

**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
DATES FOR YOUR DIARY.....	2
GARDENING CALENDAR MAY .....	2
THIS MONTHS RECIPE .....	3
WOODS AND HEDGES.....	4
ASPARAGUS TIPS.....	5
WE WANT TO GO CARBON NEUTRAL .....	7
CHOOSING THE PERFECT ROSE.....	8
FILL YOUR GAPS WITH LOTS OF COLOUR.....	9
ASH PARISH GARDEN CLUB TRIPS 2025 .....	10

---

**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](mailto:ernestperry33@gmail.com) hard copy to Chris

---

## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

- ☒ RHS Malvern Spring Festival – 8-11 May
  - ☒ PLANT SALE 10th MAY
  - ☒ RHS Chelsea Flower Show – 20-24 May
  - ☒ OUT MEETING 2nd June
  - ☒ SUMMER SHOW 7th JULY
  - ☒ RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show – 1-6 July
  - ☒ RHS Flower Show Tatton Park – 16-20 July
  - ☒ AUTUMN SHOW 6th SEPTEMBER
- 

## **GARDENING CALENDAR MAY**

May is when the garden really begins to wake up – and it's the time to gear up for the summer.

Lawn maintenance

Now's the time for active lawn maintenance – and the last chance to to sow or lay new lawns until autumn without using sprinklers. The lawn will need weekly mowing from now until autumn, and the edges will need trimming.

### **Plant**

Pay special attention to tender vegetables and soft fruit. The end of the month is the best time to plant out tender courgettes and aubergines if you have a kitchen garden, as well as planting our summer bedding plants. May is also the time to re-pot pot-bound container plants in pots 7-10cm bigger than the current ones. Remember to tie in long climber shoots to their supports with soft string.



**Protect**

With insects becoming much more active as temperatures rise, be especially vigilant about pests. Pick off scarlet lily beetle from your lilies; their larvae rapidly defoliate plants. Watch for vine weevil in container plantings – irregular-shaped notches to leaf edges are tell-tale signs. The young grubs in the soil eat roots, and fast. Use natural nematodes to control them. at the end of the month.

Cover soft fruit bushes with netting to prevent birds eating the fruit, and if you are growing strawberries, put straw around or under them.

**Prune**

Don't forget about the plants that have just finished flowering; prune spring-flowering shrubs.

**Feed**

Feed spring bulbs with Growmore or blood, fish and bone.

Cover soft fruit bushes with netting to prevent birds eating the young fruit

---

**THIS MONTHS RECIPE****MUSHROOM AND LENTIL BOLOGNESE**

Serves: 4 | Prep: 5 mins | Cook: 1 hour

**You will need**

320g spaghetti

2 tbsp olive oil

300g chestnut mushrooms

1 pack soffritto (veg base mix)

1 tsp oregano

half a jar roasted garlic and mushroom paste

1 tin chopped tomatoes

500ml vegetable stock

200g lentils



1 garlic clove  
3 tbsp dried breadcrumbs  
half a pack of fresh parsley

**To do****PREPARATION**

Cook the lentils. Mince the garlic cloves. Finely chop the fresh parsley.

**METHOD**

Heat the 1 tbsp oil in a frying pan over a medium-high heat and pan-fry the mushrooms, tossing occasionally, until caramelised. Add the soffrito mix and oregano, turn down the heat and cook for a further 10 minutes, until the veg softens and becomes lightly caramelised. Add the roasted garlic and mushroom paste and cook for another 5 minutes. Add the chopped tomatoes and stock, then simmer for another 20 minutes. Add the lentils and cook until the sauce has reduced and thickened, so you have a rich ragu. Boil spaghetti in salted water as instructions & serve with bolognese.

---

**WOODS AND HEDGES**

**COMMON FIGWORT** *Scrophulana nodosa* Flowers that are pollinated by wasps are often purple/brown in colour. This is certainly the case with figwort which is almost exclusively visited by these insects, the flowering season coinciding with their peak abundance in mid-to late summer. The flowers, produced on a panicle or branched spike, are small (about a centimetre long), the corolla consisting of three green lower lobes and two purple upper lobes. These rounded upper lobes are a little larger in size and hood the open mouth of the corolla, hiding a quartet of stamens. Figwort is a perennial plant of damp woodland and hedgerows, growing to 80cm tall. The name is derived from the Latin fiats, meaning a haemorrhoid; the nodules and tubers of the roots



were prescribed by medieval medics who supported the doctrine of signatures ('if it looks like something it must have been put here by God to cure it'). The scientific name *Scrophularia* also comes from a signature cure, this time for the so-called King's Disease, scrofula.

