

**ASH PARISH GARDEN CLUB OFFICERS**

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**EDITORS NOTES**

Brian –Stories to [ernestperry33@gmail.com](mailto: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.

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## TRIPS FOR 2022

All deposits are non returnable

### **21st May Wisley**

Meet at Victoria Hall at 1pm.

Cost for people on Minibus £5 each. No cost for those using own Transport that meet at Wisley Entrance at 1:30pm. Return to Victoria Hall approx.

5pm **Deposit £5 to reserve your place on the Bus**

### **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**

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## GARDENING CALENDAR FEBRUARY

A lot can be achieved in your garden during February, particularly on days when the ground isn't frozen or waterlogged.

### **Plant**

Plant bare-root trees and shrubs, and 'in-the-green' snowdrops (snowdrops with leaves). This is also a good month for planting Jerusalem artichokes, shallots, raspberries and blackberry canes, if weather conditions permit.

**Prune**

February is also the time to hard-prune your hedges, if you didn't do it in the autumn. Deciduous garden hedges can all be cut back fairly hard now. Make sure the frosts haven't lifted newly planted trees and shrubs, re-firm around them lightly using your hands or heels if necessary.

In terms of plant maintenance, now is the time to cut back deciduous grasses, ideally down to 15-20cm before new shoots emerge. Deadhead winter bedding plants for bushier displays later in the year, and start preparing seed beds for spring vegetable sowings.

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**DATES FOR YOUR DIARY****SPRING SHOW 9th APRIL**

RHS Malvern Spring Festival – 5–8 May

**PLANT SALE 7th MAY**

RHS Chelsea Flower Show – 24–28 May

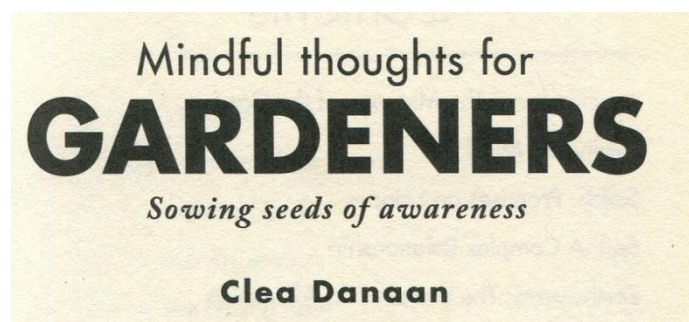
**SUMMER SHOW 4th JULY**

RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show – 4–9 July

RHS Flower Show Tatton Park – 20–24 July

**AUTUMN SHOW 10th September**

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**THE MESSAGE OF THE GARDEN**

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**Beginner's****Mind**

Considering the mind of an infant exploring the garden anew can help us understand the Buddhist concept of beginner's mind - a mind that is open, without preconception. One summer day, when my daughter was about ten months old, I couldn't find her anywhere. Our house is fairly small, so a quick survey of rooms left me even more puzzled. The back door was open, but she couldn't walk yet, and had some trouble crawling off the raised

deck. So I was surprised to discover her all the way up the garden (a long way to crawl), her chubby, cloth-napped bottom settled happily in front of the tomato jungle. Later I saw how she got herself to the garden, crawling on hands and feet, lifting her tender knees up to protect them from the scratchy grass and wood chips. This was one determined baby.

Once she got herself up the garden, she sought out green globes of immature tomatoes, picked one, took a bite, made a face while tossing it aside and moved on to another. I added many one-bite green tomatoes to my compost that year. It sort of annoyed me, but at the same time I celebrated her determination and curiosity. I found it fascinating that she knew how to get her little self to the garden, and knew that in theory those tomatoes were edible, but then didn't revise her strategy when they tasted bitter and green. Or perhaps she didn't set out with 'eating tomatoes' as a goal, but rather just met each opportunity on the path as it arose.

My daughter had approached the garden with some sort of goal or idea in mind, but also an open mind, a beginner's mind. Each tomato was a new opportunity, a new choice point. Whereas I came to the garden with an agenda, she just found herself before a green tangle of plants and chose to take a bite.

