you can select a roller version which will give you that sought after striping.

RIDE-ON MOWER Brilliant fun and many will work as mini tractors so you can pull a small trailer too. They are more expensive and require regular servicing like any other vehicle, but are invaluable for the larger garden.

ROBOTIC MOWER Gives you the perfect finish with little or no effort. They mow the lawn for you which leaves you more time to spend enjoying your garden.



VIKING ME 339

This electric mower makes a great cut with very little effort. It's light and extremely manoeuvrable, with a folding handle that makes it easy to store in the smallest of spaces.

£199



VIKING MA 339

Lawn care is a doddle with this lightweight, compact machine. So manoeuvrable, almost anyone could use it. The brilliant cordless design provides more than enough power, just pop the battery in and you're up and running in an instant.

£309

Mower only. Ask your dealer about battery and charger options.



VIKING MB 248

This push along petrol mower is incredibly durable and easy-to-use. Perfect for small to medium-sized lawns, seven cutting heights gives you freedom to choose your perfect length.

£259



VIKING MB 545 VR

For bigger lawns and for those that like stripes, this is the ideal choice due to its rear roller. Height adjustable handlebars save your back and self-propulsion makes mowing large areas a walk in the park.

£669



VIKING MR 4082

Extremely manoeuvrable and versatile, this ride-on mower is a joy to drive. With all controls close to hand making it easy to achieve the perfect lawn.

£2,599

VIKING iMOW

This perfect garden helper will revolutionise the way you tend your lawn, because you'll no longer have to tend it! The new **iMOW** cuts your lawn automatically and always to the same height. It's fast, efficient, intelligent, and adapts to the weather conditions and grass cover, leaving you free to enjoy your lawn without lifting a finger.



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It's summer time and the living should be easy. VIKING mowers are a cut above the rest, giving you the perfect lawn with the minimum amount of effort. Perfect for everyone who loves that summer feeling. **We share your passion.**

For more information visit
www.vikingmowers.co.uk

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Proudly part of the **STIHL** group.

SHEAR *delight*



PRUNING FOR COLOUR

Although you might not expect it, June is a busy month for pruning. It's the perfect time to cut back tender sub-shrubs – the not quite shrubby but too woody to be a herbaceous perennial – after the danger of frosts has finished. These are left with all their old flower heads for the winter and spring to protect them but by now I'm itching to give them a good short-back-and-sides. How hard I cut back depends on how leggy and misshapen they've got but I'm often pretty tough. The good thing about cutting back now is you can see all the new little shoots developing low down on the woody stems which makes it easier to be brave and cut back hard. The plants will be all the better for it.



PRUNING FOR FLOWER

It's hard to beat early summer flowering shrubs for sheer sugary flower power. I'm talking about those favourites like Deutzia, Kolkwitzia and, of course, Weigela. These all need pruning after they've finished flowering which is usually in late June or July. The problem is that if this job is left too late or even, dare I say it, forgotten completely, the new growth put on after pruning may not have enough ripening time to flower well next year. One of my must-have shrubs falls into this bunch so I never forget! Summer just wouldn't be the same without the heady scent of Mock Orange or Philadelphus knocking my socks off in June.

WE DO MORE THAN JUST POWER TOOLS

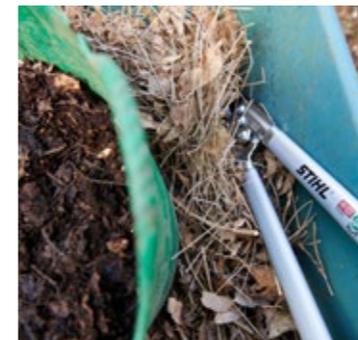
STIHL HAND TOOLS FROM ONLY £9.25

PRUNING FOR KINDNESS

It's a shame to have to prune a deciduous magnolia but occasionally it does have to be done, usually when a branch drops so low I cannot get under it with the mower despite gymnastic contortions. But, if you've got to do it then now is the time, once the plant is in full leaf and it's finished flowering. If you do it in winter, when the tree is dormant, you can get dieback, and pruning in late winter or spring can result in bleeding. So midsummer is the moment.



CARRY ON COMPOSTING



There is nothing better for keeping your soil healthy and productive than making your own compost. Gardeners always go on about their compost heaps and everyone has a slightly different way of doing things. I compost practically everything; weeds, spent compost, even tree leaves in the autumn. Even if you have a small garden I would say a compost heap is invaluable, it's a lot easier and

cheaper than trying to get rid of green waste any other way and it's much more cost effective than buying in fertiliser for your garden. The best spot for a compost bin is a shady corner. As a general rule of thumb though, two bins is better than one and the bigger they are the better.