### **COMMON COW-WHEAT**

*Melampyrum pratense*

The name is a derogatory one, referring to the apparent worthlessness of the plant and the old belief that if its seeds contaminated a corn harvest the resulting flour would turn black. Cow-wheat is an annual, and a semi-parasite, getting some of its nutrients from the roots of other plants. It is most characteristic of mixed woods on acidic soils and grows best along rides or in temporary clearings that have been created by coppicing.

The leaves are narrow and pointed, the stem simple or branching, growing to a height of 50cm but usually much less. The flowers, appearing between May and September, develop in opposite pairs from the bases of long spiky leaf bracts, but they always grow to face the same direction along the side of the stem. The individual flowers are about 15cm long, composed of a five-toothed calyx and a long, pale-yellow corolla. The mouth of the corolla is usually half-closed and the only insects powerful enough to force their way inside to collect nectar and effect pollination are bumblebees.

---

### **ASPARAGUS TIPS**

Growing asparagus takes time, but your patience will be rewarded with a crop tastier than shop produce, says Clare Wilson

THERE is much debate about the merits of eating fruit and vegetables that are available seasonally and grown locally, to reduce your carbon footprint. From a taste point of view, I would argue that there are at least two crops where locally grown produce has a real edge. These are strawberries, which have better taste and texture if you can get them fresh, and asparagus – in my humble opinion, the king of vegetables, but also known among growers as the most quickly perishable after harvesting.



For these reasons, it is well worth buying asparagus only during the brief period in spring when it is in season locally and trying to choose produce that looks as freshly harvested as possible. The stems should be firm to the touch and the buds at the end tightly closed.

An even surer way of getting a freshly picked crop is to grow your own. Asparagus is a great choice for beginner gardeners as it is so trouble-free. Unlike many other crops, it doesn't seem to appeal much to slugs or other pests, so I get a brief glut of asparagus every spring.

The only downside is that growing this plant is a long-term investment in good eating. After planting your asparagus "crowns" – an unpromising-looking bundle of roots – you have to wait two or three years before the plants can be harvested.

This is because they need to be strong enough to survive when you brutally snap off the emerging stems to feast on. After about two months of harvesting, you must leave the stems to regrow in peace so they can photosynthesise all summer and send energy down to the roots for next year. That is why the asparagus season is so short.

Once allowed to grow, the asparagus stems become huge, feathery fronds – far too tough to eat, but a decorative backdrop for flower beds. The growth stops in autumn and the stems should be cut down in winter, letting the cycle begin again.

As the UK asparagus season is fast approaching – by tradition, it starts on 23 April, St George's Day – I am eagerly monitoring my asparagus bed to spot the first shoots pushing up through the layer of mulch I treated the plants to over winter. The stems can grow as quickly as 10 centimetres a day, so I keep a close watch to make sure I don't miss out on an early harvest.

This high metabolic rate may be why asparagus is so perishable. Once picked, the stems metabolise their sugars in a vain effort to keep growing. There is also a rise in fibrous materials such as lignin, so less-fresh produce is tougher as well as less sweet and delicately flavoured. I am so keen to eat



my asparagus fresh that when I visit my allotment, I pick the stems just before I am about to leave and devour the massoonasl get home - briefly steamed and slathered in butter.

---

## **WE WANT TO GO CARBON NEUTRAL**

(I saw this question in Gardeners News and thought you might find the answer interesting)

We'd like to go 'carbon neutral' in our garden, but how would we go about it? We currently grow tomatoes in our greenhouse and raise all our summer bedding from seed.

Martin and Jenny Thornton, Richmond, Surrey

Heating a greenhouse to modest temperatures, even if well insulated, uses significant energy. If you want to reduce your footprint, you might want to re-think the way you garden.

A big step would be to dispense with annual bedding. That would greatly reduce energy consumption. You could still use your unheated greenhouse for growing protected summer crops and to extend the growing season. How about replacing the bedding with hardy perennials? There are so many to choose from and most are far easier to look after than annual bedding. Perennials provide beautiful colour and greenery almost all year. There's no need to re-plant them every spring and yet, with frequent fine tuning, you can keep your borders looking sensational from March to November.

Meanwhile, tomatoes will be fine in the greenhouse but if you sow them late, you could raise them without needing any artificial heat. And you could produce other excellent crops including peppers, cucumbers and melons all in a non-heated greenhouse.

