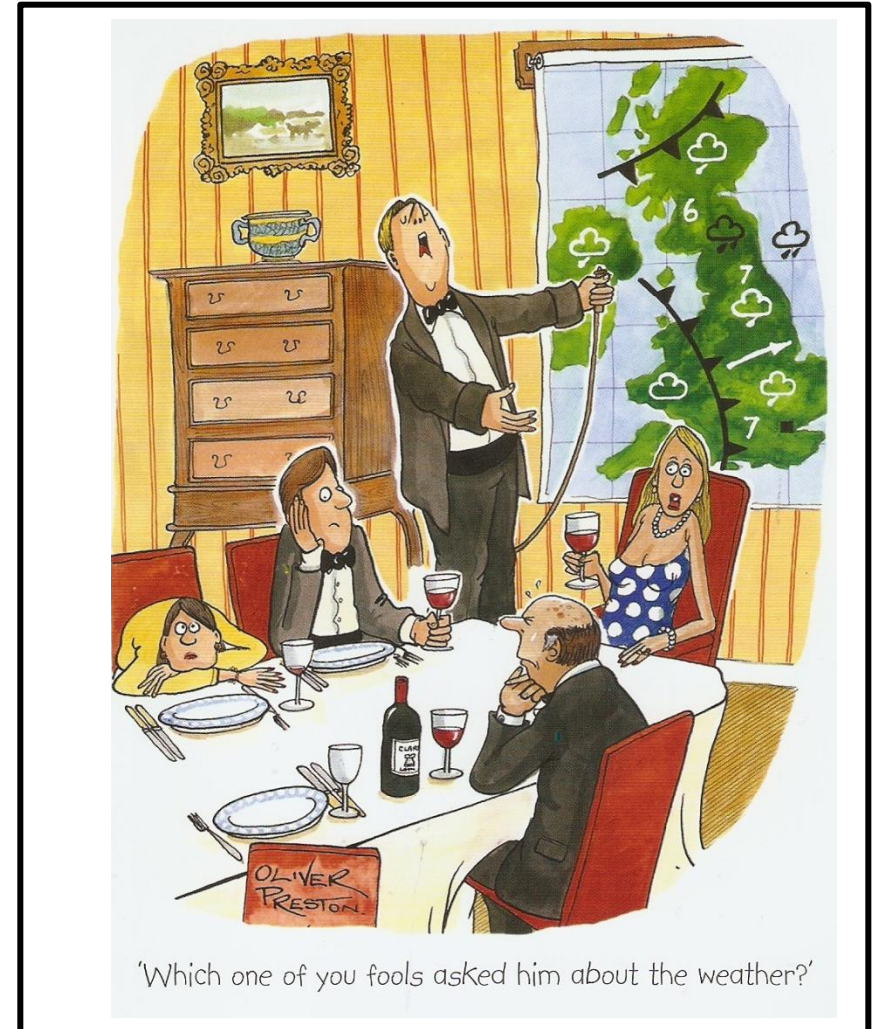


Ash Parish Garden Club

www.ashparishgardenclub.org.uk



'Which one of you fools asked him about the weather?'

Monthly Newsletter Feb 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

LEMON LAYER PUDDING

You will need

Juice and grated rind of 1 lemon
2oz butter
2 eggs separated
2oz self raising flour
4oz sugar
Half pint milk

To do

Add lemon rind to butter and sugar, cream really well.

Add egg yolks – beat well.

Stir in milk, lemon juice and flour. Whisk egg whites stiffly.

Fold into mixture and pour into a large greased oven proof dish (two & quarter pints).

Stand dish in shallow tin of water and cook near top of oven for about 45 mins. or until top is set and firm to touch.

Mrs. E. Rees

GARDENING CALENDAR FEBRUARY

Spring is in sight

This month there are signs of the approaching spring, with bulbs appearing and birds and wildlife waking up as light levels and temperatures increase. There's plenty to do indoors this month, all in preparation for the season ahead. Outdoors, the garden is coming to life again, and its time to prune shrubs, such as *Wisteria*.

