

ASH PARISH GARDEN CLUB OFFICERS

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EDITORS NOTES

Brian -

Stories to ernestperry33@gmail.com hard copy to Chris

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.

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 CAMPAIGN FOR SCHOOL GARDENING

Gardening project takes pupils on a journey to outer space

The RHS Campaign for School Gardening has partnered with the UK Space Agency to embark on an innovative educational project, to give around half a million children the chance to learn how investment in human space exploration contributes to our knowledge of life on Earth.

Rocket Science will involve 2kg of rocket seeds sent to the International Space Station as part of British ESA astronaut Tim Peake's six-month Principia mission. After several months on board, orbiting the planet at 17,000mph, the seeds will be returned to Earth and sent to thousands of UK schools, alongside a batch of seeds of the same cultivars that have stayed on Earth. Over the following months pupils will grow and compare the seeds as they embark on a voyage of discovery to see whether we can sustain human life in space through the production of our own food. The results of the nationwide citizen science experiment will then be analyzed to discover whether space travel has impacted on the growth of the seeds.

British ESA astronaut Tim Peake said, "I hope that Rocket Science will inspire the next generation to think scientifically, and to consider the fulfilling careers in STEM [Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths]."

Minister for Universities and Science Jo Johnson said, "Britain's space industry is going from strength to strength, and for this to continue it's right we inspire the next generation of scientists and engineers. He hopes that by giving thousands of schoolchildren the opportunity to play a part in Tim's mission to the International Space Station, while learning new skills in a fun and unique way."

THIS MONTHS RECIPE

You will need

8 small leeks white only
8 slices cooked ham
100g cheddar grated
2tbsp Dijon mustard
6tbsp creme friche

To do

Heat oven to 200C/fan180C/gas 6. Cook the leeks in a pan of boiling salted water for 4-5 mins or until just tender. Drain and cool under a cold tap to stop them from cooking any further, then drain again well and pat dry on kitchen paper.

Wrap each leek in a slice of ham, then arrange, side-by-side, in a large baking dish. Mix the cheddar in a bowl with the Dijon mustard and crème fraîche, until well combined. Season to taste. Spread over the leeks, then bake for 15-20 mins until bubbling and golden brown. Serve at once with plenty of crusty bread to mop up the juices.

WALES NATIONAL VEGETABLE

Lovely leeks

Unlike the majority of words in English, which come from French or Latin, the word 'leek' is firmly Germanic in origin. Leeks are tauch in German and look in Dutch, while the Danish and Swedish terms, leg and lok, refer to the onion. Along with onions, garlic, chives and shallots, leeks form the Allium family.

Alliums are found in every corner of the world. Their pungent flavours have arguably had more impact on cooking than any other vegetable. Evidence of Allium

consumption goes back at least 7,000 years and leeks have been around for as long as histories have been kept. Leeks are mentioned in the Bible - "We remember the fish in Egypt at no cost - also the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic" (Numbers 11:5) - and the Greeks and Romans considered them beneficial for the throat.

The philosopher Aristotle asked: "Why do leeks contribute to loudness of voice (for we find this so even with partridges)?" Evidently, ancient Greek partridges ate a lot of leeks, as did Roman emperor Nero, believing they would improve his singing voice. His habit earned him the nickname Porrhaphagus - leek eater. Either We Romans or Phoenician traders first brought the leek to British shores, where it thrived, surviving even the harshest frosts and providing sustenance through long northerly winters.

In Wales, the leek became a national symbol. Long associated with Saint David, perhaps due to its reported healing properties, its link to Welsh national identity came when, between AD620 and 640, King Cadwallader and his troops wore leeks in their hats to identify themselves from their Saxon enemy. The leek became a symbol of their victory. Welsh maidens placed leeks under their pillows on Saint David's Day to catch a glimpse of their future husbands in their dreams, and the greatly feared Welsh archers wore green and white in homage to it. In 1985, some of the first £1 coins to be minted bore a leek alongside the Welsh national motto; Pleidiol wyf I'm gwlad - *I am true to my country'.

Elsewhere, the leek has more humble associations (though there is a famous leek fight in Shakespeare's Henry V). and in French, poireau is, somewhat inexplicable, a synonym for idiocy. Agatha Christie named Poirot, her Belgian detective, for this association and considered him a "detestable, bombastic, ego-centric little creep". Her public, however, loved him, and like the vegetable he is named for, came to be cherished the world over.

