Neon lights
Hot from this year’s catwalks, neon hues are now the colours of choice for gardening accoutrements too. Even that gardener’s essential, the “not seen” camouflage green twine, launched by Nutscone in 1922, now comes in a choice of neon pink, green and orange. Buy the twine and be sure to snap up one of the company’s salvaged, collectible cotton mill bobbins as well. Neon two-ply twines, from £3.40 a spool, 100-year-old mill bobbins, £10 each. Contact Nutscone, 01307 468589, nutscone.com.

EXPERT ADVICE
When your house is in need of essential maintenance but your contacts book is empty, try the Find a Tradesman listing at housetohome.co.uk/findatradesman. Simply fill in the job form and search for recommended, reliable carpenters, plumbers, decorators and more in your local area.

BASKETS OF DELIGHT Order early to avoid disappointment. Christmas hampers require a bit of forethought, so to help you we’ve selected five of the best gourmet collections to suit a range of tastes

Berry Bros & Rudd
The St James’s-based vintner has expanded its Christmas range of 40 parcels to include 11 food hampers featuring tasty morsels from England, Spain, France and Italy. The Chef’s Pantry Hamper includes White Truffle salt, Ortiz anchovy fillets and 2005 Rioja Reserva, while vintage Armagnac and Demarquette fine chocolates are among the offerings in the Luxury Hamper. Visit bbrc.com. Last orders for Christmas by 6pm on 18 December.

Paxton & Whitfield
Cheese and biscuit hampers are available at this traditional British retailer, which has been supporting artisan cheese makers since 1797. This year sees the addition of traditional Pots of Cheese and a Trio of Confits, from £3.95 each. Meanwhile, festive hampers start at £50 for a selection of chutneys, pickled onions, mince pies and cheeses. Visit paxtonandwhitfield.co.uk. Last orders for Christmas, 16 December.

Chococo
Chococo’s festive-inspired treats are handmade in Purbeck using fine chocolate from the Caribbean, Madagascar and Venezuela, mixed with local produce, such as Dorset cream. This year’s offerings include Advent calendars, angels, reindeer, chocolate hampers and selection boxes, with new flavours such as Black Crow vodka and Dorset Blue Vinny Cheese. Visit chococo.co.uk. Last orders for Christmas, 18 December.

Le Cordon Bleu
Items carefully selected by Le Cordon Bleu chefs to please a range of palates, from the occasional cook to the experienced gourmet, can be bought individually or as prepared sets, so you can tailor make your own hamper. Choices include oils and vinegars, jams, teas and kitchen accessories, such as the iconic apron, £20, with the Le Cordon Bleu logo for the serious chef. Visit cordonbleu-boutique.com. Last orders for Christmas, 13 December.

Carluccio’s
This year’s festive range of artisan Italian products is inspired by Bologna’s warm red colours, porticos and towers. The gift box II Massimo, £65, includes prosecco, egg fettucine pasta, wild boar ragù, Sicilian extra virgin olive oil, orecchiette durum wheat pasta, tomato, chilli and basil sauce, cantucci biscuits, gianduiaotti, panettone, chocolate-coated coffee beans and a chocolate coin. Visit carluccios.com. Last orders for Christmas, 19 December.