

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

- **SPRING SHOW 8th APRIL**
 - RHS Malvern Spring Festival – 11-14 May
 - **PLANT SALE 6th MAY**
 - RHS Chelsea Flower Show – 23–27 May
 - **SUMMER SHOW 3rd JULY**
 - RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show – 4–9 July
 - RHS Flower Show Tatton Park – 19–23 July
- OUT MEETING 7th AUGUST**
- AUTUMN SHOW 9th SEPTEMBER**
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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

THE MESSAGE OF THE GARDEN

Attitude of Gratitude

A good way to stop anxiety in its tracks is to feel gratitude. Feeling a sense of thankfulness and even wonder for our lives is a form of mindfulness, which is why this works to halt anxiety. Even severe anxiety, as in a panic attack, lessens its grip a little when we sit mindfully with what is happening right now. I am alive. I am feeling sensations that I don't like, but I am feeling.

I need to remember this when I'm feeling cranky about my garden. Either something has died, or it's not yet time to plant, or I have only one measly grape on the vine. One grape, not one cluster. Yes, really. While I can allow myself to feel frustration and disappointment, I can also shift my perspective just a little to include gratitude. That one grape is really very pretty, and this grape vine is still alive. I have soil in which to plant a grape vine. I have a garden in which to cultivate that soil. Then my single grape becomes a celebration, instead of a whine fest.

PLANTS AS THERAPY

Gardens have pulled me out of some very dark times. After I moved to Colorado with my future husband, we lived in an apartment for six

months. During that time, his father died and I flailed about trying to figure out what I wanted to do with my life. When we moved to a house with a garden, I still didn't know what to do with myself, but I sunk my hands into the soil and felt a sense of myself again. That garden was a ray of light in a confusing time of life. Years later, when my own father died, I bought my mother some pansies, herbs and tomatoes and put them in pots outside her home. The garden had been Dad's realm, and I felt his presence strongly as I tucked soil around the roots of the new plants. I returned home after his service to find my grape vine (same one!) had come into leaf in my absence. Later I will tell you about my pear trees that gave me hope in this midst of a health crisis. I feel such gratitude for that first Colorado garden, those potted plants at my mother's house, the grape vine and the pear trees. Green and growing things have long centred me and offered me gifts of life.

Gardening lends itself to gratitude. Each day there is something new emerging in the world, brought there by the relationship I have with the Earth. A new leaf. A cluster of ladybird eggs. The first violets of spring. The blush of orange creeping across the pumpkin in autumn. What are you grateful for today?

GRATITUDE MEDITATION

Gratitude can be a part of your daily mindfulness practice. Like following your breath or tuning into present sensation, it can be done in just a moment. These little moments add up, shifting your overall perspective to one of presence and joy. Gratitude can also be the focus of a longer, more deliberate meditation. Here is one you can practise in your garden.

Find a place in your garden to sit comfortably. Take several breaths, following the air as it is pulled into your chest and released. Feel the pressure of your sitting bones on the ground or chair beneath you as the Earth pulls you towards her. Feel the sensation of air on your skin.

Open your eyes if they are closed, and let them rest gently on whatever is in front of you. What has that object brought you? Why is it in your life? Try not to get caught up in a story about this plant or garden structure, but let the reason and gift of this object simply arise in your mind. Is there a reason for gratitude for this item? Usually there is. Everything in my garden has a little bit of a story, from the plants to the mulch on the paths

to the reclaimed boards of the raised beds. What are the stories of your garden? What connections have brought these items before you at this point in time and what gifts will they bring you? Now gently shift your attention to something else nearby. Let its story arise, and send it gratitude. Stay present to your body, your breath and the now as you glance gently about your garden, sending out thankfulness.

Lastly, send your own self gratitude. Your body, heart and soul make this garden what it is. Notice how your energy has shifted simply by feeling gratitude.

