

**ASH PARISH GARDEN CLUB OFFICERS**

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**EDITORS NOTES**

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**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.

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**DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

- RHS Flower Show Cardiff – 13–15 April 2018
  - SPRING SHOW 7th APRIL
  - RHS Malvern Spring Festival – 10–13 May 2018.
  - PLANT SALE 12th MAY
  - RHS Chelsea Flower Show – 22–26 May 2018.
  - SUMMER SHOW 2nd JULY
  - RHS Chatsworth Flower Show – 6–10 June 2018.
  - RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show – 2–8 July 2018 (Preview 2 July)
  - RHS Flower Show Tatton Park – 18–22 July 2018.
  - AUTUMN SHOW 8th September
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**RHS AT CHATSWORTH HOUSE**

The magnificent parkland of Chatsworth House, Derbyshire, will be the setting for the new RHS Flower Show which will be taking place on 6–10 June 2018., will be held on the banks of the River Derwent amid views of the surrounding countryside and 'Capability' Brown landscape. The partnership between the Society and Chatsworth House Enterprises adds to the RHS calendar of events, complementing established major shows in London, Cardiff, Malvern, Chelsea, Hampton Court Palace and Tatton Park.

Sue Biggs, RHS Director General, said the Society was honoured to be part of this new annual event in surroundings rich in gardening heritage. "The spectacular home of the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire will give the event a dramatic and beautiful natural backdrop,' she said.

The Duke and Duchess said they are thrilled that Chatsworth was selected for the new show. "There is so much happening in the garden at Chatsworth and we very much hope the RHS Flower Show will encourage more garden lovers to come to see us,' said the Duke.

Historic yet contemporary

Show content will be the mix of designed gardens and floral marquees for which RHS Flower Shows are famous. Innovation and fresh ideas will be encouraged. 'It will be unlike anything we've done in previous years,' said Nick Mattingley, RHS Head of Shows. Designers will be challenged to draw on the inspiration of those that have gone before at Chatsworth - but to bring additional contemporary twists.

The show will be located on the site of a former parterre, so this may provide inspiration for designers and exhibitors. Influence may also come from Joseph Paxton, who built Chatsworth's Emperor Fountain and Great Conservatory, or James Paine, who built two of the garden's bridges.

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## **THIS MONTHS RECIPE**

### **St David's Day Dish Thursday 1st March**

(with apologies to the Welsh)

#### **You will need**

2 leeks  
1 pint of double cream  
3 large potatoes (or equivalent)  
salt and pepper  
6 oz grated cheddar  
tbls. Worcester sauce  
tsp. mustard powder

#### **To do**

Slice the leeks and cook in butter till soft.

Peel potatoes and cook until just done, then slice.

In a buttered gratin dish mix the potatoes and leeks, then pour over the cream.

In a separate bowl mix the cheese, mustard powder and Worcester sauce, season to taste.

Pour over the potatoes and leeks and bake 30-40 mins. at gas 6-7, 200°C, 400°F.

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## **WHY YOUR GARDEN SHOULD BE FUN & LIFE ENHANCING**

By Susie Hunt

It's not often you get the chance to hear garden design tips from someone who's at the very top of their profession. But the beautiful Whichford Pottery is gaining a well-

earned reputation for hosting the highest calibre of speakers who give up their time to talk about their passion for gardens and gardening.

Most recent was the flamboyant designer, and RHS judge, James Alexander-Sinclair - known to many of us as presenter and judge on the recent 'Great Chelsea Garden Challenge' - a TV reality show offering budding gardeners the chance to design a Chelsea Flower Show Garden.

Using real garden design projects to illustrate his do's and don'ts as well as his own unique brand of humour, he kept his audience enthralled and entertained - although he admits he stumbled upon gardening completely by accident.

'I probably became a gardener because I was unemployable in any other capacity', he says. 'I spent a lot of time lounging around smoking until my sister said 'for God's sake dig the garden'. Then I dug more gardens and pruned roses and so a love for gardening was born. My entire career was based on the presumption that if someone asks you a question about gardening it means they don't know the answer. Which means they'll believe anything you say!'