## **KEEPING AN OPEN MIND**

To be successful as gardeners we need our list of things to do, and we are constantly reading blog posts and books or taking classes to learn more. I just learned, for instance, that I have to pinch off the first generation of pepper flowers in order to get larger peppers. Now I've added that task to my to-do list, I get better peppers. (I always wondered why they were so tiny!)

When considering a mindful approach to gardening, however, we also need to gently hold the idea of beginner's mind. Yes, we have our plans and agenda, but each garden, each pepper plant, each flower, is new. It has never existed before. Nor has this moment in time.

We are beginners in this moment. When we approach a plant or a task with an open mind, we enter 'original mind', the place that mindfulness can bring us that is hard to express through words. We exist and the pepper plant exists now, here. In beginner's mind, we release ourselves from the need to achieve anything. We can chomp a green tomato just because it's there.

**LIMITED AND LIMITLESS**

Here is the challenge: can we hold the dialectic -both/and - of plans and open mind? Limitations are important, healthy parts of our world. Yet we can get trapped in our limitations, not seeing the garden for the pepper flowers. Our mind becomes demanding, and we get stuck in striving. Beginner's mind helps us step out of these limitations, this striving, and become boundless. We are simultaneously limited and limitless.

My baby daughter did have an agenda, whether she was aware of it or not: to learn. The human mind has a pull to grow, reach, understand. These are important

parts of who we are, throughout all stages of life. This striving to expand our relationship with the world should not, however, be nurtured at the expense of the calm, centred awareness that keeps us connected to our core self, which no striving can change. We can be the tomato plant, reaching into the soil for nutrients and up to the sun for light, yet inhabiting its tomato self only in the here and now. In this way, our mind is open and ready, containing both our limitations and our boundlessness.

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**AWARDS FOR LIVING WALL AT CITY ROUNDABOUT**

Team praised for improving air quality

Southampton City Council and its highways partner Balfour Beatty Living Places have won both a gold and silver award for the Living Wall project on Millbrook roundabout.

The awards were presented as part of The Green Organisation's Green Apple awards, which celebrate projects enhancing the environment.

The Living Wall is made up of ten large panels and more than 11,000 plants that create a display and add to the city's number of green spaces. Although hidden by the foliage, the bespoke panels house an integrated watering system that uses sensors to maximise efficiency and minimise water waste.

The council worked closely with vertical green infrastructure specialist, Biotecture, and highways partner Balfour Beatty Living Places, to design and build a structure that is intended to help the area be more visually

appealing while using nature to remove air pollutants. The project contributes to the council's commitment to creating a cleaner, greener city and its award has been welcomed.

Cabinet member for Environment, Cllr Steve Galton, said: "It's an honour to have the Living Wall on Millbrook roundabout recognised by The Green Organisation's Green Apple awards. This just a start for our Greener City plans as we are proactively bringing forward a wide range of exciting projects that work together to help us achieve our goal of becoming a cleaner, greener city. Achieving these ambitious plans means that we will continue to work with our excellent partners to deliver such environmentally beneficial projects – well done all!"

Judges at the Green Apple Awards commended the team on the way it delivered a blueprint for demonstrating how improved air quality could be achieved using living walls on highway schemes across the country. The gold award was presented in the 2020 category, and the same project received silver for 2021.

When Millbrook Roundabout was completed in 2019 it became the first highway scheme in the UK to incorporate living walls.

The Green Apple Awards for Environmental Best Practice are an internationally recognised platform. Projects that enter the awards are assigned Bronze, Silver or Gold, with the latter going to those that demonstrate exceptional environmental excellence. The awards attract hundreds of entries each year and a select few winners are invited to the presentation ceremony in London.

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## **THIS MONTHS RECIPE**

Flourless chocolate 'cloud' cake with whipped cream & raspberries

Serves 10

Prepare 20 minutes + cooling

Cook 35 minutes

### **You will need**

125g unsalted butter, plus j extra for greasing

200g dark chocolate, chopped into smallish chunks

1 tbsp instant coffee

6 Medium Free Range Eggs

175g golden caster sugar  
3 tbsp cocoa powder  
170ml tub double cream  
1 tsp vanilla bean paste  
150g raspberries

**To do**

**1** Preheat the oven to 180°C, gas mark 4 and lightly grease and line the base of a 20cm loose-bottomed or spring form cake tin with baking parchment. Place the butter, chocolate and coffee in a heatproof bowl and set over a pan of barely simmering water, stirring occasionally until combined and melted. Remove from the heat and set aside.

