

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

TRIPS FOR 2022

All deposits are non returnable

10th July Penshurst Place Gardens <https://www.penshurstplace.com/>

Leave Victoria Hall at 10am. There's a Café on site. Return to Victoria Hall approx. 5pm Cost £23 each **Deposit £10 to reserve your place**

11th September Broughton Grange as seen on TV

<https://www.broughtongrange.com/gardens>

Meet at Victoria Hall at 9am. Return to Victoria Hall approx. 6pm. Comfort stops in both directions. There's a Café on site. Cost £30 each **Deposit £10 to reserve your place**

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

AUTUMN SHOW MOVED TO 17th September

GARDENING CALENDAR AUGUST

August is the first harvest month; it is also the time to begin tidying up your garden as the early-summer-growing plants begin to finish flowering and collapse.

Harvest

Now is the time to pick sweet corn, tomatoes, peas, beans, marrows, pumpkins, artichokes and glasshouse crops such as chillies and aubergines. Push straw or old tiles under ripening squash and pumpkins to stop rotting on the soil surface.

Protect

Tie in tall late-summer perennials to stop them flopping over.

Prune

Lavender and rosemary will have finished flowering by now, so lightly trim them gently shear the new soft growth, but don't cut into the older brown wood. Likewise, trim off foliage from strawberries once they've finished fruiting. In the middle of the month stop outdoor tomatoes by pinching out the uppermost terminal shoot.

Water

Water in dry spells, from a water butt or by re-using lightly used bathwater.

Mow

Mow the lawn at least once a week. Raise the blades if the weather is hot and dry to stop the sward turning brown.

Pick pumpkins this month as well as tomatoes, artichokes and glasshouse crops such as chillies and aubergines

THE MESSAGE OF THE GARDEN**The Duality of Weeds**

We gardeners consider the 'worst' weeds to be those we just can't get rid of. Bindweed and 'tree of heaven' are the worst offenders in my garden; they have multiple ways to spread and will grow just about anywhere. No matter how many I pull up, there are always more. While I cannot guarantee that my vegetable garden will do well this year, or that my flowers will continue to thrive, I can utterly and completely guarantee that these weeds, as well as many others, will be a part of my garden this summer.

Is there much else in life we can rely on so thoroughly? I suppose it's a matter of supply and demand. We don't invest in weeds, for we know they will be there. We invest in stocks, for the risk makes them valuable. Why do we so devalue something we can depend on? Instead of devaluing them, I have learned to determine weeds' purposes, for it is a relationship I can depend on.

THE USEFULNESS OF WEEDS

The kinds of weeds present in a garden or other habitat can tell us about the land itself, as well as what minerals may be present or lacking. Foxtail, horsetail and willow indicate that the land will be wet and swampy, during at least part of the year. Chicory and bindweed indicate compacted soil. Dandelions, mullein, yarrow and nettles indicate an acidic soil, while field pepperwort and campion show you the soil is alkaline. Gardeners can use these indicators to tell us either what will grow well in this soil, or what remediation is needed.

One reason these weeds grow in their particular soil conditions is that they can, but another reason is that they offer some remediation to the soil's challenges.

Bindweed and clover work to break up soil. Dandelions and sunflowers accumulate minerals in their plant tissue, which can either help pull minerals from deep down and make them available to surface-growing plants, or actually remove excess minerals from the soil. This is so effective it is used to remediate toxic soil. Here we again see an example of the dynamic relationship between soil and plants. We are reminded that plants aren't just growing things, but have a purpose in a web we only slightly understand.

We can benefit from these weeds' gifts directly as well. Dandelions, when one eats the whole of the plant, provide a complete protein. They are highly nutritious and, since they are so easy to grow, could help to provide a solution to malnutrition in some parts of the world. One of my favourite weeds to eat is nettle, which also happens to be one of the most nutritious plants on Earth. Learning how to eat the weeds in your garden cultivates a whole new relationship with the land.

