

# Gardening Irritations

## Rob Cole

I would not be at all happy without a garden to nurture - it gives me such continual pleasure, exercise and excitement. But there are lots of things which I don't like or which annoy.

Why is it, for instance, after I have spent an entire morning weeding an area in the garden, that I go out in the afternoon and find dozens of seedlings, and even larger weeds, that I have missed? And why, when I walk back to the house, do I see another area that needs weeding even more than the one I've just done?

Why does it start to rain on the morning when I had planned to mow the lawns, and why, when I have managed to set aside a whole afternoon to do a particular job, do friends come round for a chat? And when they ask to see the garden, why did it look so much better last week, or will look even better next week?

And do you also find, when you get out your hedge trimmer, shredder, strimmer, etc. that it decides to malfunction or that you run out of fuel and have none in the spare can. You then spend a few useless hours trying to fix it, and then it rains again.

Plants which fail are often a mystery and a disappointment, especially when two in a group of three are successful and the third dies. Why is that? Is it me, or is it the plant or maybe the soil? Either way it's annoying, but something we have to live with as gardeners.

Visitors to the garden are always a pleasure however, but I did have one gentleman who came to me clutching three different flower heads which he had picked to ask me what they were. I was speechless, and had to walk away to avoid a confrontation. Ten minutes later he came back to me, pushed forward by his wife, to apologise. He was not a gardener, merely the mode of transport for his wife, but I bet that he won't ever pick flowers again!

Still on the subject of garden visitors and garden visiting, there are three cardinal rules - don't arrive early, don't arrive late, and don't talk about your own garden to the garden owners unless they ask you. But do ask them about the plants in their garden which attract your attention, they will be only too happy to chat with you and compare experiences.

My final irritation is seeing a plant thriving vigorously in someone else's garden, but which is one I have lost several times. You'll know the feeling!