As many gardeners amongst us know, it can take its toll on the body, and James decided to move into garden design after his back started hurting aged 30 or so! From then on it was all about trial and error - using his own backyard to create a green space and 'giving it a go'. He's firmly of the view that there are basically four ingredients to garden design - and not a lot else!

### **1. The hard stuff!**

This includes things like walls, pots, fences, furniture. It also includes benches which James advises treating as something to look at - not to sit on! 'Buy something beautiful because you'll spend most of your time looking at it. The minute you sit down you notice weeds or pruning that needs doing and before you know it you're knee deep in plants again'.

### **2. The soft stuff!**

This is basically anything that grows. While admiring anyone who chooses to grow heritage varieties of fruit and veg, it comes with a cautionary word. 'I planted a heritage orchard for my wife in the millennium year and went for heritage fruit varieties- It made me realize why they're rare!! They had great green and white leaves but tasted terrible. Be warned!'

### **3. The wet stuff**

'Few of us have the equivalent of Capability Brown's vision and may have to opt for a slightly smaller water feature but whether you " have a lake, a stream, once-only water that comes through the garden and disappears - it's lovely in a garden.'

#### **4. Other people's stuff!**

Include the sky under this heading - it's the stuff that you don't own but you can see from your garden. The best gardens progress from the area nearest the house to that furthest away but don't forget to bring the wider view into your own garden. Make sure nature comes back to you. Be warned about large specimens though. The best place for a large tree is in someone else's garden!

So there you have it - garden design made simple by someone who knows what does and doesn't work! 'If you bear those four rules in mind - there is nothing else you need', James says.

As well as the 'stuff you should include in your garden design - there are some pretty basic principles on what to avoid - certainly if you adopt James's school of thought,

Builders! There should be an international treaty keeping them away from soil! However if you end up with a garden full of poor quality builders subsoil, work out what grows best in it - wild flowers thrive on terrible soil although they're high maintenance so stick to the adage that the best place for a wildflower garden -rather like the best place for large trees - is in someone else's garden!

Green walls. They're sold to us as environmentally sustainable when they're far from it because in order to survive they need irrigation. Green roofs are a different matter altogether.

Don't grow *Sanguisorba obtuse alba*. Grow any other variety of this wonderful plant - in fact grow all of them except this one because, despite the name, the flowers are only white in the way that over washed knickers are white!

Don't get over-sentimental about taking things out of a garden! 'It's always a hard decision to fell a tree but if a garden would work better without it, do it (Tree Preservation Orders excepting!). All garden design should be simple - the minute it becomes complicated it doesn't work so if your design isn't working -take something out of it!

Don't try to compete with a view. It doesn't matter how good a garden designer you are or how good a gardener you are, you will never be as good as nature so don't even try to compete. Do the 'stuff (see points 1 to 4) closer to the house so you don't lose the view.

Don't get hung up on having lots of winter interest. There's nothing wrong with anticipation - waiting for spring - and with it plant interest and colour to arrive.

Don't stress about what you can't control! I'm a big fan of controlled anarchy of planting - letting plants do what they want (up to a point). Also remember you have no control over the weather or wildlife so let them get on with it and stick to my four principles for successful garden design!

For me, the most valuable piece of advice - and the one which, as gardeners we all too often forget, is to really take the time to look at your garden. James says 'every day your garden changes and most of us only have room to grow a few plants so you must make them work for you. Suck the last juices from your garden; walk through it at least twice a day and don't beat yourself up about the weeding. No-one has ever been arrested for not weeding but remember if you pull weeds out when you see them, it's a lot easier than trying to tackle everything in one go! Don't let your garden become a chore. Shriek every time you go out into it- It must be fun and life enhancing.'

And with that firmly in mind, I'm off to look around my garden. If you hear a shriek - you'll know where it's come from!