THIS MONTHS RECIPE

Child's Play Quick and Easy Pizza

You will need

8 oz. mix of scone dough
A can of tinned chopped tomatoes, drained of juice
Crushed garlic
Ground black pepper
Grated Cheddar cheese or mozzarella
Basil/oregano/snipped chives

A choice of options: mushrooms, salami, ham/bacon, red, green or yellow peppers, anchovies

FOR THE SCONE DOUGH BASE:

8 oz. self raising flour
2 oz. British butter
Quarter pint whole milk
Pinch of salt

To do

Measure the flour into a bowl.
Add the butter and salt.
Finger the butter into the flour until it is similar to breadcrumbs.
Add the milk to form a soft dough & knead gently.
Roll out on a lightly floured work surface and place on a buttered pizza tin base.
Stir the crushed garlic evenly into the drained and chopped tomatoes.

Spread this mixture over the entire dough base.
Add the toppings of your choice from the list above.
Finally, top with the cheese and herbs of your choice.
Cook until the cheese is soft and the pizza dough cooked thoroughly.

A GARDEN FIT FOR A KING

DAVID WHEELER

We now have a garden-minded King. A gardening King. Charles's accession to the throne restored treasured memories of the few hours I spent with him (as Prince of Wales) at Highgrove House on a hot July afternoon and early evening in 1990.

The visit had been arranged by Rosemary Verey, who had helped design Highgrove's Cottage Garden for the Prince.

I was in the midst of writing a book about noteworthy gardens in my native Cotswolds, and Rosemary (famed garden designer and writer) insisted that 'without Highgrove, a book on Cotswold gardens would be incomplete'.

Published in 1991, *Over the Hill from Broadway: Images of Cotswold Gardens*, was illustrated by the artist Simon Dorrell, who had accompanied Rosemary and me to Highgrove the previous summer - when the Prince was recovering from an injury after falling from his horse during a charity polo match.

By 1990, the Prince had been at Highgrove for ten years and I already noted signs of maturity among acres poised on the brink of fulfilment.

Many hands played a role in designing individual parts of the garden. Sir Roy Strong helped with the hedges. He had worked up delightful drawings to show how swags, pompoms and Gothick 'windows' could be conjured from living plants, to bring movement, decoration and humour to the garden.

Sir Roy's love of topiary, superbly demonstrated at The Laskett in Herefordshire (now under the auspices of the gardening charity Perennial), in a flurry of droll invention also led to his devising Prince of Wales feathers in topiary for Highgrove's secluded Rose Garden.

In a Times interview in 1989, the Prince

said one of the reasons he was attracted to the Highgrove estate was 'the beautiful walled garden', which he found 'irresistible'.

Enter the Marchioness of Salisbury (who died, aged 94, in 2016), chronicler of the Queen Mother's gardens and whose own garden at Hatfield House in Hertfordshire remains among Britain's finest.

The Prince worked on the layout of the one-acre, quartered, walled garden with Lady Salisbury, resulting in a formal design with four main crossing paths interwoven with secondary paths of mown grass, brick or gravel.

I recall tunnels of birch and hazel sticks clothed in beans and sweet peas, espaliered fruit trees, including medlar, apricots, plums and cherries trained on the walls above beds of unrestrained herbs.

At the kitchen garden's heart, we paused by the circular pond, where pools of aromatic thyme, marjoram, sage, fennel and rosemary made lacy patterns around a well-placed picket fence, installed to prevent the then infant Princes William and Harry from getting a dousing.

Great contrast to the kitchen garden's formality was found in the nascent meadow, where Miriam Rothschild, the scientist and entomologist, had reckoned to bring the countryside almost to the house walls.

I recorded what Dame Miriam 'saucily' called her Farmers' Nightmare Mixture - an assortment of corn cockle, corn marigold, cornflower, poppy and sprinklings of wild barley.

Standing there in late-afternoon sunshine, Simon and I were introduced to the young Princes, who buzzed towards us through burnished grasses on their BMX bikes. It was a brief, highly charged family moment - a celebration of horticultural birth and rebirth, blessed by the presence of two excitable small children, seemingly free of future protocol-governed lives.