A MINDFUL APPROACH

Transforming our understanding of weeds, however, is only half of a mindful relationship with these plants. The other way we need to relate to them from a mindful perspective is to notice our resistance to them. A mindful approach to weeds does not try to make a bad situation good, although there is nothing inherently wrong with doing so. A mindful approach simply sits with the weeds as they are, without trying to manipulate their existence into something that benefits us. Notice how when I say 'weed', the feeling in your body is different from when I say 'pea plant' or 'peony'. Neither response is good or bad, it's just an opportunity to notice how we cling to one thing or another. We become attached to something as 'good' or 'bad'. That attachment itself is also neither good nor bad, it just is. It is an opportunity to notice, and then to notice what arises once we develop awareness.

When I allow bindweed to simply be a part of my garden, I don't have to surrender to it. I still pull up as much as I can, stuff it into a black plastic bag and stick

the bag in my hot driveway to cook the seeds before adding the mass to the compost. But no longer do I fight the bindweed. No longer do I curse and stress about how my garden is less than perfect and I am a failure as a gardener because of its presence. I just accept that part of my garden is bindweed, and move forward from the place of acceptance.

THIS MONTHS RECIPE

Plum squares

Serves 12-16

You will need

300g self-raising flour
300g light brown sugar
150g butter

For the topping

300g sour cream
2 eggs
150g plums, roughly chopped

To do

- 1.** Preheat your oven to 160°C (140°C fan, 325°F, gas mark 3) and line a 30cm by 20cm deep-sided baking tray with baking parchment paper.
- 2.** Mix the flour and sugar, and rub in the butter until you have a sandy texture.
- 3.** Spread half of this mixture in your lined tray and press down gently with a spatula or back of a spoon until you have an even layer.
- 4.** Add the sour cream and eggs to the remaining flour mix and stir until just combined and with only a few lumps remaining.
- 5.** Pour this mixture over the base of your tin and spread evenly. Top with the chopped plums, arranging them evenly over the surface.
- 6.** Place in the oven and bake for 35-40 minutes or until golden and set.
- 7.** Once cooked remove from the oven. Let your bake cool completely before cutting.

Top tip Add a sprinkle of icing sugar and some freshly scraped vanilla seeds to double cream and whip lightly, then serve on top.

FLOATING REED BEDS

As installed on the Hanwell Canal Lock Flight
THE Hanwell Locks Partnership June task party was spent helping the Canal River Trust plant floating reed beds for the side ponds of Lock 97 on the Grand Union Canal.

This new floating ecosystem at the Lock 97 side ponds follows on from a successful installation of similar floating beds at the Lock 96 side ponds in 2020.

The coir floating beds, planted with a variety of native wetland and marginal vegetation, provide a transitional habitat important for the newts residing within the ponds, and an easy means of movement between habitats for amphibians. They also provide a great spawning habitat for fish and habitats for insects such as dragonflies and damselflies.

At the task party the interlocking units were bolted together by IWA volunteers on the lock side before being planted with a variety of sedges,

rushes and reeds. Finally, the beds were manoeuvred into the two side pond basins.

A cable system will be used to tether the floating ecosystem to the rear wall of the side ponds, and this is designed to accommodate variations in water level and future operational use of the side ponds by the volunteer lock keepers at Hanwell.

The partnership is a joint IWA West London and Canal & River Trust initiative for the care, conservation and restoration of the Hanwell Flight and Norwood Locks. Its volunteer activities extend over one mile of the Grand Union Canal from the head of Norwood Top Lock (Lock 90) to the confluence with the River Brent below the Hanwell Flight (Locks 92 to 97).

Norwood Locks and the Hanwell Flight are separated by a 500-metre pound which is the site of Three Bridges, – a Scheduled Monument and a rare intersection of canal, road and railway engineered by Isambard Kingdom Brunel.

Constructed in 1794, the Hanwell flight of locks together with the lock side ponds and the boundary wall of the former Middlesex County Asylum (completed 1831) is a Scheduled Monument.

The locks and side ponds at Hanwell are recognised as a non-statutory wildlife site due to the intrinsic value for wildlife and the associated connections to other important habitats, including the River Brent corridor and the nearby public open space of Jubilee Meadow and Blackberry Corner, managed by Ealing Council.

