

Ash Parish Garden Club

www.ashparishgardenclub.org.uk



Monthly Newsletter Jan 2019

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

SPRING SHOW	6 April
PLANT SALE	11 May
RHS Malvern (spring)	9 - 12 May
RHS Chelsea	21 - 25 May
SUMMER SHOW	1 July
Gardeners World Live	13 - 16 June
RHS Hampton Court	1 - 7 July
RHS Tatton Park	17 - 21 July
AUTUMN SHOW	7 Sep
RHS Malvern (autumn)	28 - 29 Sep

THIS MONTHS RECIPE

Time for a change from all that meat

BUTTERNUT SQUASH & LEEK RISOTTO

SERVES 4 TIME 45 MINS TOTAL

You will need

550g diced butternut squash
2 tbsp olive oil
1 tbsp rosemary sprigs
25g butter
2 leeks, trimmed and thinly sliced
2 garlic cloves, crushed
300g Risotto rice
100ml white wine
1 litre hot vegetable stock
60g tub Grated Parmesan cheese

To do

1 Heat the oven to 200°C, fan 180°C, gas 6. Spread the butternut squash on a baking tray. Drizzle over 1 tablespoon of the oil and scatter over the rosemary. Toss well to coat. Season with salt and freshly ground black pepper. Roast for 25-30 minutes until just tender and golden.

2 Meanwhile, heat the rest of the oil and the butter in a large saucepan over a medium heat. Add the leeks and cook, stirring, for 5 minutes until just tender. Stir in the garlic and fry for a further 2-3 minutes, then stir in the rice.

3 Pour in the wine and let it bubble for 1 minute. Add the stock, one ladleful at a time, ensuring each one is absorbed before adding the next one, stirring frequently. Continue until all the stock is absorbed and the rice is just tender. This will take about 25 minutes.

4 Stir in half the cheese and season to taste. Add the roasted butternut squash and any pan juices to the risotto and stir gently to mix. Serve topped with the rest of the cheese.

GARDENING CALENDAR JANUARY

January might be the middle of winter but as the days lengthen the garden starts to grow. Now is a great time to plan for the coming gardening year and to order seeds and plants. Enjoy the fresh air, on dry sunny days, and check your winter protection, stakes, ties and supports are still working after any severe weather. Also put out food for birds and leave some garden areas uncut, a little longer, to provide shelter for wildlife in your garden.

Top 10 jobs this month

- 1 Recycle your Christmas tree by shredding it for mulch
- 2 Clean pots and greenhouses ready for spring
- 3 Dig over any vacant plots that have not been dug already
- 4 Disperse worm casts in lawns
- 5 Inspect stored tubers of *Dahlia*, *Begonia* and *Canna* for rots or drying out
- 6 Prune apple and pear trees
- 7 Start forcing rhubarb
- 8 Plan your vegetable crop rotations for the coming season
- 9 Keep putting out food and water for hungry birds
- 10 Make a polythene shelter for outdoor peaches and nectarines, to protect against peach leaf curl

Flowers

Sowing and planting

Sow seeds of *Begonia*, *Lobelia*, *Salvia* and *Pelargonium* in a heated greenhouse or propagator to provide early plants.

Sweet peas can be sown this month. Sweet peas sown earlier in the autumn can now be potted on taking care not to disturb the roots too much. Place them on a sunny windowsill, or on a high shelf in the greenhouse that gets plenty of light.

This is the last chance to sow seeds that need frost in order to germinate (such as native tree and shrub seeds, and alpine plants).

Plant lily bulbs in pots and in borders during mild spells.

Summer bulbs, seed potatoes and onion sets will be available to buy from the middle of the month.

Cutting back, pruning and dividing

Cut off old leaves of hellebores that produce flowers from ground level to expose the flowers.

Cut away some *Iris unguicularis* leaves to expose the flowers.

Root cuttings can be taken now. *Papaver* (perennial poppies), *Verbascum* (mullein), *Acanthus* and *Phlox* are suitable examples.

Start cutting back grasses and other perennials left for winter interest. Alternatively you can leave them a few more months to provide cover for wildlife.