Top 10 jobs this month

1. Prepare vegetable seed beds, and sow some vegetables under cover
2. Chit potato tubers
3. Protect blossom on apricots, nectarines and peaches
4. Net fruit and vegetable crops to keep the birds off
5. Prune winter-flowering shrubs that have finished flowering
6. Divide bulbs such as snowdrops, and plant those that need planting 'in the green'
7. Prune *Wisteria*
8. Prune hardy evergreen hedges and renovate overgrown deciduous hedges
9. Prune conservatory climbers
10. Cut back deciduous grasses left uncut over the winter

FLOWERS

Sowing and planting

Dahlia tubers stored over winter (or bought this year) can be started into growth. Place them in a light, warm place to sprout before planting. They will need additional misting with a spray-bottle of water, to stop them drying out.

Lily bulbs can be planted in pots, for flowers this summer. After growing on indoors or in a cool greenhouse, they can be moved onto the patio when in flower, so that you can enjoy the blooms.

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

Hardy annuals can be sown in pots or modules to provide colour.

Summer-flowering Dutch iris bulbs can be forced and used as cut flowers.

Place gladioli corms in seed trays or boxes and place in a light, warm (around 10°C/50°F) spot to encourage them to sprout before planting. This will ensure an earlier display.

Sweet peas can be sown under cloches, in a cold frame, or in a cool room in the house. Any sweet peas that were sown earlier in the autumn can now be potted.

Root cuttings can be taken of *Papaver* (perennial poppies), *Verbascum* (mullein), *Acanthus* (bear's britches) and *Phlox*.

Check on tender plants overwintering outdoors to ensure protective coverings are still in place

Cutting back, pruning and dividing

Cut back ornamental grasses and other perennials left for winter interest.

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

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

At the end of the month prune back the stems of pot-grown overwintered fuchsias and place in a well-lit, warm place to encourage new growth.

Divide and/or plant bulbs-in-the-green such as snowdrops (*Galanthus*) and winter aconites (*Eranthis hyemalis*).

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.

General maintenance

Prepare beds for new roses when conditions allow. Avoid wet days and frozen ground.

Send soil samples for pH and nutrient testing (if necessary). This can help you choose the correct plants for the site in question, and allow you to rectify any nutrient deficiencies with a spring feed.

Improve the drainage of heavy soils by working in lots of organic matter and coarse gravel (if necessary).

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.

Check whether containers need watering. Pots that are sheltered by eaves or balconies can miss out on any rainfall. Check the compost at a hand's depth to see if it feels dry. Aim to keep pots moist, not wet.

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

Towards the end of the month, you can top dress beds and borders with a balanced fertiliser such as Growmore or blood, fish and bone, to feed perennials as they start back into growth.

Pest and disease watch

Top dress spring-flowering alpine plants with grit or gravel to show off the plants and to help prevent stem rots.

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

Snowdrops can be vulnerable to *Botrytis* (grey mould).

Watch out for downy mildew and black spot on winter pansies. Remove any infected leaves and destroy badly affected plants. To avoid the build-up of diseases, do not plant pansies in the same place every year.

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

Hellebore leaf spot can be a problem on old foliage of hellebores. Cutting back the old leaves should control the problem, and allow the flowers and new growth to be better seen.

Protect sweet pea plants from aphids as they can transmit sweet pea viruses. Protect lily, *Delphinium* and *Hosta* shoots from slugs and snails before they appear.

Check autumn-sown sweet peas growing in cold frames, and apply mouse and slug controls if necessary.

Inspect stored tubers of plants such as *Dahlia* and *Canna* for signs of drying out. Do not let them become bone dry or they will desiccate; but too wet and they may rot.

Planning ahead

Order catalogues for spring planting of summer-flowering bulbs, bedding plants and herbaceous perennials.

Stock up on stakes and ties for the coming season, if you have not done so already.

Plan your summer bedding and container planting schemes in good time for ordering the necessary bulbs, annuals and seed, and for propagating the relevant material.

APGC TRIPS FOR 2019

Sun 14TH APR Wisley

Meet at Victoria Hall at 1.00pm and return at approx 5pm, cost £4 for Minibus. Members can use own transport and meet us outside Wisley Entrance at 1:30pm

For all following garden visits a deposit of £10 is required at time of booking.

