

ASH PARISH GARDEN CLUB OFFICERS

OFFICE	OFFICERS	TEL NO
Chairman	Mr J Poole "MEADCOTT" Badshot Lea Rd	01252 319621
Secretary	Mrs. B Ames 97 Longacre, Ash	01252 686303
Treasurer	Mr. Ian Chant 54 Aldershot Road, Church Crookham	07850 498544
Show Secretary	Mrs. B Winton 2 Elm Hill, Normandy	01252 333756
Social Secretary	Mrs. H Chant 54 Aldershot Road, Church Crookham	07754 888994
Mag Editor	Mr. Brian Perry 9 Drake Avenue Mytchett	01252 542341
Prog Secretary	Sue Goodchild	

ASH PARISH GARDEN CLUB OFFICERS	1
R.H.S. LONDON AND WISLEY	1
EDITORS NOTES	2
GARDENING CALENDAR OCTOBER	2
THIS MONTHS RECIPE	3
EASTERN PROMISE.....	4
GRASSLAND AND VERGES	6
BERRY SEASON STARTS NOW.....	6
AUTUMN SHOW	8

R.H.S. LONDON AND WISLEY

We are affiliated to the RHS who's benefits include competitive insurance cover, free gardening advice, a free group visit to an RHS garden, (54 members to visit Wisley club trip in Summer) access to medals (Banksian medal) and show stationery and a free monthly copy of The Garden magazine (see Brenda Winton if you wish to view). Our membership number is 10564709.

EDITORS NOTES

Brian –Stories to ernestperry33@gmail.com hard copy to Chris

GARDENING CALENDAR OCTOBER

October is the time to start tidying up and preparing for winter in earnest, while still enjoying the harvest.

Harvest

If you have apple or pear trees, now is the time to pick the fruit.

Protect

Move any tender plants, including houseplants, into a conservatory or greenhouse – don't forget to check that any heaters you have are working properly.

Container gardeners should remove any drip trays and raise terracotta patio pots with bricks or special pot feet (from garden centres) so they don't sit in water over winter and crack when it freezes. This is also the time to stop all feeding, as your plants are slowing down for the winter.

Plant

Now is the time to plant up your spring bulbs, excluding tulips, which should be planted up in November.

Tidy

Fallen leaves are an important natural resource, so don't simply discard them: clear up fallen leaves into black bin bags or create a separate pile next to the compost heap to make leaf mould ready for next October's soil conditioning.

Continue planting spring bulbs, but leave tulips until next month

THIS MONTHS RECIPE**ITALIAN BAKED FISH**

Serves 6

Preparation time: 15 mins Cooking time: 40 mins

YOU WILL NEED

25g unsalted butter

1 large onion, finely sliced

2 cloves garlic, finely sliced

600g floury potatoes such as King Edward, skin on, cut into 2cm pieces

6 plum tomatoes, roughly chopped

200ml dry white wine

200ml Fish Stock

1/2 x 200g tub Cracked Olives, drained

1 kg cod fillets, (or other firm white fish), cut into 6 equal pieces

½ x 20g pack fresh flat-leaf parsley, roughly chopped

TO DO

Preheat the oven to 200°C, gas mark 6

Melt the butter in a large flameproof roasting tin over the hob and cook the onion for a few minutes until beginning to soften. Add the garlic and potatoes and mix well with the onions.

Stir in the tomatoes and, over a high heat, add the wine and bubble rapidly until reduced by half.

Pour in the fish stock, add the olives and stir together well. Roast in the oven for 20–25 minutes, or until the potatoes are tender and the tomatoes have softened.

Add the fish to the tin, nestling it among the potatoes and tomatoes.

Scatter with the parsley and serve immediately from the tin, with green beans and some warmed crusty bread such as Focaccia.

Spoon over some of the cooking juices and season lightly. Return to the oven and cook for a further 7–10 minutes, until the fish is just cooked through.

EASTERN PROMISE

DAVID WHEELER

Perovskia. I imagine him striding across the pages of an epic Russian novel, radiantly uniformed, high-booted, much bemedalled, sporting showy epaulettes, sashes a-plenty, sabre tip rattling against spurs.

But no. My perovskia is a plant - more subtly uniformed than our fictional bogatyr - upon which, in the popular and easily sourced variety 'Blue Spire', myriad small, long-lasting, late-summer pale lavender flowers appear among aromatic, ghostly grey leaves, borne on similarly-hued airy, semi-woody stems.

Its common name is Russian sage, botanically known as *Perovskia atriplicifolia* until being re-classified in 2017 as *Salvia yangii*. But it's not from Russia. It emanates from south-western and central Asia. So why the misleading vernacular moniker?

