

ASH PARISH GARDEN CLUB OFFICERS

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EDITORS NOTES

Ash Parish Garden Club 60th birthday is this year so let's all try and make a memorable one, I've decided to share month by month a lovely little book I've enjoyed, so this will be instead of the poetry corner.

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.

TRIPS FOR 2022

Sunday 11th September 2022

Broughton Grange, Wickham Lane, Banbury, OX15 5DS as seen on TV Times and cost TBA

GARDENING CALENDAR JANUARY

January may seem like the dead of winter, but there is a lot to be done in your garden during this month.

Plants

Your plants will need protection and maintenance during this time of year. Brush snow from evergreens and conifers to stop the branches from bowing, breaking or splaying out under the sheer weight. If wet weather conditions have made ornamental grasses and other perennials fall flat, start cutting these back to give them a fresh start.

Protect

After plenty of rain, mulch beds and borders with leaf mould, manure, compost or shredded bark – a layer of around five to 10cm is ideal. Check protective fleece and straw is covering still-tender plants such as tree ferns.

Feed

Feed new plantings in late January with slow-release fertiliser such as Blood, Fish and Bone, and water, but leave the application of faster-acting organic fertilisers such as Growmore until the beginning of March. Wildlife also will benefit from your help at the beginning of the year. Start putting food and water in your garden for hungry and thirsty birds. To stop ponds and bird baths freezing over, leave a tennis ball to bob on top of the water.

Tidy

January is also an appropriate time for tidying your garden and maintaining and repairing your garden furniture and decking. Recycle cut trees by shredding them for mulch or compost. Repair and stain or paint fences, pergolas and wooden furniture if weather conditions permit. Scrub slippery garden decking and paving with hot soapy water; Patio Cleaner is useful for dirtier surfaces. Ventilate greenhouses and conservatories on hot sunny days, and wash the glass of the greenhouse to let in more light.

Be sure to put out feed for birds throughout the winter months

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

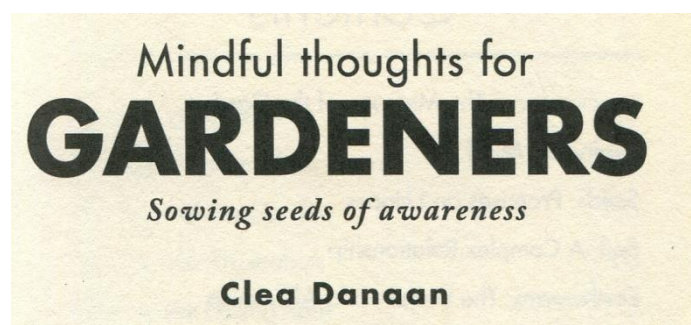
SUMMER SHOW 4th JULY

RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show - 4-9 July

RHS Flower Show Tatton Park - 20-24 July

AUTUMN SHOW 10th September

THE MESSAGE OF THE GARDEN



There is something about a garden that's unlike any other environment. For many, the garden is a place to come home to oneself - with our hands tucked into living soil, we breathe in the scent of rosemary and mint, and we know who we are. The garden, whether a place for edibles or flowers or cactus, connects us to our physical self, our compassionate heart and our infinite soul. It is art, food and relationship with literally billions of beings. In the middle of this simple yet complex dance, we enter into mindful presence. We are here and now, this breath, this taste of fresh green leaf. Our hearts need green and growing things to feel strong and healthy, not

just in terms of eating your greens, but in growing things green. Certainly, it just feels good to be around plants. When you grow them yourself, you cultivate unique relationships directly with plants.

Keeping food local and fresh is a powerful act of presence and responsibility. Growing your own food is one of the best things you can do for yourself and for the planet. Grow a little extra and you spread the nourishment to others. Whether you keep a little pot of herbs in the kitchen or you grow a farm's worth, bringing mindfulness to your garden can extend the important work of gardening into the realm of spiritual practice and emotional health.