As Prince of Wales, the new King produced two books on his Gloucestershire garden: *The Garden at Highgrove* (2000, with Candida Lycett Green) and *Highgrove: A Garden Celebrated* (2014, with Bunny Guinness).

These, with my own precious memories from many years before, fill my head with impressions of a royal garden unlike any other.

GETTING READY FOR YOUR GLADIOLI IN THE SPRING

Trevor Fawcett

JANUARY has been a month of playing catch up, here are eight key jobs to do over the next few weeks.

Wash your pots and bowls well

Use warm soapy water with a little Jeyes Fluid added to remove dirt and to ensure that your containers are disease free before planting your new crop. Rinse with clean water and stand them to dry. Do the same with your labels, removing all the writing, then it's much easier to re-write the variety names with the new planting date.

Warm up your compost

Any compost that you're planning to use should be stood under cover to keep it frost free. When you're ready to plant, you don't want to find your compost is soaking wet or frozen solid. Nothing likes being planted into compost in that condition and cormlets would lie dormant for a long time before starting into growth.

Sow if you have room

I usually sow the glad seed from my previous year's crosses in washing-up bowls in mid to late February when I have a little more space in my greenhouse. However, I don't have much seed to sow this year so I'm planning to get ahead with this task. Because my washing-up bowls of seed were so successful last year, I'm going to try growing some cormlets in this way to see whether they fare better than when grown in pots.

Remove cormlet husks

Towards the end of January I'll be removing the husks or shells from the cormlets. It's a fiddly job but it gives better germination and allows me to ensure that the cormlets are disease free. The large ones are easier but the tiny ones need a lot more care, and you must be careful not to squash them. If you don't want to go to all this trouble, soak them overnight in lukewarm water before planting, which softens the shells and induces growth.

Protect your cormlets

Cormlets are quite hardy, and in the spring you might see them popping up in last year's glad patch where they dropped off the corms that were lifted in autumn. However, if you don't have a greenhouse or frame where the cormlets can be grown, it's best to leave them alone until the weather and soil conditions warm up and you can plant them outside. If you move them too soon, they could rot in the ground before starting into growth.

Stock up on supplies

This is a good time to check on supplies, such as fertilisers and sprays, for the coming growing season. You don't want to find the dreaded thrip on your plot and have nothing to hit it with.

Overhaul your canes

Check your canes and replace any six footers that are starting to rot or showing signs of wear and tear. A few saw cuts on the damaged canes will give you some extra 1.2m (4ft) canes for the rest of the flower border. Some of my original six-footers have now been cut down again to three footers so they've served me well! You can use shorter canes as supports for the cut spikes when they're ready for the shows. They tend to be all different lengths so it's good to have a mixed bundle.

Check stored corms

Don't neglect your corms in storage as you'll need to know if they've survived the winter. I check mine every two or three weeks to see if they are still sound. Discard any that don't feel solid or are showing signs of rot.

YEAR END RESULTS

Most Points Section 1 Flowers	1st 89 pts	Hazel Chant
	2nd 64 pts	Ann Poole
	3rd 36 pts	Kathy Wagstaff
Most Points Section 1 Fruit & Veg	1st 16 pts	Kathy Wagstaff
	2nd 13 pts	Ann Poole
	3rd 12 pts	Muriel Brodrick
Banksian Medal	Most points in Section 1 Flowers + Fruit & Veg	
	1st 92 pts	Hazel Chant
	2nd 77 pts	Ann Poole
Most Points Section 3 Cooking and Craft	3rd 52 pts	Kathy Wagstaff
	1st 23 pts	Hazel Chant
	2nd 10 pts	Ian Chant
Most Points All Sections All Shows in 2022	3rd 9 pts	Kathy Wagstaff
	1st 115 pts	Hazel Chant
	2nd 82 pts	Ann Poole
	3rd 61 pts	Kathy Wagstaff