

ASH PARISH GARDEN CLUB OFFICERS

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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.

EDITORS NOTES

Brian –Stories to ernestperry33@gmail.com hard copy to Chris

NEW PROGRAM SECRETARY

Program Secretary Mrs Penny Slack has arranged for the 2024 speakers but in order for a program to be organised for 2025 a new program secretary needs to be found. Any volunteers?

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- **SPRING SHOW 6th APRIL**
 - RHS Malvern Spring Festival – 18-21 May
 - **PLANT SALE 11th MAY**
 - **RHS Chelsea Flower Show – 21–25 May**
 - **OUT MEETING 3rd June**
 - **SUMMER SHOW 1st JULY**
 - RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show – 2–7 July
 - RHS Flower Show Tatton Park – 17–21 July
 - **AUTUMN SHOW 7th SEPTEMBER**
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GARDENING CALENDAR APRIL

April is a transitional month that can often bring unpredictable weather, so what will need doing in the garden is largely dependent on the weather conditions.

Plant

As a general rule, this is the time for planting up, supporting young plants, and for forward planning ahead of the summer. Sow tomatoes, runner beans, basil, green pepper, marrow, courgettes and sweet corn in individual modules undercover for planting after the frost.

April is the best time for creating new container displays. If there's space, pot plug plants into larger pots – cheaper than buying bigger pot plants in a month's time. Plant up summer baskets and grow undercover before positioning in late May. Sow half-hardy bedding plants in seed trays or cell trays undercover.

Maintain water features

If you have a water feature in your garden, now is the time to give it its annual round of post-winter maintenance. Clear out ponds: take out planting baskets and fish (keep in buckets of old pond water), bail out the water, remove sludge and refill. Rainwater is best, but let tap water stand for a week before putting fish back in. Plant new pond plants using special pond baskets from garden centres.

Protect

Now is the time to watch out for early pests and diseases – hit them hard now to avoid problems later on. Use fine Environmesh to protect young carrots from carrot root fly.

April can still bring frosty nights, so protect tender flowers and vegetables from late frosts – keep horticultural fleece on standby. Young, upright-growing plants will need some form of support: stake tall perennials such as delphiniums and sunflowers with 'grow through' supports.

Go indoors

Don't forget the house plants, either: water and feed more often now they're actively growing.

THIS MONTHS RECIPE

Orange, saffron & almond loaf

Serves 8-10 Prepare 20 minutes Cook 1 hour

You will need

- 150g unsalted butter, softened
- 100g light brown soft sugar
- 100g golden caster sugar, plus 1 tbsp for sprinkling
- Large Eggs
- 130g plain flour
- 100g ground almonds
- One & three quarter tsp of baking powder
- Quarter tsp of saffron, steeped in 2 tsp boiling water
- « 1 lemon, zested
- 2 oranges, zested, 1 peeled and cut into rounds
- 2 tbsp flaked almonds

To do

1 Preheat the oven to 180°C, gas mark 4, then grease a 900g loaf tin and line it with baking parchment.

2 Beat the butter and sugars together until pale, light and fluffy (using an electric mixer if you like), then beat in the eggs one at a time until fully 'incorporated'. Fold in the flour, ground almonds, baking powder, saffron and its liquid, lemon and orange zest and a pinch of salt.

3 Scoop the cake mixture into the tin, level the top and finish with the sliced orange. Sprinkle with the flaked almonds and extra caster sugar, then bake for 50-60 minutes, until well risen and a skewer inserted comes out clean.

4 Leave the cake to cool slightly in the tin before removing to a wire rack to cool completely.

IN SAFE ARBORS

DAVID WHEELER

We were out and about in May last year, finding cool woodland glades. We were trying to dodge unseasonal unbroken sunshine which made garden work at home too troublesome for an entire month.

Who'd have thought south-west Wales would have been Britain's sunniest and hottest spot? Friends in East Anglia, more accustomed to such stress than us, were still in woollies, wondering -like us -why the UK's weather pattern has been reversed.

It won't last, of course. We'll doubtless have our brollies out in midsummer, grateful for whatever moisture the sky bestows.

May warmth is glorious, but it should ideally be tempered. New plants have to be watered judiciously -not doused, for fear of drowning them. Instead, kindly wet them and their surrounding soil so that new roots can find a comfortable and auspicious home in which to establish themselves.