In mild areas, and during dry spells, you can still lift and divide herbaceous perennials. This will increase stocks, and revive tired or poorly flowering clumps.

General maintenance

Rake up any winter debris and leaves off your borders to keep them tidy. Clear up any weedy beds ready for mulching in the spring.

Collect leaves that have blown over alpine beds as these plants are easily smothered. Bare patches can be covered with gritty compost.

Containers

Keep tubs and containers tidy, cutting back and removing debris regularly. They can be mulched with compost or grit. Grit is aesthetically pleasing, and will reduce the surface puddling that can occur when light composts are beaten into a solid 'cap' by raindrops.

Some pots - particularly those sheltered by eaves or balconies - may need watering. Check the compost (at a hand's depth) to see if it feels dry. Aim to keep pots moist

(not too wet), but do not let them dry out.

Raise patio containers onto feet or bricks, if you have not done so already, to avoid them sitting in the wet.

Tender plant care

Even in mild areas, tender plants that cannot be left outside with protection should really be taken into the greenhouse or conservatory by the beginning of this month. In cold areas, you are best moving things inside much earlier, in the autumn.

In cold spells, protect non frost-proof containers (terracotta pots for example) with bubble wrap, hessian or fleece, to prevent them cracking. Grouping the pots close to a south-facing wall may provide additional protection to the most vulnerable ones

Ensure protective straw or fleece is still in place on tender plants overwintering outdoors.

Lawns

General maintenance

If the weather is mild you can lay a new turf or repair hollows and bumps in an existing lawn. To repair the lawn, make a 'H' shaped cut in the turf, peel back the grass and either fill the hollow with loam, or scraping away the soil from a bump. Re-lay the turf, press it into place and pinch the cut edges together.

Repair lawn edges, especially around flower and shrub beds, with turves cut from other areas of the garden.

If your lawn suffers dieback from treading during the wet, muddy season, then consider laying stepping-stones through it to allow easy access across it without causing damage.

Troubleshooting

Remember not to walk on frosty grass as this will burn or scorch the grass and the grass will appear to be black and have brown footprints after a while.

Watch your lawn for signs of waterlogging, as the weather gets wetter. If you missed the opportunity to carry out autumn lawn maintenance, then you can still remedy the situation a bit, by spiking the lawn with a garden fork or mechanical aerator. Then fill the holes with a mixture of sharp sand and loam, brushed in using a stiff broom.

Mole activity will increase in January and February due to mating and nest (fortress) building. Remove the largest hills and re-firm before overseeding in spring.

Keep brushing away worm casts, as they can be troublesome at this time of year.

Fusarium patch or snow mould may be a problem in wet weather, particularly on overfed and lush lawns that have been left a bit too long.

Algae can be a problem on lawns where there is poor drainage, excessive shade, or under the drip-line of trees.

POETS CORNER

To a Snowdrop

Lone flower, hemmed in with snows and white as they
But hardier far, once more I see thee bend
Thy forehead, as if fearful to offend,
Like an unbidden guest. Though day by day,
Storms, sallying from the mountain-tops, waylay
The rising sun, and on the plains descend;
Yet art thou welcome, welcome as a friend
Whose zeal outruns his promise! Blue-eyed May
Shall soon behold this border thickly set
With bright jonquils, their odours lavishing
On the soft west wind and his frolic peers:
Nor will I then thy modest grace forget,
Chaste Snowdrop, venturous harbinger of Spring,
And pensive monitor of fleeting years!

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH (1770-1850)

NEW DIRECTOR OF GARDENS CHOSEN

Clare Goddard has been appointed the new Director of Sir Harold Hillier Gardens, near Romsey.

She joins the gardens this month, having previously been instrumental in overseeing the restoration of the award-winning Victorian Garden at the Cathedral of St John the Baptist in Norwich. Most recently, she was Manager of Painshill Park, Surrey, considered to be one of the finest Eighteenth Century English landscape gardens.

Clare's love of plants and flowers started as a child, and has seen her forge her career on developing world-class visitor attractions and centres of learning; creating inspiring and enjoyable experiences for all who visit.