The offside of the canal supports a diverse range of wildlife including amphibians, wetland bird species, aquatic vegetation such as reed beds, sedges, rushes and wetland trees including willow and poplar.

PEST OR DISEASE CONTROL

Pest or disease control relies in the first instance on the use of good gardening techniques and many attacks can be kept under control and to an acceptable level with due care to the following:

- Good planting preparation
- Good plant feeding » Correct pruning » General garden hygiene
- » Leaving an air space of at least 5cm behind supports for plants grown on walls or fences.

- That wherever possible the growing area is kept open and good air circulation is allowed to flow.

By ensuring these points are followed, plants will be encouraged to grow well and produce natural enzymes in their leaves that naturally control many pest or disease attacks. The main aim should be to break the life cycle of the pest or disease, so stopping the possibility of reinfestation.

Methods

BIOLOGICAL CONTROL: Many outbreaks of pests can be controlled by introducing a live predator that will attack the pests without damaging the plants. Biological control works particularly well in the protected environment of a greenhouse or conservatory, and can go a long way in reducing the severity of an attack. Suitable predators are usually supplied by mail order but some garden centres stock them. Ask at your garden centre or nursery, or visit www.rhs.org.uk/advice/biocontrol.asp

CHEMICAL & MECHANICAL CONTROL: There is a wide range of chemical and mechanical controls for serious pest and disease infestations, sold as insecticides, fungicides and herbicides. They can give safe and effective results if used properly, but they are also harmful to the environment so should only be used as a last resort and must be stored safely.

SAFE USE: Always read the instructions and apply in the manner stated. Wear gloves if possible and always wash your hands after using chemicals. Keep all chemicals out of the reach of children and animals.

Pests

APHIDS: feed on the leaves, stems and flowers of ornamental plants, vegetables and fruits. They are also known as greenfly or blackfly, but the insects can be pink, cream or mottled. Broad beans and elder bushes are prone to blackfly attack. Symptoms: sap-feeding insects infesting plants, especially on shoot tips, flower buds and leaf undersides. The foliage may be sticky with honeydew that aphids excrete and a black sooty mould often develops on the honeydew. Control: pick aphids off plants by hand and nip out affected shoot tips as soon as aphids are seen. Natural enemies of aphids are ladybirds, parasitic wasps and larvae of lacewing and hoverfly (shown above). Spray plants with pyrethrum, rotenone, fatty acids, plant and fish oils or plant extracts. For higher levels of control use bifenthrin or imidacloprid.

RED SPIDER MITE: are mainly a problem in greenhouses or for house plants. Symptoms: pale mottling on the leaves and, in bad infestations, fine webs around the leaf and shoot tips. Control: keep the air humid by damping down greenhouses, spraying plants with water and placing houseplants on damp pea gravel. Destroy affected leaves and shoots. Predatory mite *Phytoseiulus persimilis* feeds on the eggs or spray with bifenthrin.

WHITEFLY: mainly affect greenhouse plants, especially fuchsias and tomatoes, and brassicas outdoors in summer and autumn. Symptoms: clouds of small, white-winged insects fly up from the leaf undersides when touched. Leaves become sticky and have black sooty mould. Control: use biological control, yellow sticky traps or spray with bifenthrin, plant extracts, plant oils or fatty acids.

VINE WEEVIL: grubs attack the roots of almost any young plant and are also fond of the tubers of begonia and cyclamen. Plants in pots are particularly at risk. Symptoms: plants turn yellow and wilt, by which time it is probably too late to save them. Control: pick off and destroy any newly hatched adult vine weevils - use a torch to find them at night and look for notches bitten out of the sides of leaves. Sprinkle a thick layer of grit around plants at risk and don't leave old compost lying around in pots and baskets. To kill the grubs in containers, water pathogenic nematode *Heterorhabditis megidis* into the potting compost or apply a pesticide that contains imidacloprid. This is available as a slow-release formulation pre-mixed with a peat compost, sold as Levington Plant Protection Compost.