Little and often is my mantra -a splash morning and night being enough for the ground to remain sufficiently moist. Once new plants are settled after, say, several summer months, damp and cooler autumnal conditions will assume the gardener's labour.

We have our own good acres of woodland in which to wander when, as Cole Porter penned, 'It's too darn hot.'

Still, off we trundled to discover other havens of quietude and shade to linger beneath bosky boughs. We found them in the gardens of Upton Castle, on a tidal creek in Pembrokeshire.

Far less known and visited than other local 'attractions', Upton -a fortified manor house dating back to the 13th century -blessed us with a

venerable garden partly lost in time and, with gusto, partly undergoing sympathetic revival. Magnificent, century-old specimen trees (including 17 national and county champions) enrich its grounds, while a long leafy path led us to the reedy banks of the River Cleddau.

Similarly, at Picton Castle near Haverfordwest a week earlier, ancient arboreal grandees sheltered us from the heat. We couldn't, though, resist the walled garden, with its long, Mediterranean border set against mellow brick walls.

Among strollers under umbrellas providing individual pools of shade, we sighed admiringly at the fleeting beauty of irises at their peak, a freestanding, clipped wisteria in full floral avalanche, outcrops of phlomis and magnificent stands of giant fennel (*Ferula communis*). Thyme and rosemary sweetened the air, truly justifying the enclosure's Mediterranean associations. Was this really south-west Wales? Wet Wales?

A lack of spring rain is worrying. Woody plants in particular do their best growing in April, May and June, and they need good, well-irrigated roots to see them through July and August.

We store what rainwater we can in butts and are adding to their number wherever possible. But my ancient limbs now rebel at the ferrying of heavy watering cans across long stretches of garden.

Thank heavens for mulching. It's proved fabulously beneficial this year, especially around newly planted trees and shrubs. I mix barrowloads of grass clippings and compost in roughly equal measure, spreading the mixture three to four inches thick around plants after they've been well watered. Blackbirds toss it all about in search of insects, but the thatch is easily kicked back in place.

Having recently spent considerable amounts on young trees -maples, dogwoods, birches, flowering cherries -I don't want them to suffer. And my extensive collection of famously thirsty hydrangeas need good, regular guzzles.

I'll be taking cuttings of the rarer varieties in late June and early July. With new-found fellow hydrangea enthusiasts nearby, I need a ready supply for swaps and giveaways.

WOODS AND HEDGES

GOLDSLOCKS *Ranunculus auricomus* This is a woodland buttercup, found especially on fertile lowland soils. The plant a perennial growing from a rootstock and has a very variable set of leaves. The lowest an round or kidney shaped, but the majority a deeply lobed. The flowers are about half the size of those of other buttercups and are much less numerous. Even when dominating a woodland glade in spring or early summer goldilocks does so with restraint. Many flowers have some reduced or deformed petals, contributing to the plant's untidy, leggy appearance.

The name 'Goldilocks' is often used locally for other buttercups, including marl marigold and globe flower, and also for a yellow aster.

LESSER CELANDINE *Ranunculus fictru* Celandines are a familiar sign of early spring in open woods, shady meadows and river banks. The flowers, 2 or 3cm in diameter, have three green sepals and a variable number (between 7 and 12) of shiny yellow petals which bleach white after a few days of March sunshine. The leaves grow from a rosette and are long stalked, broad and glossy green. Lesser celandine is a perennial, appearing year after year in the same place, growing from root tubers and sometimes from bulbils, which, through a belief in 'sympathetic magic', were used in medieval medical treatment and earned the plant the name 'pilewort'.

DEBUNKING GARDENING MYTHS

Time to heal all wounds

Gardening wisdom of the past 50 years has said that painting a tree's pruning wounds is pointless - but James Wong isn't so sure

IF YOU are a regular reader, you will know of my weird fascination with traditional horticultural practices that endure for decades despite being resoundingly debunked by science. In this article, however, I wanted to explore what might turn out to be a surprising bit of irony. Prepare to get meta...

For well over 400 years, standard horticultural advice was to paint the pruning wounds of tree branches and trunks with various concoctions, in the belief that this would prevent infection and promote healing.

However, as long ago as 1915, scientists began to ask whether contemporary preparations of white lead, coal tar or ochre actually provided the protection they

were believed to. By the 1970s, a series of comprehensive studies, which investigated more modern treatments such as bitumen, asphalt and synthetic polymers, demonstrated pretty conclusively that these "wound dressings" didn't prevent decay or speed healing.