Clare said: "I am overjoyed, and consider it a great privilege, to have been appointed Director of the Sir Harold Hillier Gardens. I very much look forward to working alongside all the talented staff, volunteers, supporters and public who make it the very special place that it is today. It is an honour to be joining such a prestigious organisation at this exciting stage in its development."

Clare will be at the helm of the gardens spanning 180 acres in size and growing over 12,000 species of plants. There are also 14 national plant collections and around 400 champion trees – more than any other collections in the UK. Hillier Gardens now attracts more than 200,000 visitors annually and has over 22,000 members.

In 1977 Sir Harold Hillier left the gardens under the sole trusteeship of Hampshire County Council.

Clare's appointment follows former director Wolfgang Bopp who stepped down in August this year after 14 years' service to move to New Zealand.

STRONG FOUNDATIONS

Jo Arnell emphasizes that it's all in the planning when it comes to creating this year's gorgeous garden.

The garden has put itself to bed for the winter and it's up to you how much you want to help it do this; you can tidy up behind it, or leave it to its own devices as it sheds leaves and debris about the place, comforted by the thought that you are making cosy homes for wildlife, and that there is a wayward beauty in faded stems and old seed heads, especially in the low winter light, but even grasses have bad hair days. I tend to tidy up in the veg patch, because I have to be a little mote organised there and I don't want to make it too comfortable for lurking pests. It's also useful to see the beds and attempt to work out in advance which crop will go where next year. I leave the borders to drift along for a while longer though, for poetic reasons, obviously, but also to help me remember what worked, what didn't and what to tweak about. The foundations of a gorgeous garden are built long before next spring, so let's make some plans.

Plan a border

This is a good time, when all the distractions of flowers have finished, to look critically at your plants and evaluate them in terms of 'Seasonal Interest' and 'Structure'. It might sound a little hard, but I do expect plants to earn their place in the border - to give at least two points of interest through the year, or be truly spectacular if they can only manage one. There is room for emotional blackmail - plants from our childhoods and those with sentimental associations are allowed (and most of us love peonies and roses even though the flowers are generally fleeting and the rest of the plant lacks, well, most things really). So something like

Philadelphus teeters on the edge of my list, a straggly, unkempt and un-trainable mess of a shrub, redeemed every June by the irresistibly gorgeous scent of its white blossom. Whereas an evergreen like Viburnum davidii – overlooked, or shoved permanently to the back of the nursery, is quietly handsome all the time, its large, glossy leaves providing constant structure and reliable dark green-ness (and a little hit of flower and berry too).

Structure doesn't have to be provided by plants, but in order for the border to work, some definition is required. A border filled with billowing lovelies quickly falls apart without either a backdrop, or some anchoring focal points to hold it together. You will find it easier to see where your garden lacks structure and seasonal interest as the borders begin to be laid bare this month.

Plan to grow vegetables

A productive garden is immensely satisfying to make, but while you're in the planning stages, or even while you're preparing the beds and getting set up (November is an ideal month for this) look deep into your soul and have a think about a few things. I always wear rose-tinted glasses, I'm afraid - imagining myself strolling about in the sunshine, stylish trug on my arm, harvesting blemish-free, delicious looking ingredients for perfect meals, where no-one says 'Yuk', or worse, or finds a coiled up caterpillar cooked to perfection on their plate. I'm also over-ambitious and bite off more

CLUB EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES –

Please contact secretaries direct for further details.

9th Virginia Water Fascinating Fungi, with Peter Herring

Linda Gillham 01932-564834

12th Hardy Plant Soc. Succession Planting, with Steven Edney. 10 for 10.45 start

Sandra Hartley 01372-727715

16th Onslow Village Winkworth Arboretum, with Peter Herring

Anne Bradbeer 01483-563421

16th Sandhurst Berried Treasure, with Howard Drury

Chris Dresler 01420-768965

22nd West End The culinary and health uses of herbs, by Belinda Allen

Judy Douch 01483-475133

23rd Dorking Japanese Gardens and Plants, with Vincent Gradwell

Cliff Weight 01306-888286

24th North Warnborough Talk on NGS Gardens, with Angela O'Connell

Pam Forey 01256-703412

29th Woking Gardening Herbaceous borders etc. with Geoff Hawkins

Joy Leach 01483-837359