APGC TRIPS 2018

Sunday 13th May RHS Malven Spring Show. Cost £38 each (transport and Entry Fees) Leave Hall at 8:30am, returning approx 6:30pm. Non Returnable Deposit £20 to be paid by 2nd April. <https://www.rhs.org.uk/shows-events/malvern-spring-festival/about-the-rhs-malvern-spring-festival>

Sunday 8th July East Lambrook Manor Gardens. Cost £24 each (transport and Entry Fees) Leave Hall at 9am, returning approx 6pm. Non Returnable Deposit £10. <http://www.eastlambrook.com/pages/>

Saturday 18th August Great Dixter. Cost £25 each (transport and Entry Fees) Leave Hall at 9:30am, returning approx 6pm. Non Returnable Deposit £10. <https://www.greatdixter.co.uk/>

On all the above trips a comfort break will be made in both directions.

Sunday 9th September RHS Wisley Gardens. Cost £4 each (for those using minibus only) Leave Hall at 1pm, returning approx 5pm. Free for those who meet us at Wisley at 1:30pm. <https://www.rhs.org.uk/gardens/wisley>

Friday 23rd June to Monday 26th June. Our 4 day trip to Lynton, N Devon. We still have 1 single person vacancy. Cost £225 includes 3 night Dinner, Bed & Breakfast, Transport and Entry fees to all gardens.

GARDENING CALENDAR MARCH

Top 10 jobs this month

- 1 Protect new spring shoots from slugs
- 2 Plant shallots, onion sets and early potatoes
- 3 Plant summer-flowering bulbs
- 4 Lift and divide overgrown clumps of perennials
- 5 Top dress containers with fresh compost
- 6 Mow the lawn on dry days (if needed)
- 7 Cut back *Cornus* (dogwood) and *Salix* (willow) grown for colourful winter stems
- 8 Hoe and mulch weeds to keep them under control early
- 9 Start feeding fish and using the pond fountain; remove pond heaters
- 10 Prune bush and climbing roses

Flowers

Sowing and planting

Hardy annuals can be sown in pots or modules to provide colour in the garden. In mild areas you can sow directly outside. Marking out irregularly shaped seedbeds and broadcasting drifts of different seed gives a more natural look.

Sweet peas can be sown outside this month. Place autumn-sown sweet peas in a sunny position, perhaps on a high shelf in the greenhouse that gets plenty of light. Sow summer bedding plants in a heated propagator or under glass.

Early spring is an ideal time to plant herbaceous perennials, including *Geranium*, *Astrantia* and Oriental poppies.

Plant summer-flowering bulbs. Prepare the soil first, to ensure that drainage is sufficient to prevent the bulbs rotting. *Anemone coronaria* tubers need particularly well-drained soils.

Plan a continuous crop of cut flowers for this summer. Perennials such as delphiniums and annuals can be grown to produce a useful and beautiful display. When space becomes available in the greenhouse, pot up cuttings of tender

perennials taken last summer and at the beginning of this year. Bulk up plant numbers by taking more cuttings from the largest of the new plants.

Indoor forced bulbs that were in the house for winter displays, but which have now finished flowering, can now be planted into the garden, taking care not to disturb the roots.

Cutting back, pruning and dividing

Cut back ornamental grasses and other perennials left for winter interest, if you have not already done so. Even if they still look good, you need to make way for the new growth.

Cut off old leaves of hellebores that produce flowers from ground level (including *Helleborus x hybridus* and *H. niger* - left) to expose the flowers and remove possible foliar diseases such as hellebore leaf spot.

Divide and/or plant bulbs-in-the-green, such as snowdrops (*Galanthus*) and winter aconites (*Eranthis hyemalis*), if not done last month.

Divide clumps of herbaceous perennials that you want to propagate, those that have become too large for their allotted space, and those that are flowering poorly or have lost their shape.

Divide hostas before they come into leaf.

Divide hellebores and polyanthus-type primulas after flowering.

Propagation

Propagate more dahlias from tubers. Pot them up in multi-purpose compost so that the old stalk is just above the surface. Water and place in a warm, light position or in a propagator. Once the fresh shoots have grown to 7.5-10cm (3-4in), cut them off carefully with a knife. Dust the ends with hormone rooting power and push them into a pot containing cuttings compost. Place back in a propagator or plastic bag until roots appear.

Perennials that are showing new shoots from the crown can be propagated via basal stem cuttings. Shoots 7.5-10cm (3-4in) high are cut from the parent plant with a sharp knife. Sometimes a piece of root can be taken with the cutting (which speeds establishment), but stems can be cut without root, and then dipped in hormone rooting powder before striking into growing medium, as for softwood cuttings.

General maintenance

Continue to deadhead winter-flowering pansies and other winter bedding. Pansies will carry on into the spring and even to early summer, if attended to frequently.

Deadhead the flowers of *Narcissus* (daffodils) as they fade, but allow the foliage to die down naturally.

Herbaceous perennials infested with couch grass and other perennial weeds should be lifted so the roots of the weeds can be removed. Improve the soil by digging in organic matter before replanting.