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### **SHF SPRING TALK**

# **Sunday 4th March, 2018**

**- 2.30 pm start - We are delighted to have the company of**

## **TONY KIRKHAM**

**Head of the Arboretum at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew,**

**with his new talk**

# **'TREES – A CUT ABOVE THE REST'**

**NORMANDY VILLAGE HALL, GLAZIERS LANE, NORMANDY, GUILDFORD, GU3 2DT**

**Just off the main A 323 Guildford Aldershot road at Normandy, turn into Glaziers Lane, 500 yds on left (Manor Fruit Farm)**

**Advance Tickets (to include tea and biscuits) £7.50 for members, £10 for visitors, available from SHF Secretary Janet Arm (address above). All tickets on the day will be £10 so order early!**

**Please make cheques payable to Surrey Horticultural Federation**

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**CLUB EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES**

– Please contact the number given for full details.

Club	Event	Contact
January 2018		
9th Brooklands	Talk by Mark Saunders, Head Gardener Fittleworth House	Barb. Royston 01932-569441
9th Worplesdon	Garden and plant photography, with Michael Sleigh.	Sheila Dyke 01483-481841
13th Hardy Plant Soc	Gilbert White the Gardener. D. Standing, Old Barn, Bookham	Sandra Hartley 01372-727715
18th Churt	The flora of Costa Rica, with Myra Johnson at Quinnettes	Anne Butler 07747-621118

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**CLUB FOCUS - PLANT HERITAGE SURREY GROUP**

“The best way to look after a plant is to give it away” is a philosophy true of all gardens. Plant Heritage – the overarching charity of the National Plant Collections® - began 40 years ago because nurserymen and women were worried that, as big garden centres became more popular, plants that could not be propagated commercially in their thousands would be lost to gardeners.

This could be because they are difficult to propagate (such as Daphne), or need specialist conditions (such as Nerine), or are sold in small numbers (too many examples to mention here) . . .

That is where Plant Heritage comes in. The garden plants you enjoy today (or might have loved in years past) may not be around in a few years’ time, which is why it is important that we grow plants and share them by propagating and distributing them.

- The Surrey group was established in 1981 and Graham Stuart Thomas was our first speaker. We hold monthly talks from September to April in Cobham. Our speakers cover many subjects from plant families, planting and gardening schemes, gardening history to subjects such as pruning, DNA and changing plant names, soil, genetic modification and climate change. We keep the range as wide as possible.
- In summer we put on events that include visits to gardens or nurseries, some of which are rarely open to the public.
- We also visit and assist our National Collection Holders (all the information about these is on our website) by helping with repotting their bulbs or pruning, for instance. They ask, and we try to lend a hand. All the information on these days is printed in the two newsletters we publish each year.

- We usually hold three plant fairs a year between May and September. The information about these is on our website and on our Facebook page. We have a members' stall, selling plants propagated at our regular propagation days and we invite specialist nurseries to take part too.
- Our summer social is held at the home of one of our members, who opens his or her garden to us. This is a relaxed occasion with a chance to explore someone else's garden and talk to fellow members.
- Two of the important benefits of belonging to PH are the Plant Exchange and Plant Guardian scheme. If you like free plants, particularly ones that are rare or hard to find, the Plant Exchange is a national plant swap. Each year a list is published of garden plants being offered or sought by members. You do not have to put a plant into the Exchange to be able to request one and the intention is to focus on plants that are not widely available in garden centres or nurseries. The Plant Guardian scheme allows any member to become actively involved in conservation by registering a plant that appears less than twice in The RHS Plant Finder. This way, we have a record of plants that are rare in cultivation but can still be propagated and are safe for future generations.

Many thanks to Clare Hogan for this report. Contact:- [www.plantheritage.org.uk](http://www.plantheritage.org.uk)

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## **GARDENING CALENDAR JANUARY**

### Flower garden

Sweet peas - Pinch out the tips of seedlings raised from autumn sowings to encourage side shoots to form and make bushy plants.

Roses - Continue planting bare-rooted roses. Avoid planting new roses where old ones have been removed, unless the soil is replaced and conditioned, to avoid diseases.