Sun 19th May Leonardslee Gardens , Horsham Cost £17 each

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

Stopping off at Hilliers Garden Centre, Horsham for Lunch

<https://www.hillier.co.uk/garden-centres/locations/horsham/>

Leaving Victoria Hall at 11am, returning approx 5:30pm

Sat 8th June Houghton Lodge Gardens, Stockbridge Cost £15.50 each

<https://houghtonlodge.co.uk/>

Stopping off at Andover Garden Centre for Lunch

<https://www.wyevalegardencentres.co.uk/product/andover/2214>

Leaving Victoria Hall at 11am, returning approx 5:30pm

Sun 14TH JUL Lavender Farm Selborne Rd, Alton UK Cost £10 each

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

Stopping off at Avenue Nursery Lasham for Lunch <http://avenuenurseries.com/>

Leaving Victoria Hall at 11am, returning approx 5:30pm

Sun 8TH SEP Great Comp Garden, Sevenoaks

<https://greatcomparden.co.uk/> We shall be having Lunch at the Great Comp Tearoom.

This is a RHS Partner Garden.

Cost for RHS members £10 each

Cost for those without RHS membership £17.50

Leaving Victoria Hall at 10am, returning approx 5:30pm

FAREWELL TO THREE WOMEN

DAVID WHEELER

The year 2016 saw the loss of three influential and inspiring women gardeners. Each of them, vastly disparate in their lifestyles and attitudes, nevertheless proved gardening's positive health-giving properties by living into their nineties and remaining pretty much active until the Grim Reaper came a-calling.

The Dowager Marchioness of Salisbury was born in 1922; Joan Loraine in 1924; Mirabel Osier in 1925. I sat on a horticultural committee with Mollie Salisbury in the mid 1980s and, soon after, visited her former garden at Cranborne Manor in Dorset, where - years before, in pioneering fashion - she had banished the use of pesticides. Her

fingerprints remain on that garden, despite her 1972 move to Hatfield House in Hertfordshire when her husband succeeded as 6th Marquess of Salisbury. The developments and improvements to Hatfield's extensive gardens and grounds are her legacy. Upon her arrival, the original elaborate and once-famous gardens (laid out by John Tradescant in the early 17th century) had mostly disappeared, leaving traces of their former glory 'overgrown, gloomy and badly pruned'. Though daunted by new responsibilities, her talent, enthusiasm and vision led quickly to a transformation that blossomed spectacularly, placing Hatfield high on today's list of Europe's finest stately home gardens.

Joan Loraine, daughter of a distinguished soldier and airman and the granddaughter of a former Advocate-General of Bombay, who was the first man to successfully prosecute Mahatma Gandhi, was made of equally strong stuff, once describing herself as both 'charming and deadly'. One professional engagement was as founding headmistress of the British Embassy School in Ankara and, later, a leader of relief-supply convoys to post-Ceausescu Romania. On my all-too-few visits to Greencombe, her jewel box of a woodland garden at West Porlock on the north Somerset coast, I came to realise that my own true love was for flowering trees and shrubs, and the shade-loving plants that are martyrs to Britain's fickle climate. There was, so to speak, much dirt under Joan's fingernails - she not only adopted an intellectual approach to gardening, but made sturdy efforts in pursuit of botanical treasure. To the gardening quarterly Hortus a decade ago she contributed a series of four articles describing her sometimes hair-raising exploits in pursuit of her beloved erythroniums (dog's-tooth violets), bulbs found in mountainous parts of Europe, Russia and the US. She was passionate, too, about ferns and acid-loving vacciniums and galtherias, completing a quartet of genera that she held as national collections.

