

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

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- ☒ SUMMER SHOW 7th JULY
 - ☒ RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show – 1–6 July
 - ☒ RHS Flower Show Tatton Park – 16–20 July
 - ☒ AUTUMN SHOW 6th SEPTEMBER
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GARDENING CALENDAR JUNE

June is all about regular, consistent maintenance of your plants; in short, remember to weed, water and feed your plants, and do it often.

Feed

Pay special attention to container plants, bedding plants and veggies. Liquid-feed tubs and baskets every two weeks if you haven't already mixed in controlled-release fertiliser. Feed tomatoes, peppers and aubergines with a high-potash feed such as Tomorite every two weeks (also useful for feeding pelargoniums).

Harvest

June is also the time for harvesting onions – the right time is when the leaves turn yellow.

Bring indoors out

To maximise on summer blooms, move any summer flowering house plants into the garden.

THIS MONTHS RECIPE

ITALIAN CHICKEN CASSEROLE

You will need

Chicken pieces for 4
1 tablespoon seasoned flour
2oz margarine
1 medium onion
Half lb mushrooms
2 teaspoons sugar
3 table spoonfuls tomato puree
Half pint chicken stock (made from cube)
1 glass cooking sherry

To do

Dip chicken joints into seasoned flour.
Melt margarine in frying pan and quickly brown the joints.
Remove into casserole dish.
Pour away most of the fat and add the stock, tomato puree, sherry, sugar and any flour which is left
(it is best to mix this with a little cold water as it could go lumpy)
Bring to the boil, stirring all the time
As soon as it thickens pour over the chicken joints.
Cover and cook at Reg. 6 for half hour then turn down to Reg. 3 for one & half hours.

WOODS AND HEDGES

BUGLE *Ajuga reptans*

The nectar of this unassuming perennial herb is very sought after by butterflies. It has few other obvious attributes but has unusually dark leaves. These are round tipped and smooth, and can be a dusky violet in colour, especially those which shorten into bracts high up on the stem.

Bugle has a very dense flower head, a series of whorls each made up of 5 or 6 flowers growing from the axils of a pair of bracts. It is out from May to July. As in other dead-nettles or labiates, the stem is square and the flowers are composed of a spiky calyx and an attractively sculptured and colourful corolla. This is bright blue, heavily veined, with two small side lobes and a much larger lower lobe. Although characteristic of most kinds of woodland, especially clearings and coppices, this plant can also be found on open hillsides. It grows to a height of 10–25cm and spreads from its rootstock by means of long runners or stolons.

GIANT BELLFLOWER *Campanula latifolia* Few wild flowers are encountered during a woodland walk that are so impressive as the giant bellflower, a goliath among a family of plants that also contains the harebell (page 69). The stems are up to a metre in height and are slightly hairy. The leaves are bluntly toothed; those growing directly from the rootstock are heart shaped, those growing alternately up the stem decrease in size and are more oval or spear shaped with much shorter stalks. Each stem carries a raceme of several flowers. These have corollas 4 or 5cm long, usually purple/blue but sometimes white in colour. It is the size of these tube-shaped flowers that comes as such a surprise. Giant bellflower is a perennial flowering in high summer, commoner in the north than the south and characteristic of woods and hedgerows that are very shady

KITCHEN GARDEN - SIMON COURTAULD

DAHLIAS

My wife grows several varieties of dahlia successfully every year. Either they are left in the ground and covered with a mulch after the first frosts, or the roots are lifted and stored in sand over winter.

However, there is another use for the roots – which she would not allow, but was favoured by the Aztecs of Mexico centuries ago. They can be eaten.

Anyone who doubts the edible qualities of dahlia roots should refer to the Royal Horticultural Society's book *Vegetables for the Gourmet Gardener*, in which two pages are devoted to them.

They became less popular in Mexico with the arrival of potatoes from South America, But when the plants were introduced to Europe in the late-18th century by the Swedish botanist Anders Dahl, he recommended dahlia roots as food because, unlike potatoes, they were resistant to blight.

The roots are roughly oval in shape, some with the appearance, though not the colour, of a small sweet potato, while others that we have dug resemble baby new potatoes.

According to the RHS, they can be used and cooked in the same ways as potatoes. Having boiled, sliced and fried a couple of tubers, I would say they have the taste and texture of water chestnuts. With bacon and mustard, they were perfectly acceptable.

If anyone cares to experiment with dahlia tubers in the kitchen, beware of those that have been bought recently from a garden centre, as they may have been chemically treated.