Snow warning - Be ready to brush snow from evergreen shrubs and conifers, as the weight can weigh down and damage their branches.

Containers - Stand planted patio pots up on feet to improve drainage and prevent water logging. Protect pots in very cold spells by moving them to a sheltered position.

Cutting back - Many perennials can be cut back hard now, removing old growth to make room for new shoots that grow up in spring. *Stachys byzantina* 'Silver Carpet' benefits from hard pruning, cutting away all stems at ground level.

### Greenhouse

Hippeastrum - Plant bulbs in free-draining compost and place in a warm position, such as a shelf over a radiator. This will encourage strong root development and flowering. Never leave them standing in water.



Peaches - Move pot-grown peaches and nectarines under cover for winter. An unheated greenhouse is ideal. Keeping rain off these fruit trees prevents the spread of spores of peach leaf curl disease. It also protects their early flowers from frost.

Gutters and butts - Wash down the greenhouse roof to remove grime and let in more light. Clean out the gutters, and empty and clean water-butts.

Crocus - Remove pots of crocus from their plunge beds once leaf shoots begin to show. Wash old compost off their pots, then place them in the cold greenhouse to develop flowers.

### Kitchen garden

Digging - Dig over bare areas, forking in plenty of compost or rotted manure. If conditions are very wet, cover an area with polythene sheet to keep the rain off, and dig once the soil has dried out.

Apple trees - On trained forms of apple tree, such as espaliers and cordons, side shoots shortened in summer can be reduced in length now to about three buds. Any new shoots that have grown to extend the framework can be tied in to their supports.

Bean trench - Prepare a bean trench on the site where you're planning to grow your runner beans next summer. Take out a deep trench and fill with the rotted contents of your compost bin. Continue adding kitchen waste during the winter. Cover with soil in late spring, then sow or plant out your beans on top.

Winter washes - Where pests such as woolly aphid have been a severe problem on apple trees, spray now with a tar oil winter wash. Take care not to splash any on surrounding green plants or paving.

Early rhubarb - Place buckets or forcing jars over dormant clumps of rhubarb to encourage stems to form for a delicious early harvest.

New fruit - Continue planting new fruit trees and bushes. Bare-rooted plants, available by mail-order from specialist fruit growers, offer the best value. Raspberries and cane fruits can also be planted now.

Currants - Shorten sideshoots on red and white currants to just one bud. Also remove any old stems crowding the centre of the bush.

Seed potatoes - Place your order for seed potatoes now. These will be delivered later in the winter, when they can be set to form shoots before planting out.

### General care

Bulb care - Check bulbs, corms and tubers in store for signs of rot or deterioration. Remove diseased ones and sprinkle others with sulphur powder to prevent disease attack.

Water features - Removing pumps and filters from ponds and water features helps prevent them being damaged by freezing water during the winter. Keep ponds covered with netting to prevent fallen leaves blowing in.

Houseplants - Keep winter-flowering houseplants in a cool position in good light to extend their flowering season, avoiding draughts or any dry hot spots, such as on a table by a fire or radiator. Move plants from cold windowsills at night and bring them into the centre of the room.

Move shrubs - This is a good time to move shrubs that are growing in the wrong place or those that have outgrown their position. Aim to lift established plants with as large a root ball as possible. Prepare the soil in the new planting hole well, digging compost deeply into it. Firm the soil around the transplanted shrub, and provide a stake for support if required. Water in well and mulch with bark or compost. It may be necessary to prune out a few shoots from very large transplanted shrubs, as the damaged root system may not be able to support them.

Mail-order - Write off for seed catalogues and place orders.

Rake leaves - Finish raking up fallen leaves, especially those collected under hedges and shrubs. These offer protection to slugs and snails over winter months, so all leaves should be cleared away. Also clear gutters which can get clogged up and put all the leaves in a leaf bin to rot down.

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“There now – be brave! Real gardeners don’t cry when they stick the pitchfork through their foot...”