**2** Separate the egg whites and yolks into two large mixing bowls. Using electric beaters, whisk the egg whites to soft peaks. Add the sugar to the egg yolks and whisk (there's no need to clean the beaters in between) for a couple of minutes until light and voluminous.

**3** Stir the melted chocolate mixture into the egg yolks until combined, then stir in the cocoa powder. Fold in half the egg whites first, then continue with the remainder, trying to lose as little air as possible but making sure it's all incorporated. Tip the mixture into the cake tin and bake for 35 minutes until risen and cracked on top.

**4** Cool in the tin for 10 minutes, then remove the sides of the tin and leave to cool completely to room temperature, during which time it will sink in the middle. When ready to serve whisk the cream and vanilla paste to soft peaks. Pile into the middle of the cake and top with the raspberries.

**COOK'S TIP**

*This cake is best made a day in advance. Leaving it too cool properly overnight allows it to set and firm up in the centre, making it easier to slice.*

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**BEES TRAINED TO PREFER SUNFLOWERS**

Honeybees that have been coached to prefer feeding from sunflowers have boosted seed production on Argentinian farms by 60 per cent. Being given sugar with a sunflower-like scent encourages the bees to seek out and feed from similar flowers in their environment.

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**BRITAIN IN BLOOM****Steps to reduce climate change**

By Helena Horton

FOR almost 60 years the Britain in Bloom competition has inspired thousands to beautify their towns and villages with colourful floral displays.

But now hanging baskets and flowers planted in perfect formation are being shunned in favour of messy grassland and untamed hedges as the Royal Horticultural Society strives to turn the contest 'green'.

No longer will beauty be the main criteria for the competition - the eco-friendly credentials of village greens and town centres will take precedence.

Competitors will be penalised for over- use of bedding plants such as pansies, busy lizzies and begonias and are instead asked to plant perennials and herbs as they have a lower carbon footprint.

They will also be asked not to make their town centres too tidy and told to 'consider the needs of wildlife' when maintaining areas by 'avoiding hedge trimming in nesting season or leaving grass longer at certain times of year to support invertebrates'. The use of pesticides and herbicides will also be a no-no, with weeds removed by hand. And walls covered in moss and ivy will be encouraged in polluted areas to catch particulate matter.

The update to the rules is likely to change the appearance of many towns and villages that until now -have focused on creating flowerbeds with spectacular bursts of colour.

Britain in Bloom involves around 3,500 community gardening groups and hundreds of thousands of local volunteers who work year-round to keep their neighbourhoods beautiful and vie for awards.

It expanded from its roots in 1963 as a hanging-basket competition and became a national gardening movement. Now more than 1,600 towns, villages and cities take part each year.

Kay Clark, of the RHS, said: 'The campaign has moved away from the idea of beautiful flowers and making it all attractive to improving the local environment and using plants as a way to do that.'



She added the horticulture charity, which also runs the annual Chelsea Flower Show, will be offering tutorials for gardeners who want to learn how to be more eco-friendly.

Miss Clark said: 'We want people to grow their own plants or buy from local nurseries instead of using big garden centres.'

'We want people to start using green walls and roofs, planting to create barriers for pollution, taking steps to reduce climate change.'

Gardeners will also be asked to conduct nature surveys before and after they plant their gardens to see if their work has increased biodiversity. She added the horticulture charity, which also runs the annual Chelsea Flower Show, will be offering tutorials for gardeners who want to learn how to be more eco-friendly.

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Gardeners will also be asked to conduct nature surveys before and after they plant their gardens to see if their work has increased biodiversity. Miss Clark said: 'We are really thinking about wildlife. They need to look at making habitats - we are saying they should include hedges and ponds, integrate it right into their planting.' The last time the competition was held in 2019, before the pandemic, Perth in Scotland was crowned Britain in Bloom's Champion of Champions. Judges praised the city's stunning green spaces and 700 hanging baskets sponsored by local businesses.