SLUGS & SNAILS: will attack any soft, lush plant. Hostas are a favourite, although hairy plants are usually fairly safe. Symptoms: slugs tend to attack plants close to the ground and eat all parts of the leaves and even tubers underground. Snails climb, so look for slime trails and nibbled leaves, even on plants in pots. Control: place barriers such as prickly leaves or really sharp grit around plants, or a ring of petroleum jelly around the top of pots is effective particularly with hostas. Collect slugs and snails by hand and dispose of them. A nematode *Phasmarhabditis hermaphrodita* works specifically against slugs and is simply watered on to the ground. Use slug pellets sparingly. You can also try beer traps, with a jam jar part filled with beer sunk into the soil near vulnerable plants, and empty it regularly.

Diseases

BLACKSPOT: is a fungal disease most prevalent in wet weather as it is spread by water droplets. If left untreated, susceptible plants can lose their leaves. Symptoms: black patches appear on rose leaves and stems. Leaves fall prematurely. Control: remove infected and fallen leaves promptly and regularly. Hard prune infected bushes in spring and burn the prunings. Spray with penconazole, flutriafol or myclobutanil, alternated with mancozeb, a protectant to prevent the fungus from developing resistance to the fungicides.

MILDEW: is caused by a range of closely related fungal species. Some mildews can spread to cultivated plants from closely related weed hosts, so weed control is an important part of disease limitation. Many garden plants are affected, both woody and herbaceous, particularly apple trees, roses, sweet peas and those growing in containers. Vegetable foliage is also prone, including beetroot, parsnip and spinach. Symptoms: a dry whitish powder - coating leaves, shoot tips and often flowers - is especially visible in summer. Other symptoms include stunted and distorted growth, and reduced flowering. Control: susceptibility to the disease can be reduced as follows:

- keep plants well watered, so they are not dry at the roots.
- mulch to preserve soil moisture.
- improve air-flow around plants to reduce humidity. Prune woody plants such as roses to establish an open branch structure. Avoid overcrowding smaller plants and thin vegetable crops to recommended spacing.
- avoid high-nitrogen fertilisers, as these encourage soft sappy growth that is more easily colonised by fungi.
- ensure plants are in their ideal position. For example, a sun-lover will struggle in shade and be at greater risk of infection.
- check catalogues and grow resistant varieties where possible.
- prune out infected areas as soon as seen. Collect and destroy all infected debris and prunings.
- For roses and other ornamental plants, use fungicides myclobutanil, penconazole, flutriafol or sulphur.

- For other plants, check the labels carefully before choosing, as pesticides can only legally be used on the range of plants specified on the label. Sometimes the label will also list certain cultivars that can be damaged by the application of a specific fungicide, for example sulphur dusts may damage certain gooseberry and apple cultivars.

GREENHOUSES & CONSERVATORIES

Pests and disease can thrive in a greenhouse or conservatory, but risks will be reduced if the following points are considered and practised.

Keep vents and doors open whenever possible throughout the year.

Maintain a humid atmosphere.

Store pots, tools and other materials elsewhere.

Carry out gardening operations such as potting up away from the greenhouse or conservatory.

Wash all pots and trays used for a second or subsequent time.

Only use potting composts once, and never use garden soil as both can carry the eggs and spores or pests and diseases.

Each winter, wash down the inside of the greenhouse with a household disinfectant.

Keep an ever-watchful eye for the first signs of pest or disease attack and remove any affected plants from the greenhouse to deal with the problem.

Remove and destroy any dead leaves and flowers once seen.

Do not allow plants to dry out or overwater them, particularly in the winter months.

SUMMER SHOW RESULTS

Sect 1 Fruit Flower and Veg 1st 42pts Hazel Chant, 2nd 41pts Ann Poole, 3rd 28pts Muriel Brodrick

Best Rose Class 72 Muriel Brodrick, **New Exhibitor** Katherine Everard

Sect 2 Floral 1st = 5pts Katherine Everard and Muriel Brodrick

3rd = 4 pts Kathy Wagstaff and Ann Poole