Clear up weedy beds before mulching. Lighter soils can be mulched now, but heavier soils are best left until March, when the soil is warmer. Mulching with a deep layer of organic matter helps to condition the soil, suppress weed growth, insulate plant roots from temperature fluctuations, and conserve soil moisture during the summer.

Bulbs coming up in the rock garden or in containers may benefit from overhead protection from the rain. A sheet of glass or perspex placed on piles of bricks will do the job.

Top dress spring-flowering alpines with grit or gravel to show off the plants and to help prevent stem rots. Mulch may need replacing after weed removal.

Improve the drainage of heavy soils by working in lots of organic matter.

Perennials putting on plenty of growth may need support by the end of the month.

Check whether containers need watering. Even at this time of year, they can dry out.

Pots that are sheltered by eaves or balconies can miss out on any rainfall. If in

doubt, check the compost at a hand's depth to see if it feels dry. Aim to keep pots moist, not wet, and don't let them dry out.

Pots and tubs benefit from topping up with fresh John Innes compost. Old compost can be removed and replaced with new if there is not much room for topping up.

Some grit will also deter slugs.

Feed borders with a general-purpose fertiliser at the manufacturer's recommended rate.

It is best to get supports in early, so that the plants grow up through them, covering them discreetly. Adding rigid supports afterwards usually looks unattractive and results in bunched stems lacking sufficient ventilation. Criss-crossing strings from hidden or decorative posts work well, allowing stems to grow up in the gaps between strings.

In mild areas, you should remove winter coverings of fleece, straw, polythene etc, to prevent new shoots being damaged. In cold areas, you are best waiting until the risk of frost has passed.

Planning ahead

You may wish to get your sweet pea wigwam growing supports ready. In mild areas, you can transplant young plants to the feet of the wigwam, using a light twine to tie them in.

Pest and disease watch

Continue to protect new growth on lilies, delphiniums, hostas and any other plants affected, from slugs and snails.

Check autumn-sown sweet peas and apply mouse and slug controls if necessary.

Hellebore leaf spot can be a problem on old foliage of hellebores. Cutting back the old leaves should control the problem.

Aphids can multiply rapidly during mild spells. Remove early infestations by hand to prevent the problem getting out of hand. Protect sweet pea plants in particular, as they can get sweet pea viruses, which are transmitted by aphids and other sap-sucking insects.

Watch out for downy mildew and black spot on winter pansies. Remove any infected leaves and destroy badly affected plants.

Look out for rots (such as crown rot, *Sclerotinia*, delphinium black blotch, black root rot and antirrhinum rust).

Remove dead leaves from around the basal rosettes of alpine plants to prevent rotting.

Top dress spring-flowering alpines with grit or gravel to show off the plants and help prevent rotting around the neck.

Lawns

Turf can still be laid, provided the soil is not too wet or frozen. Work from planks, to avoid compacting the soil. Do not walk on newly laid turf, and leave it undisturbed for several weeks to allow the new roots to establish.

Newly-turfed areas can be mown with the blades set to the highest setting, as soon as the grass reaches 5cm (2in) in height.

Mow the established lawns if the weather is mild enough and the grass shows signs of growth. Ensure the first cut of the season is light, raising the blades 0.5cm (0.25in) higher than the usual cutting height.

Where lawns are to be grown from seed, prepare the ground for sowing by cultivating, levelling and then firming the soil. Doing this now will allow the soil to settle prior to sowing later in the month, or in April.

In late March apply a high nitrogen spring/summer lawn fertiliser to encourage good, strong growth to help the lawn recover after the winter.

Straighten lawn edges using a half-moon turf iron and a board, or use sand to mark out a curve, which can then be cut out with the iron.

Sow a wildflower meadow.

Troubleshooting

Disperse worm casts (left) with a hard brush once they have dried out.

Bare patches can be re-sown at the end of the month in mild areas.

Molehills continue to be problem in spring, as the creature tunnels in search of food. Traps are the most effective way to deal with this problem.

Fusarium patch, or snow mould, and algae may continue to be a problem. The best way of tackling these is to improve airflow and light over the lawn by pruning back any overhanging trees or shrubs. Alternatively it may be much easier in the long run to plant shade-tolerant ground cover plants instead.