That's not bad for a carbon-neutral garden! Stop heating your greenhouse to reduce your carbon footprint

---



## **CHOOSING THE PERFECT ROSE**

The experts at David Austin Roses, renowned the world over, suggest some of their best roses for your garden

Nothing captures the essence of a British summer quite like a rose in full bloom. With so many types to choose from, selecting the right rose for your garden is a journey of discovery, each variety adding its own charm, colour, and fragrance. Pay attention to your roses as they need plenty of deadheading to encourage more flowers –try Kent & Stowe's Eversharp Secateurs for a nice, clean cut. Here are some of the best to bring a little romance to your garden.

### Shrub roses

Olivia Rose Austin and Gabriel Oak : these compact beauties add a soft, classic feel to borders and make wonderful standalone accents. Olivia Rose Austin has lovely, soft pink flowers with a delicate, fruity fragrance that appear as early as May and keep going strong. For a bolder look, Gabriel Oak

adds a splash of colour with rich, deep pink blooms that are as captivating as they are fragrant.

### Rambling roses

The Albrighton Rambler: ramblers bring a bit of romance to the garden, with their arching stems that make them ideal for covering fences, arches, or pergolas.

The Albrighton Rambler is a showstopper, blooming in clusters of delicate blush-pink flowers – it has a subtle, sweet scent and a natural, carefree beauty.

### Climbing roses

The Generous Gardener and Claire Austin : climbing roses bring your garden to new heights, literally! They



are fantastic for walls, trellises, or any vertical feature. The Generous Gardener is a true gem, with its soft pink petals and a delightful, musk fragrance, creating a warm and welcoming atmosphere. For a touch of brightness, Claire Austin produces beautiful, creamy white blooms with a hint of lemon fragrance, perfect for illuminating shady corners or mixing with other flowers.

---

## **FILL YOUR GAPS WITH LOTS OF COLOUR**

Sowing summer-flowering annuals is a good way to fill those gaps and keep the garden colourful.

They don't need great conditions either – many annuals give their best displays on poor, infertile soil. This makes them perfect for adding colour to any newly-cleared parts of the border.

Before you start to sow into gaps, it's a good idea to dig out any troublesome perennial weeds such as couch grass, alkanet or nettles. Lift them out with a fork and remove any pieces of root.

Annual seeds are cheap and easy to sow so why not break with tradition and choose something that you haven't grown before? They might surprise you and you could find a new 'favourite plant' for your garden!

### **What to sow**

Annuals are often thought of as airy ethereal plants but some have real architectural qualities such as large-leaved castor oil plants (*Ricinus communis*), smoky blue-purple cerinthe and the tall, exotic looking spider flowers (*cleome*).

Californian poppies, marigolds, nigella and cornflowers thrive on poor soil in a sunny position and the common nasturtium can be brash or sophisticated, scrambling or neat, depending on which seed strain you choose to include.



Plant old-fashioned annuals such as larkspur, godetia and what was Clarkia elegans but is now included in the godetia family, although it is often still listed under its old name Cosmos make bushy plants that quickly look established whether you choose a tall variety such as white 'Purity' or more compact 'Sonata'.

Seed companies often make life easier by selling mixes of annuals.

Thomson & Morgan have an Easy Annual Fairy Mixed that is perfect if you are not sure what to sow. Lobelia and Lobularia maritima (sweet alyssum) make a traditional edging for the front of a border.

---

## ASH PARISH GARDEN CLUB TRIPS 2025

**Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2025.** Visit Shere Open Gardens, Shere GU5 9JA

<https://www.shereopengardens.co.uk/>

Leave Victoria Hall at 1pm returning 6pm approx.. Cost £16 include both travel and entrance fees Refreshments are available. £5 deposit secures a place. Details of paying below

**Sunday 13th July 2025** . Visit RHS Wisley

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/gardens/wisley>

Leave Victoria Hall at 1pm returning 5pm approx.. Cost £6 if you travel on bus, FREE if you use your own transport. Meet at entrance to collect your tickets at 1:30pm .

If you want to go on any trip please see Ian at the rear of the Hall, or email him on [ian@chant.org.uk](mailto:ian@chant.org.uk) or telephone 07850 498544

payments can be done on line

Acc Name	Ash Parish Garden Club
Sort code	20-16-99
Acc Num	33110818



# Ash Parish Garden Club

# Plant Sale

At the Victoria Hall  
(Ash Hill Road, Ash Vale)

Alpines

Shrubs

Bedding Plants

Annuals

Perennials

Vegetables

Basket Plants

**Saturday 10th May**  
**10am - 1pm**

For further details or information contact  
Brenda Winton on 01252 318998