The research overturned centuries of dogma. And so, for the past 50 years, the new received wisdom of pretty much every gardening textbook has been that any attempt at treating pruning wounds is long outdated and far inferior to simply letting healing occur naturally.

However, here's the thorny bit: when you look deep into the studies published since the 1970s, a much more complex picture seems to emerge.

First, it is important to point out that this is an enormously complicated question. The rate and degree at which pruning cuts heal depend on the tree species, the type of injury, the time of year when the wound is made and even the type of tool used. That is before we even get to which compounds are used to treat them.

The 1915 and 1970s studies tested very different substances; today, most mixes on the market tend to be natural tree resins or synthetic fungicides - very different preparations from those in the 1970s studies, despite these still being cited as proof that the entire practice doesn't work.

When we consider more recent studies that investigate the use of fungicide pastes, the idea that all treatments are counterproductive becomes harder to sustain. One 2016 trial found significantly higher wound closure rates on trees like ginkgos treated with fungicide versus a control.

A range of other recent experiments have produced similar findings for other plants, such as American oaks and especially grapevines. Perhaps because of this, some academic advice has started to include caveats to the previously strict "no pruning paint" rule, to exclude oak trees.

I wonder if, as further research on new treatments is published, the exceptions will one day prove greater than the rule?

ONIONS

SIMON COURTAULD

July and August are the months for runner beans but, for the first time in my memory, thanks to drought conditions this summer, none grew in my garden. The flowers appeared but were not followed by beans. Other growers had the same experience.

Farmers were said also to be struggling with their crops of peas, potatoes and onions. On this small plot, I haven't grown peas this year, but several varieties of potato have done well, including the Pink Fir Apple which we have been enjoying since August.

My first attempt at growing onions has met with qualified success. I chose to grow them from seed, with a variety called Golden Bear F1, which, according to the catalogue, produces onions weighing 300 grams.

Having sown the seed directly into the ground in early spring, I thinned the infant plants to about four inches apart and did little else apart from weeding and watering. The advice is to stop watering once the onions have swollen in midsummer but, since we had no rain for weeks, I continued to give them some water.

I'm not expecting any 300-gram onions, but a few were tennis-ball size at the end of August. As the green parts start fading, the onions will be lifted, dried in the sun or greenhouse and stored on strips of wire netting.

I am aware that onions are more usually - and more easily - grown from sets (immature bulbs). The plants will produce an earlier crop than those grown from seed, and are less likely to be affected by disease such as onion white rot. This produces a white, fluffy fungus on the base of the onions and rots the roots. As there is apparently no known cure, it is essential that the soil be kept free from dirty tools and boots.

However, seed-sown onions are less likely to bolt, and have the additional advantage that the thinning's can be used as spring onions. I shall probably try onion sets next year, hoping for the same success I have had with shallots grown from sets.

SPRING SHOW **6th April 2024**

SECTION 1 **FLOWER, FRUIT & VEGETABLE**

Classes 1-24 inc. are for cut flowers. Vases are provided, and MUST be used

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------|--|
| 1 | Daffodil Division 1 | Trumpet, 1 stem; |
| 2 | Daffodil Division 1 | Trumpet, 3 stems; 1 variety |
| 3 | Daffodil Division 1 | Trumpet, 3 stems; 2 or more varieties. |
| 4 | Daffodil Division 2 | Large Cup, 1 stem; |
| 5 | Daffodil Division 2 | Large Cup, 3 stems; 1 variety. |
| 6 | Daffodil Division 2 | Large cup , 3 stems; 2 or more varieties. |
| 7 | Daffodil Division 3 | Small Cup, 1 stem. |
| 8 | Daffodil Division 3 | Small Cup, 3 stems; 1 variety. |
| 9 | Daffodil Division 3 | Small Cup, 3 stems; 2 or more varieties. |
| 10 | Daffodil Division 9 | Miniature Cup, 3 stems; e.g. Pheasant Eye |
| 11 | Daffodil Division 4 | Double, 3 stems; 1 variety |
| 12 | Daffodil Division 5,7,8 | Miniature Multi-headed, 3 stems. |
| 13 | Daffodil Division 8 | Miniature Single flowered 3 short stems. |
| 14 | Daffodil | 3 stems of 1 or more varieties, from Div 6,10,11,or 12 |
| 15 | Daffodil | 1 or more varieties. 5 stems; |
| 16 | Tulip | 1 stem single colour |
| 17 | Tulip | 1 stem multi-coloured |
| 18 | Tulip | 1 stem serrated edges |
| 19 | Tulip | 1 stem Multi-headed |
| 20 | Vase of Tulips | 5 stems – mixed, 2 or more varieties |
| 21 | Muscari (Grape Hyacinth) | 5 stems. 1 or more varieties |
| 22 | Heathers | 3 sprays (in bloom), 1 or more varieties |
| 23 | Primrose/Primula | 5 stems, single headed |
| 24 | Polyanthus | 5 stems, 1 or more varieties, multi-headed |
| 25 | Flowering Shrub | 1 Spray (in bloom). |
| 26 | Camellia Flower Head | 1 Flower Head floating in own bowl. |
| 27 | Spring Flowers | Any kind including shrubs. Max 9 stems |