CLUB EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

1st Aldershot Floral Design Demo: Spring is on its way, by Jo Richardson
for advise on visiting please call Dee Kelly 01252-350944

5th Ash Parish Italy from Seed to Plate, with Paolo Arrigo
Beverley Ames 01252-686303

5th Esher/Molesey The Grace and Favour Community Garden at West Horsley.
for advise on visiting please call Ann Beauchamp 0208-9791415

- 6th Jacobs Well Inspirational Gardens, with Mark Saunders
for advise on visiting please call Pam Lomax 01483-767225
- 6th Lightwater Heathers, with John Hall.
for advise on visiting please call Lynn Bull 01276-502497
- 6th Merrow How to have colour in the garden and vase, by Claire Brown
for advise on visiting please call Jenn. Bayley 01483-572781
- 7th Thursley Topical Tips and Ideas, with Ray Broughton
for advise on visiting please call Pat Clake 01252-706869
- 7th Witley Central London Parks, with Jim Buttress
for advise on visiting please call Gina Ellerton 01483-488460
- 8th Peaslake/Shere Birds in our garden with Roger Beck. Shere Village Hall.
for advise on visiting please call Scilla Roe 0790-155-4415
- 12th Elstead Tales from the Potting Shed, with Jean Griffin
for advise on visiting please call Alison Gravett 01252 703318
- 13th Brooklands Naturalistic planting with perennials and grasses. Kevin Hobbs for
advise on visiting please call Barb. Royston 01932-569441
- 13th Ewell Growing for the Kitchen, with Paul Patton
for advise on visiting please call Lynne Mason 0208-393-9257
- 13th Worplesdon Poisonous Plants, with Dr. Kathryn Harkup
for advise on visiting please call Sheila Dyke 01483-481841
- 14th Virginia Water Perennials in the Garden, with Mark Saunders
for advise on visiting please call Linda Gillham 01932-564834
- 14th Ewhurst First Rate Perennials, with Val Bourne. Sidney Scott Lecture
for advise on visiting please call Anne Dyball 01483-271812
- 14th Grayshott RHS, Past, present and Future, with Sue Biggs.
Tickets only! Ros. Henshall 01428-607879
- 14th Nat. Veg. Soc. Successional sowing/ no digging. Charles Dowding. E.Horsley for
advise on visiting please call Beth Otway 01483-420989
- 15th Bramshott/Liphook Bees and the Garden, with Michael Keith-Lucas
for advise on visiting please call Ann Haussauer 01428-723045
- 15th Headley Hants Horticulture Dealing with Climate Change, by Ray Broughton for
advise on visiting please call J.Howard-Duff 01428-714073
- 15th New Soc. Camberley Make more of your plants, by Sally Burr. Plant Sale for
advise on visiting please call Chris.Thompson 01252-837640
- 17th Hardy Plant Soc. Gardens of Sussex and Kent, by Nigel Phillips (after AGM) for
advise on visiting please call Sandra Hartley 01372-727715
- 18th Jacobs Well SPRING SHOW
for advise on visiting please call Pam Lomax 01483-767225
- 20th Banstead A Head Gardeners Year, Mark Saunders . Banstead Prep. School for
advise on visiting please call Diana Beck 01737-271243
- 21st Chiddingfold Growing Lavender, with Tim Butler, Alton Lavender Farm
for advise on visiting please call Georgia Lacey 01428-683120
- 21st Sandhurst Daffodil Show, then talk on Ponds, with Ray Broughton
for advise on visiting please call Chris Dresler 01420-768965

- 22nd Claygate Fuchsias, with Carol Gubler
for advise on visiting please call Marie Barltrop 01372-467888
- 22nd Frensham/Dockenfield Propagation the Phoenix Way, Marina Christopher
for advise on visiting please call Ruth Murphy 01252-793267
- 22nd North Warnborough Companion Planting, with Ray Broughton
for advise on visiting please call Pam Forey 01256-703412
- 24th Puttenham/Wan. SPRING SHOW 2.30 pm Markwick Hall
for advise on visiting please call Mag. Forwood 01483-813855
- 26th Bookham/Fetcham Fruit for the small garden, with Jim Arbury
for advise on visiting please call Anita Laycock 01372-750818
- 26th Ripley Preparing for your Show, by Barry Newman
for advise on visiting please call Liz Cooper 01372-458313
- 27th Milford The English Garden, with Chris Beardshaw
Ticket only. S. Miskimmin 01483-421509
- 27th Tilford Herbaceous Plants, with Tracey Bull
for advise on visiting please call Janet Arm 01252-783133
- 28th Leatherhead Spring Show and AGM Leatherhead Parish Hall 7.30 pm
for advise on visiting please call Euan Niven 01372-279079
- 31st Elstead SPRING SHOW 2.00-4.00 Village Hall
for advise on visiting please call Kathy Deaville 01252-702630



National Vegetable Society – Surrey
Wednesday 14th March 2018

“Successional Sowing & No Dig Gardening”

Speaker: Charles Dowding

(Teacher, author, appears on TV & radio & innovator of no dig gardening)

Main Hall, East Horsley Village Hall,
Kingston Avenue, East Horsley, KT24 6QT at 8pm

NVS Members Free, NVS Affiliated Society Members £1, Visitors £5.00,
RHS Students £2