Mirabel Osier was the 'gypsy' of this gardening trio, a bohemian of great wit and wide interests, whose parents' friends included Ezra Pound, Ford Madox Ford and Ford's wife, artist Stella Bowen. As well as gardening, Mirabel loved to travel. She lived with her husband, Michael, on Corfu for several years. And, on a 1950s vagabond journey across Anatolia to see the ancient architectural delights of Hattusa, she had herself strapped to the roof rack of their Dormobile in order to sunbathe en route. Mirabel made two gardens in Shropshire - one full of roses, left to fend for themselves in glorious disarray, and another in later years in Ludlow where she crammed a town plot with myriad delights. Her book *A Gentle Plea for Qiaos* will continue to amuse gardeners for years to come. I am privileged to have known these luminaries. Should any plant breeders come across these few words, they might consider naming 'new' plants in their honour: a heavenly perfumed rose for Mirabel, a delectable variant of a dog's-tooth violet for Joan, and perhaps a honeysuckle for Mollie - a plant to reflect her seemingly delicate robustness and great beauty.

POETS CORNER***Forget-Me-Not***

The blossoms blue to the bank he threw
Ere he sank in the eddying tide;
And 'Lady, I'm gone, thine own knight true,
Forget-me-not', he cried.
The farewell pledge the lady caught,
And hence, as legends say,
The flower is a sign to awaken thought
Of friends who are far away.
ANONYMOUS (19th century)

PLANTS TO ATTRACT BUTTERFLIES**Shrubs**

Buddleja varieties - sweet scented flowers, well known as the Butterfly Bush

Caryopteris x clandonensis - late blue flowers above grey scented foliage

Calluna vulgaris - hardy shrub, requiring little maintenance, profusion of small flowers

Clematis tangutica - dangling yellow lantern-like flowers in late summer

Escallonia varieties - evergreen, ideal for hedges & screens, white, pink or red flowers

Hedera helix - evergreen glossy leaves

Hebe 'Great Orme' - pink flowers that turn white above green foliage

Ilex aquifolium - common holly - evergreen, small flowers in spring

Lavandula varieties - scented foliage and flower spikes, trim regularly to maintain shape

Rhamnus frangula - deep green foliage, berries in autumn

Rosa 'Mermaid' - single, primrose yellow flowers

Rosmarinus - Rosemary - scented foliage in upright & prostrate forms, blue flowers

Syringa varieties - Lilac - scented heads of flowers in a variety of colours, good for cutting

Perennials

Achillea filipendula - yarrow - flat heads of flowers in an array of colours
Agastache foeniculum - aromatic leaves & spikes of dense flowers
Anthemis - golden marguerite - finely cut leaves with yellow daisy like flowers
Aster varieties - small daisy flowers in late summer
Centaurea - cornflower - **unusual flowers in shades of pink & blue**
Centranthus varieties - perfect for dry areas; will readily self-seed
Ceratostigma willmottianum 'Forest Blue' - stunning cobalt blue-flowers
Coreopsis - daisy-like flowers mainly in yellow but some red varieties available
Cynara -thistle like perennial plants, including the globe artichoke
Dahlias (single flower varieties) - many different flower types & colours for late summer
Dianthus - Pinks - popular scented flowers above grey-green foliage
Echinacea - coneflower - single large flowers with a cone shaped centre
Echinops ritro - globe thistle - blue globular flower heads Erigeron - daisy flowers available in a range of colours
Eryngium giganteum - thistle like blue flower heads Eupatorium cannabinum - dense flower heads of white, pink or purple
Geranium (hardy) - large single flowers. Rozanne is a particular favourite.
Helenium varieties - daisy-like flowers in shades of yellow, orange and red
Heliotropium arborescens - evergreen shrub with sweet scented violet, purple or white flowers
Iberis amara - fragrant small white, pink or lilac flowers
Lathyrus latifolius - perennial sweet pea. Pink flowers from summer to early autumn

CORNISH CREAM*DAVID WHEELER*

JUST AS I WAS THINKING it was time to re-acquaint myself with some great Cornish gardens, there comes along a pocket-sized book, a tad larger than a CD case, with 176 brimful pages, covering everything from the horticultural and architectural to the obscurely genealogical.

Early in the year is no bad time to explore gardens in this far South-West peninsula, largely blessed, of course, with a plant-friendly maritime climate but one that can kick hard when you least expect it - shorthand for reminding you to put warm weatherproof clothing on your packing list, whenever you choose to go.