WHAT TO COMPOST

Getting the mix right is key. About half your heap should be green: weeds, grass clippings, and other vegetable waste. The other half should be brown stuff like dead leaves, wood chips and prunings. Remember to layer your mix. The books say go for 20cm (8in) layers but treat that as a guideline. Once you've got the mix right, the other crucial element to making good compost is regular turning, to speed up the decomposition process. Shop bought additives can also help. You can turn it as often as you like, watering any dry spots as you go, but once every couple of months or so is ideal.

PLANT OUT PUMPKINS

If you didn't sow your pumpkin seeds indoors as detailed in our spring issue then not to worry. There's still plenty of time to get growing, just jump to step 3. This is a great way to get the kids involved in the garden as the large fruit is clear for all to see. Just follow the steps below and by Halloween you'll have your very own pumpkins to carve.



1 Acclimatise your pumpkin plants to outdoor conditions by putting them out each day for about a week, bringing them indoors each night.

2 Plant into a warm, sunny spot with plenty of added compost or manure – I have seen pumpkins growing very happily in a dung heap at horse stables.

3 If you haven't already sown your seeds indoors, it's now possible to sow straight into the ground. Sow two or three seeds 2.5cm (1in) deep outdoors and cover with cloches, jars or plastic bottles. Leave these in place for two weeks, once the seedlings appear, then thin the seedlings to leave the strongest one. Check the seed packet for planting distances, as some are big growers, and keep them watered until the plants are established.

4 Once settled, they'll grow quickly and produce flowers and embryo pumpkins in no time. If you want really big pumpkins then 'stop' the plants, snipping off the growing tip after two or three pumpkins have developed to allow these to get all the nutrients.

CHECK BACK IN OUR AUTUMN ISSUE FOR WHAT TO DO NEXT

Q&A WITH JANE

I get asked for gardening advice from almost everyone I meet when I tell them what I do. So here are my answers to some of the frequently asked questions I receive.

The branches of my little plum tree are weighed down with fruit and look like they might break. What can I do?

L. HODGES, SURREY

You can help the tree to prevent this becoming a problem by thinning the fruit early in the season as the fruitlets develop. Not only will this reduce the amount of fruit weighing down the tree but the fruit that is left should be bigger and better too. Propping up the branches with stakes will also help.



My houseplants often look a bit frazzled and scorched in summer. Is there any way to prevent this?

R. TAYLOR, LONDON

They're probably simply a bit hot and too exposed to the sun. Try watering them in the evening so they get more chance to absorb the water overnight rather than it evaporating on a sunny day. Open the window to improve ventilation and cool the plants on a nice day or perhaps you could even put your houseplants outside on the patio for the summer – they'll love it.

Is it best to pull weeds out by hand or can you get away with just hoeing?

M. BOONE, STOCKPORT

Hoeing is much quicker than weeding by hand and it's better to weed by this method than leave the weeds to grow if you're short of time. But hoeing is best done in hot dry weather when the weeds just shrivel up rather than in showery conditions when the weeds can simply re-root and keep on growing.

If you have a question that you would like me to answer, email me at:

jane.moore@stihl.co.uk

I try to conserve water as much as possible but I've put a lot of effort into my vegetables this year. How regularly should I water them?

A. SHARPE, WILTSHIRE



Vegetables need a regular, consistent supply of water ideally given to them in the early morning before the sun gets scorching or, my preferred time, in the evening so that they can soak it up through the night. As a rule of thumb vegetables need more water when they are flowering and the fruits are setting and developing than at any other time. For instance, it's essential you water runner beans once they start flowering, especially if the weather is particularly dry.



WIN A LUXURY OVERNIGHT STAY AT THE BATH PRIORY HOTEL

Unwind and explore the array of different plant and tree species in the beautiful award-winning gardens of The Bath Priory Hotel, Restaurant and Spa. The gardens at The Bath Priory are managed by Jane Moore and include three acres of lawn and meadow plus an acre of courtyard.

This sublime luxury hotel is located just a short stroll from the Georgian city centre of Bath. Your overnight stay in the luxury Garden Spa Suite will leave you feeling like a guest in a private house rather than a hotel. You will also be treated to a five course tasting menu for two created just for you by Michelin-starred Executive Chef, Sam Moody.



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