Classes 28-36 are for growing plants.

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|----|-------------------------------|--|
| 28 | Single Bulb | Any bulb variety |
| 29 | Container of Bulbs, | Container not to exceed 30cm diameter |
| | Tubers or Corms | |
| 30 | Alpines | Floral or foliage. Container not to exceed 30cm in diameter. |
| | No House Leeks. (Sempervivum) | |
| 31 | Spring Container | Judged as seen |

All Pot Plants not to exceed 60cm width or depth

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|----|-----------|---|
| 32 | Pot Plant | 1 Plant ,foliage only, pot not to exceed 12.5cm in diameter |
| 33 | Pot Plant | 1 Plant, foliage only, in pot 12.5 to 25cm in diameter |
| 34 | Pot Plant | 1 Plant, in bloom, pot not to exceed 25cm in diameter |

- 35 Pot Plant 1 Cactus or Succulent, pot not to exceed 25cm in diameter
36 Pot Plant 1 Orchid, pot not to exceed 25cm in diameter

Classes 37-39 Doilies are provided.

- 37 Rhubarb 3 sticks, not forced
38 Leeks 2
39 Any other Vegetable or salading Minimum 2

SECTION 3**COOKING & HANDICRAFTS**

Plates are provided for Classes 43 to 48 inclusive and MUST be used.

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|----|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 40 | Chutney or Pickle | 1 jar. |
| 41 | Marmalade | 1 jar. Lid see notes on page 17 |
| 42 | Treacle tarts | 18cm approx. |
| 43 | Cheese Scones | Show 5 |
| 44 | Lemon Drizzle | Use Loaf tin 18cm approx. |
| 45 | Flap Jacks | Show 5 pieces |
| 46 | Cake made from a Cake Mix | Men Only . Approx 18cm tin. Kit |
| 47 | Cup cakes | Show 5 |
| 48 | Any other Cake | Approx 18cm tin. Cake must be named. |

Maximum size for all Photographs A5 (148.5 x 210 mm) unmounted

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|----|------------|--------------|
| 49 | Photograph | Fungi |
| 50 | Photograph | Road Works |
| 51 | Photograph | Spring Bulbs |

The following exhibits must have been made in the last 12 months and not previously exhibited or worn.

- 52 Knitting or Crochet Any article.
53 Embroidery Any article
54 New From Old Any article any medium
55 Dress making Any article
56 A Toy Any Medium
57 Any other type of handicraft Not computer generated. (Hand crafted)

SECTION 4**JUNIORS**

All work must be done by the Child unaided.

- A Easter Bonnet A decorated hat.

- B Potato Print Use A4 sheet of paper
 C Picture of Spring On A4 (max) paper or card
 D Any item of handicraft

SPRING SHOW 6th April 2024

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57			

Name					Tel No				
JUNIORS	A	B	C	D		A	B	C	D

Name	Age	Name	Age
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ENTRY FORMS

Please circle each class number you wish to enter.

Remember only 1 entry is allowed per person in each class.

There will be no penalty if you do not have a worthy exhibit on the day of the show.

Please give your entries to, ring or email:-

Mrs B Winton OR
 2 Elm Hill
 Normandy
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 Tel: 01252 333756

email : brendawinton@btinternet.com

Mrs H Chant
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 GU52 8LF
 Tel:- 07754 888994

Email: hazel@chant.org.uk

Don't forget the PLANT SALE on Saturday 11^h May at 10am until 1pm in the Victoria Hall, Ash Hill Road.