

# Jobs for June

June is one of the busiest months of the year. The days will be lengthening and the temperatures rising, and everything on the allotment will be growing energetically – not least the weeds. Most likely, you'll feel that the whole plot is insistently demanding your attention. June can be a surprisingly dry month, too, so there may be a lot of watering to do in order to keep your newly planted seedlings growing healthily.

## Weed

Like most plants, weeds put on a growth spurt in June. Dig out any perennial weeds, such as dandelions and creeping buttercup, that you've overlooked in the preceding months. Then hoe regularly, especially on dry days, to prevent annual weeds competing for moisture with new, young plants.

## Water

Most seeds and seedlings need regular watering if they are to germinate and develop successfully. Plants are better able to take up moisture if you water little and often than if you drown them just once a week.

## Mulch

Continue to spread mulches such as garden compost, mushroom compost, well-rotted manure, and bark chips. They will help to suppress weeds and, if the underlying earth is damp before you apply them, they will also delay evaporation.

## Check nets

Ensure peas, cabbages and other brassicas, and soft fruit are all securely netted against birds.

## Feed tomatoes

As soon as tomatoes being grown under cover form their first tiny fruits, they will benefit

from a weekly feed of high-potash fertilizer. Pinch out small side shoots that grow in the "V" between the leaf stems and the main stem.

## Earth up potatoes

Even if you've already done this, it's worth doing again. It will help ensure the tubers remain out of the light.

## Build supports for climbing beans

Use 2.5m (8ft) long canes and strong twine to construct rows or wigwams ready for beans to climb up. Make sure they're sturdy enough to support the heavy weight of beans when they are fully grown. Protect newly sown or transplanted seedlings with makeshift cloches or collars made from empty plastic bottles.

## Cut down broad beans and peas

As soon as harvesting is over, cut plants down to just above the surface of the soil and compost them. But leave the roots in the ground, as they are rich in nitrogen.

## Feed asparagus

Apply a general-purpose fertilizer now you're no longer picking spears – but leave the plants to grow and don't cut them down until they go brown in autumn.

## Summer-prune herbs

Chop back herbs such as mint, chives, sage, thyme, and lovage in order to remove tired old leaves and to stimulate the growth of fresh new ones.

(far left) **Water climbing bean** seedlings regularly once they are in their final position. Frequent watering encourages strong, healthy growth and an ability to withstand disease.

(left) **Net young brassicas** as soon as you have transplanted them to keep birds, especially pigeons, at bay. Cabbage white butterflies, too, are eager to lay their eggs on young cabbages.



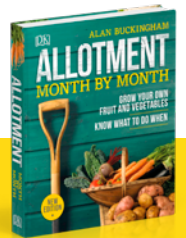
**Runner beans** will usually climb up bamboo canes without any encouragement. If they are slow to get started, gently twist each plant around its cane.

## Pot up strawberry runners

If your strawberry plants have finished producing fruit, you can either cut off any runners, or use them to make new plants (see p.132).

## Summer-prune gooseberries, redcurrants, and whitecurrants

Prune bushes and cordons by cutting back to five leaves all this year's new lateral shoots – although don't touch any laterals you might want to develop into new branches next year. If summer pruning is done before harvesting it may encourage the fruit to swell.





### Remove raspberry suckers

Any rogue suckers that sprout up at a distance from the base of the plants should be pulled out and composted.

### Tie in blackberries and hybrid berries

Although the new canes that grow up this year will not bear fruit, they should be tied in securely during this month and next. In the autumn the canes carrying this year's fruit will be cut down, and the new ones will take their place – ready to provide you with more berries next year.



### Thin out apples and pears

"June drop" usually takes place towards the end of the month. Apple trees (and to a lesser extent pears) naturally let fall a large number of tiny, embryo fruit as a way of automatically thinning out their crop. In a good year, however, you may have to thin them out still further in order to prevent overcrowding, to allow each fruit to grow to a good size, and to avoid branches breaking under the weight of too much fruit.

### Twice thin plums, damsons, and gages

These stone fruit also need thinning in June. Thin once at the beginning of the month, leaving a gap of about 2.5cm (1in) between individual fruits, and then again at the end of the month to increase the final gap to about 8cm (3in).

### Tie in and thin peaches, nectarines, and apricots

Tie in new shoots on wire-trained trees, and thin out fruit to about 15–20cm (6–8in) apart for peaches and nectarines and about 8cm (3in) apart for apricots.

### Summer-prune figs

Prune established fig trees this month by pinching out the tips of new shoots so that they each have only five leaves left.

### Grape vines

Prune side shoots, and thin outdoor fruit grown for eating so that the remaining bunches can ripen easily and grow to a reasonable size.

**Nectarines**, like peaches, can overproduce and heavily laden branches can break. To avoid losing some of your crop, thin fruits thoroughly – those that are touching or close together.



## June pests & diseases

(above, left to right) **Blackfly** infesting a globe artichoke are being harvested by ladybirds. **Mildew** is the worst problem for gooseberry bushes. Cut out affected branches. **Asparagus beetles** have distinctive markings, making them easy to spot.

### Vegetables

- **Pinch out** tips on broad beans to discourage aphids.
- **Check for blackfly** on globe artichokes, French and runner beans, and beetroot.
- **Pick off** and destroy asparagus beetles and their larvae.
- **Net cabbages** and other brassicas to protect them from pigeons.
- **Check cabbages** for cabbage white butterfly eggs and caterpillars, and squash, pick off, or spray.
- **Remove** and destroy any yellow leaves from cabbages, broccoli, and other brassicas. Otherwise, grey mould or brassica downy mildew may develop and spread.
- **Check peas** for signs of pea moth. Covering the crop with fleece is the only truly reliable safeguard.
- **Carrot fly** is still a danger in June. Protect crops with barriers or fine mesh.
- **Protect against flea beetle** by covering crops such as radishes, rocket, Oriental salad leaves, and beetroot with fine-gauge mesh.

### Fruit

- **Check apples and pears** for greenfly, scab, and bitter pit, and spray if necessary. If you didn't hang up pheromone traps in apple trees for codling moths in May, do so now.
- **Check plums** and cherries for aphids and slugworm (small black larvae); spray if necessary.
- **Net cherries**, currants, and blueberries to protect from birds.
- **Net strawberries** to keep off birds, and protect fruit from slugs.
- **Check strawberries** for grey mould, especially in wet weather, and remove and destroy any infected fruit.
- **Inspect raspberries** and loganberries for raspberry beetle as soon as the berries start to change colour, and spray if necessary.
- **Check blackcurrants** for "reversion", a disease carried by big bud mite.
- **Inspect for greenfly** on currants, and spray if necessary.
- **Check gooseberries** for gooseberry sawfly larvae and for American gooseberry mildew.
- **Check grapes** for scale insects and mildew.