There is so much more to a garden than the plants themselves. A garden is nutrients and soil, bees and nematodes, water and light. When we begin to explore all the different parts of a garden, including ourselves, we see how vast and complex the garden truly is. We begin to see ourselves as a part of a greater whole. We see how our actions affect other parts of that whole, and how they in turn affect us. In this way, the garden is a tool for compassion and deeper understanding. It's a wisdom we come to by doing, though reading about the garden can guide us to a different sort of knowing, too. In these pages we will contemplate all aspects of the garden, including some of those inside the gardener. We will discover how the garden is inside us, too. For of course a garden is not just a garden.

This book is not a how-to guide, though perhaps you will get some new ideas as you read. Some of it may not apply to your specific garden, for you might grow more roses than I do, or you may live in a climate different from mine. But the message of the garden is the same everywhere. The plants, and the beings that support them, ask nothing of you but respect and care. They do not see your struggles and they do not judge. They invite you to be in relationship with them, separate but connected. Gardens reflect to us our essential nature, alive, seeking the light, hopeful for the future but unattached. Perhaps these thoughts do the same, inviting you to breathe, stretch and come back to your essential self.

Where do butterflies go in winter?

Think of butterflies and usually we associate them with sultry summer days, but have you ever wondered how these delicate insects survive during harsh winters in the UK?

Butterflies are ectothermic – or cold-blooded – meaning they cannot regulate their own body temperature and instead rely on external heat sources to warm up. This is why butterflies perch on leaves to bask in the sun or, conversely, seek shaded spots to cool down.

So, naturally, butterflies begin to struggle when sources of heat become harder to find, hence why British winters pose a problem. To overcome temperate climates, butterflies have adapted in a remarkable number of ways in order to survive.

The most common way for butterflies to overwinter in Britain is either as a caterpillar in their larval stage, or as a chrysalis. To protect their soft and vulnerable bodies, caterpillars find refuge at the bottom of plants or bury themselves in leaf litter or soil where they wait, hopefully undisturbed, until spring. This tactic is used by 42 of Britain's 59 butterfly species, including orange-tips and common blue.

Another popular tactic, and one of the safest ways of surviving winter, is to wait it out as an egg. The brown hairstreak is one butterfly that employs this strategy. The adults are hard to see in summer as they fly high among tree-tops and hedges, so counting overwintering eggs on blackthorn is one of the most reliable ways of estimating their population.

Less common is the method chosen by five of the UK's most recognisable butterflies, namely brimstone, comma, peacock, small tortoiseshell and red admiral. These species overwinter in their adult forms and, in late summer or early autumn, will seek out safe and relatively warm spaces, such as inside sheds, garages, log piles or even rabbit holes. They then wake when temperatures rise and so are occasionally seen on warmer days in the depths of December and January.

Finally, the humble painted lady butterfly escapes the cold of British winter by making an epic migration to northern Africa in an incredible quest for warmer climes.

Despite these mighty displays of adaption to survive winter, butterfly numbers in Britain are decreasing rapidly. Once common species, like the small tortoiseshell, have fallen by 80% in Southeast England since 1990.

But there are several ways you can help these amazing insects:

- delay cutting back old plants and tidying up leaf litter until spring to provide butterflies with places to overwinter
 - leave a wilder area of your garden, with long grasses, ivy, shrubs, weeds and nettles to provides vital butterfly habitat
 - plan to plant some nectar-rich plants in your garden or window box for butterflies when they wake up in spring. Pollinator-friendly options include cowslips, rosemary, forget-me-knots, bugle, sweet William or heather
 - if you find a butterfly in your home, garage or shed, carefully catch the butterfly and place it in a cool spot. Once the butterfly settles you can gently move it to an unheated room in a shed, porch or garage. Remember to let the butterfly out of the building when it awakens in spring.
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AN AMERICAN PRAIRIE IN SUSSEX

Planting is underway to create a sweeping American prairie landscape - the first of its kind in the UK - at Kew's wild botanic garden, Wakehurst.

A team collected seeds from US prairies to transform six acres of the Sussex site into the famous grasslands, and create a sea of movement and beauty.

Wakehurst's rare breed cattle will fulfil the grazing role of bison and, by this summer, visitors will be able to see species such as pale purple cornflower and little bluestem grass.

A visit here in 2022 could be your only chance to see this type of prairie, as less than 1% of this type of ecosystems remain.