If grown for food, the tubers should be planted about six inches deep in spring, and most of the flower heads removed so that the plant's energy will be directed at the root system.

However, I am sure our dahlias will once again be grown this year principally for their glorious summer colour. Among favourite varieties are the rich, dark red of *After Dusk*, the bright pink *Selina*, the creamy pillows of *Cafe au Lait* and the star-shaped white *Honka Fragile*. No wonder the Mexicans, having gathered the tubers since time immemorial, decided 60 years ago to declare the dahlia the country's national flower.

A GOOD YEAR FOR THE ROSES

DAVID WHEELER

Was there ever such a year as this for roses? Mine began in May. The ground was moist from plentiful April rain and, throughout the 'merry month' they relished a succession of warm, sunny days and – a rare treat here on the Welsh border – a string of frost-free nights.

Roses stole my heart in June in the Netherlands, especially in the garden of veteran designer Albert Tielens, where they intermingled with clematis and climbed athletically into trees, dipping swags of flowery limbs into stretches of cool, reflecting water. A week later, I admired roses in the Azores, that Portuguese archipelago of nine volcanic islands halfway to Bermuda where, in some respects, the clocks stopped fifty years ago. While it can be too damp for some varieties in the mid-Atlantic, the climate is nevertheless perfect for hydrangeas, good companions for those roses that do flourish there.

One of England's greatest collections of roses resides at Mottisfont Abbey in Hampshire. They were the prized personal collection of rosarian Graham Stuart Thomas (1909–2003), legendary gardens advisor to the National Trust, and remain one of that institution's most valued horticultural possessions. But I hear the cry, 'Roses flower for such a short time, leaving behind a mess of twiggy branches of no ornamental worth.' Not necessarily so.

Take any rose catalogue and look for 'repeat' or 'perpetual' varieties. They are numerous and exist in splendour far beyond the stiff, less interesting and all-too-familiar Hybrid Teas.

Old favourites include such Hybrid Perpetuals as highly scented, slightly cupped, clear, rose-pink 'Baroness

Rothschild' (a repeater), Fisher Holmes' (a continuous flowerer edging towards scarlet and crimson), and Mrs John Lang', another repeater with 'scented, shapely, silver-pink flowers' beloved of Victorian and Edwardian gardeners. The late Peter Beales described this classification of roses as having emerged in the 1830s, 'born from a varied and complex union, in which the Chinas, Portlands, Bourbons, Noisettes and, later, the Teas all played their part'.

Of today's breeders, David Austin can be ranked in the premier league. His so-called English Roses have admirers around the temperate world, and many of his introductions flower continually throughout summer, are disease-resistant, fragrant and delightfully old-fashioned in appearance. No one should be without his 'Gertrude Jekyll', his finest, perhaps - upright, robust, free-flowering, deep pink, with 'a very strong, rich Old Rose fragrance of a high quality'. Jekyll (rhymes with treacle) wrote a string of important books from her Surrey home, Munstead Wood, and not surprisingly Austin has given that name to another, more recent, good doer, bearing dark crimson/purple flowers.

A group consisting of just these two varieties will give great pleasure right through to the first frosts of autumn.

If your preference is for yellow - a strong yellow - then Austin's award-winning 'Graham Thomas' (yes, commemorating the aforementioned rose aficionado) is without rival. It's somewhat upright, therefore good in formal plantings, with a fresh Tea Rose fragrance overlaid with a hint of violets. From the same stable comes 'The Pilgrim', of a softer, paler yellow classified as a climbing English musk rose.

I no longer have beds and borders dedicated solely to roses, preferring instead to set them among other flowering shrubs. I'm pleased if they flop into the arms of neighbouring plants and thrilled when they infiltrate the lower branches of nearby trees. Can one sensibly ever have too many of them?

ASH PARISH GARDEN CLUB TRIPS 2025

Sunday 29th June 2025. Visit Shere Open Gardens, Shere GU5 9JA

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

Leave Victoria Hall at 1pm returning 6pm approx.. Cost £16 include both travel and entrance fees Refreshments are available. £5 deposit secures a place. Details of paying below

Sunday 13th July 2025 . Visit RHS Wisley

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/gardens/wisley>

Leave Victoria Hall at 1pm returning 5pm approx.. Cost £6 if you travel on bus, FREE if you use your own transport. Meet at entrance to collect your tickets at 1:30pm .

If you want to go on any trip please see Ian at the rear of the Hall, or email him on ian@chant.org.uk or telephone 07850 498544

payments can be done on line

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