One theory suggests a plant was given by a Russian botanist to honour the Imperial Russian general and statesman Vasily Perovski (1794-1857). Why? I don't know. Elsewhere, I've read that it was first described by eminent English botanist George Bentham, based on a specimen collected by British doctor/naturalist William Griffith in Afghanistan in 1848.

Regardless of such trivia, Russian sage is bone hardy and among my mid-to late-summer indispensables. It's free-flowering, self-seeds agreeably and is untroublesome, although its tap root has been known here to break through terracotta pots. Hence I prefer it in open ground (as poor as you like) among ornamental grasses where, at this time of the year, it bestows an enchanting, gauzy *quelque chose* to a kaleidoscopic assembly of feathery seedheads, burnished bronze, buff, manila and fawn.

The sapphire heads of late-flowering agapanthus further enrich the scene; cerulean Michaelmas daisies too, and indigo gentians...

Of the latter my choice is the willow gentian, *Gentiana asclepiadea*, a robust perennial up to 3ft tall and across, with stems pleasingly arching under massed, cobalt-blue trumpets.

In a previous garden, I had them spectacularly interwoven among the remains of earlier-flowering herbaceous peonies. By now, they sport jovial seedheads reminiscent of a court jester's headgear, as their foliage mutates to hues of old Bordeaux.

And should your venerable peony clumps have adopted a bloated, Falstaffian spread, you might consider splitting and replanting them. If so, now's the time. Give the divisions a deep, well-loosened new planting hole to allow for vigorous new root growth, and remember to replant the pieces no deeper than their previous depth. Peony roots like to burrow deeply; surface stem buds require no more than a thin covering.

September only hints at autumn's forthcoming gala of blistering foliar colour. We can wait. Flowers continue to rule. Dahlias, chrysanthemums, heleniums, clematis, the aforementioned Michaelmas daisies (asters), nerines, crocosmias...

And, of course, the perovskia's multitudinous salvia cousins, boasting towering spires of magenta, purple and (in *S. involucrata* 'Boutin') fluorescent pink, by now reaching to the shoulders of a 6ft grown-up. It's the blues, though, that do it for me. The most covetable is the inky *S. guaranitica* in such named varieties as 'Black and Blue', 'Souper Trouper', 'Blue Enigma' or - paler - the alluringly named 'Argentinian Skies'.

Unlike our phoney Russian hero, these Latino sages (from Mexico and Central America) need some winter protection against our cold. A mound of straw, leaf mould or wood chips over the crowns should give enough protection in our milder regions. Elsewhere, if doubtful of winter survival, take cuttings of flowerless shoots now and cosset them until Whitsuntide next. Pictorial satisfaction guaranteed.

GRASSLAND AND VERGES

PERFORATE ST JOHN'S WORT

Hypericum perforatum

This is the commonest species of St John's wort, especially on basic soils. It is a tall, straight herb between 30 and 90cm high, flowering from June to September.

The stem is smooth but with a raised ridge on either side, best detected by touch. The leaves are opposite, each pair alternating in direction up the stem, and are covered by glandular dots which are translucent and give the leaf a perforated appearance, as if covered by pin-holes, when held up to the light. The flowers are smoky golden-yellow, five petalled, dotted with black along the edge and about 2cm across. The Saint John referred to in the name is John the Baptist; the plant played an integral part in celebrations of the Saint's day (24th June).

COMMON MILKWORT *Polygala vulgaris* Milkwort flowers shine like sapphires among summer pastures but the colour is variable – usually blue, sometimes pink, even white. The individual flowers are unusually shaped with three small outer sepals, two large deeply coloured sepals and three small petals fused into a whitish fringed tube. These are produced on an inflorescence woven or trailing among other herbs or grasses. The stem is between 10 and 30cm long, woody at the base, with lance-shaped leaves up to 35cm long, the biggest near to the tip. This is one of the favourite flowers of those country people who spend much of their time out of doors and have the opportunity to appreciate beauty in the min

BERRY SEASON STARTS NOW

Cut back, plant anew and you'll be set for both winter and next summer
CIAR BYRNE

EVEN in late October, there are still a few red raspberries clinging to our bushes - perfect for a snack. From next month until the end of March, you can plant raspberries bare-root. Autumn is the best time to give them a chance to settle in.

Raspberries prefer moist, but well-drained, slightly acidic soil. Once planted, they need support. Construct a frame for them to grow against, with horizontal wires suspended between vertical poles to tie in the fruiting canes.