My new vade mecum is Cornwall's Great Houses and Gardens by Barry Gamble (Alison Hodge £6.95). Gamble entered the specialist field of heritage interpretation in the 90s after a career in industry and what appears to have been a lifelong

interest in Cornish mines and mining families - several of which have bankrolled the county's many outstanding estates and botanically important collections.

By April most of the county's renowned camellias are fading, making way for thickets of rhododendrons and exquisite magnolias, their waxy blooms unbesmirched by the kind of damaging late-season frost that buggers us non-coastal gardeners. Later in the year these bountiful beauties give way to ceanothus (California lilac) in their many shades of blue, and some of the incredible floral wonders from Australasia and South America. Nor does it take much effort to unearth impressive collections of hydrangeas and bamboo or, on a smaller scale, the delights of primroses, Clematis viticella cultivars, dahlias and day-lilies (hemerocallis), not to mention the many diverse echeverias, succulents that thrive out of doors in frost-free areas but are grown with great affection by the likes of me in a winter-heated greenhouse.

Properties such as Heligan, Glen-durgan, Lanhydrock, Trebah, Caerhays and Trewithen are well documented and much visited, so it was to Gamble's pages dealing with less-familiar places that I turned when making plans for my next Cornish foray. Catchfrench, with its Repton Red Book landscape, a few miles from St Germans, attracts me by its name alone - although I'm told not to confuse the 'new' house with the 'romantic ruin of the old adjacent manor'. Pentillie, on a great bend of the Tamar, with splendid C bus an palms from central China and towering sequoias (California redwoods) also beckons like a siren, as does Killiow, near Truro, occupied over several centuries by members of the Daubuz family, one of whom 'introduced exotic conifers, together with Kew rhododendron seedlings grown from Joseph Hooker's original seed from his 1847-51 Himalayan expeditions'.

I must test my sea legs, too. While St Michael's Mount can be approached on foot by a causeway at low tide, nothing beats the high-water excitement of a ride in the Falmouth-made 'amphicraft' that zips out from Marazion. Once islanded you must walk round to the south-facing cliff to discover the sequence of little bandbox gardens, bright with bloom all year round. A bigger vessel (from Penzance) ferries passengers to St Mary's before they must transfer to a small open boat heading for the magnificence of the sub-tropical Abbey gardens on Tresco, one of the five inhabited Scilly Isles among a cluster of outcrops battered by Atlantic surf. Its miscellany of plants, sheltered by high walls, is unique, as too are Tresco's dunes, inundated now by escapee lapis-blue agapanthus that in July suggest the wild sandy reaches of the South African Cape.

Gamble's book is a small treasure, augmented by numerous aerial photographs of whole estates (with Ordnance Survey co-ordinates instead of a map), costing less than a fresh-baked pasty and a pint of Cornish Knocker.

CLUB EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES –

Please contact secretaries direct for further details.

March 2019

4th Esher Molesey The History of Squires Garden Centres, with Colin Squire
Ann Beauchamp 0208-979-1415

7th Aldershot Floral Design Demo: It's only Natural, with Kate Kerr
Dee Kelly 01252-350944

13th Nat. Veg. Surrey Growing in containers, with Barry Newman. E. Horsley V.Hall
Sally Coleman 0208-399-8809

16th Ellens Green/Rudgwick SPRING SHOW, Rudgwick Village Hall 2.30 pm
Simon Quail 01403-822766

18th Epsom Seasonal Pruning, with Mark Saunders
Sue Anderson 0208-393-0892

20th Chiddingfold The Way to a Wimbledon Lawn, with Paul Patton
Els Trovo 01428-684548

20th Dorking Beneficial fungi for your plants, with Helen Thomas
Cliff Weight 01306-888286

21st Aldershot Floral Design Something of this Nature, with Craig Bullock
Tickets Dee Kelly 01252-350944

26th Tilford Herbs, growing and uses, with Belinda Allen
Janet Arm 01252-783133

30th Elstead SPRING SHOW, Village Hall
Kathy Deaville 01252-702630

30th Ewell SPRING SHOW 2.30 pm at Blenheim High School Ewell
Lynne Mason 0208-393-9257

30th Milford SPRING SHOW, Village Hall
S. Miskimmin 01483-421509