Cut back summer fruiting raspberries as soon as they have finished cropping, removing the old canes and tying new ones to the support. Cut autumn fruited down to the ground at the end of winter.

BARE BEAUTY

RASPBERRIES are members of the Rubus family, of which there are many different species - some grown for their fruit, others for their flowers and foliage. Now is also the time to plant these in your garden.

They are adaptable to many soil conditions, provide good ground cover and grow both in full sun and shade. They also have tough, woody root systems which are ideal for stabilising fragile soil on slopes. Blackberries are a Rubus that has been growing in the wild in Europe, Asia and the Americas for thousands of years. Loch Ness is a thornless variety and you can also get compact culti-vars for growing in pots. Opal and Little Black Prince are both good low-growing brambles suitable for containers.

BERRY BOLD

LOGANBERRIES are a hybrid of the North American blackberry and the European raspberry, accidentally created in 1881 by Californian horticulturist James Harvey Logan. The plant resembles the blackberry but with dark red fruit.

Tayberries are another cross of the two, patented in 1979 and named after Scotland's River Tay. The fruit is larger and sweeter than either the loganberry or raspberry.

The thornless boysenberry was created in the US in the 1920s by Rudolph Boysen and is a cross between raspberries, blackberries, loganberries and the American dewberry.

Blackberries and hybrid berries can also be planted from November and throughout the winter months. Choose a sunny, sheltered spot and, once in,

cut down to 20cm above ground and train up a support or fence for maximum productivity. Prune every year after fruiting.

The Chinese bramble (*Rubus tricolor*) can be used as evergreen ground cover in tricky spots where nothing else will grow. It has glossy dark green foliage and produces white flowers in summer, followed by edible red fruit. Called the Creeping Raspberry, *Rubus microphyllus Variegatus* is grown for its attractive white and pink leaves.

Rubus cockburnianus, which is native to the UK, is grown for its slender, arching stems that glow white in winter.

Salmonberry (*Rubus spectabilis*) is grown as an early-flowering shrub. Olympic Double is a variety that bears pinkish-purple rose-like blooms in mid-spring. Thimbleberry (*Rubus parviflorus Flore Pleno*) has large double white flowers and maple-shaped leaves.

AUTUMN SHOW

At last month's Autumn show judged entirely by Belinda Allen was not its over flowing traditional self, she told us that all through the year the numbers of plant entries at all of her shows had gone down. However we all did our best which did include good handicraft and culinary exhibits, but two of our members were unsure about the class for ginger cake.

I'm afraid that I can't tell you the source of recipe we used but I was able to get these comments from Ann Poole who got second place - I usually enter the garden club show but had very little time this year in the way of flowers so thought I would attempt to make a cake. I followed the ginger cake recipe exactly which said cook for one and a half hours which I thought was rather a long time for a seven inch tin but I intended to follow it as I am not the best cake cook. I lost my nerve and took it out of the oven after one hour, it was well over cooked but I still decided to enter it.

Mandy Howell made the other entry for this class (which got 1st) and she told me she had taken it out after three quarters of an hour and she still thought it was overcooked.

Belinda who normally only judges flowers, fruit, plants and vegetables was happy to fill in for a domestic judge. As it happens she told me she is a fan of ginger cake and often makes it for herself, her recipe actually has 50mins for cooking time but when she made her first one the finished cake was soggy in the middle so she now cooks it for 70mins.

Belinda said it certainly tasted like ginger cake but drier than the one she makes, perhaps Ann and Mandy could let us know how it tasted when they had it for tea ?

Best Dahlia	Hazel Chant
Best Exhibit FFV	Hazel Chant
Most Points FFV	87pts Hazel Chant, 35pts Ann Poole, 17 Maggie Neate
Best Pot Plant	Hazel Chant
Best Fuchsia	Hazel Chant
Most Points Fruit	10pts Ann Poole, 4pts Hazel Chant
Most Points Veg	19pts Hazel Chant, 5pts Ann Poole, 4pts Mandy Howell
Top Vase	Hazel Chant
Floral	5pts Ann Poole, 4pts Muriel Brodrick
Judges Favorite (Floral)	Ann Poole
Cookery	15pts Ann Poole, 5pts Maggie Neate, 5pts Hazel Chant
Best Exhibit (Cookery)	Maggie Neate
Handicraft	18pts Maggie Neate, 16pts Hazel Chant, 13pts John Poole
Best Exhibit (Handicraft)	Adrienne Evans
Most Points (whole show)	108pts Hazel Chant, 40pts Maggie Neate, 38pts Ann Poole