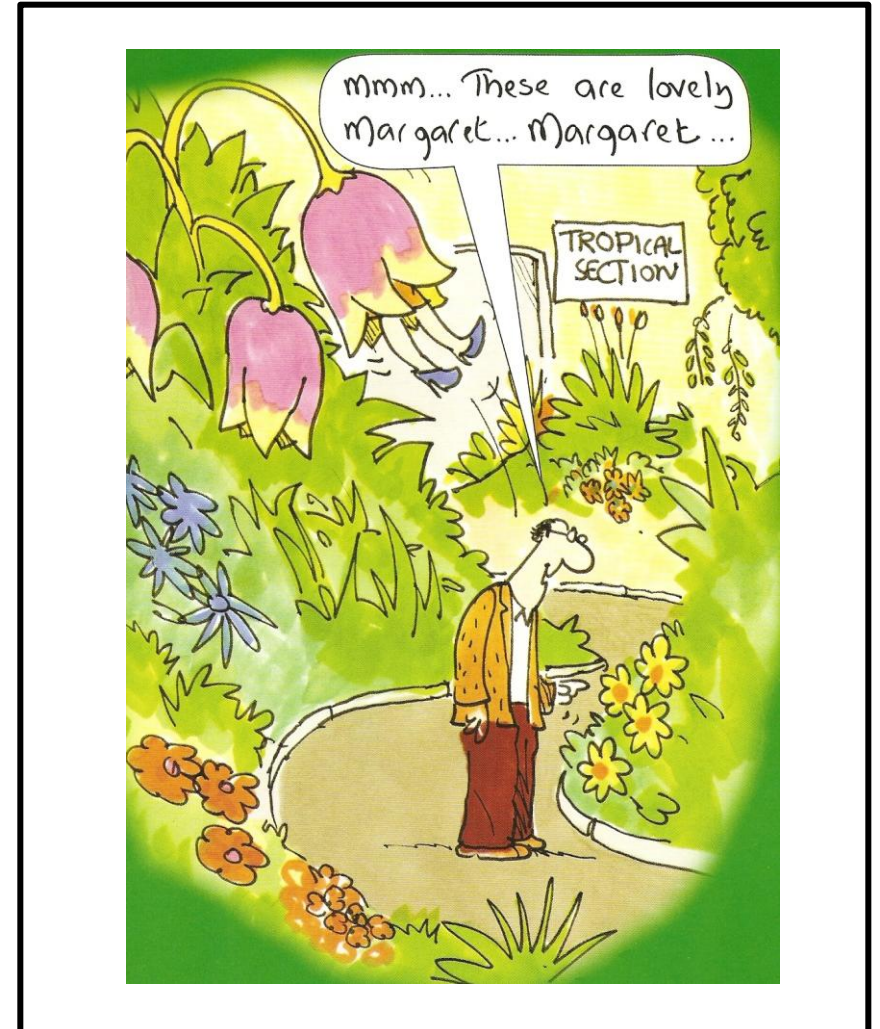


# Ash Parish Garden Club

[www.ashparishgardenclub.org.uk](http://www.ashparishgardenclub.org.uk)



Monthly Newsletter Apr 2019

## 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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## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

|                      |              |
|----------------------|--------------|
| SPRING SHOW          | 6 April      |
| PLANT SALE           | 11 May       |
| RHS Malvern (spring) | 9 - 12 May   |
| RHS Chelsea          | 21 - 25 May  |
| SUMMER SHOW          | 1 July       |
| Gardeners World Live | 13 - 16 June |
| RHS Hampton Court    | 1 - 7 July   |
| RHS Tatton Park      | 17 - 21 July |
| AUTUMN SHOW          | 7 Sep        |
| RHS Malvern (autumn) | 28 - 29 Sep  |

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## THIS MONTHS RECIPE

### MARMALADE CAKE

#### You will need

225g S/R flour

Pinch salt

115g Soft butter or margarine

85g Caster sugar

2 Beaten eggs

2 Large tablespoons marmalade

2 Tablespoons milk

1 Teaspoon finely grated orange peel zest

#### To do

Preheat oven gas 3 or 170c electric

Grease & line a loaf or 6in cake tin

Mix all together well add sieved flour last

Well mix again

Put into tin & place in the centre oven

Cook for 50 to 55 mins

Decorate with warm marmalade & orange zest

## GARDENING CALENDAR APRIL

### Sunshine and showers

Spring is finally in evidence as daffodils and flowering trees start to bloom. Expect the inevitable April showers this month but with sunny days too, when you can turn your attention to the lawn. It's an exciting month, with indoor-sown seeds well into growth, and it's also time to start sowing outdoors. Just watch out for frosts...

Top 10 jobs this month

- 1 Keep weeds under control
- 2 Protect fruit blossom from late frosts
- 3 Tie in climbing and rambling roses
- 4 Sow hardy annuals and herb seeds
- 5 Start to feed citrus plants
- 6 Increase the water given to houseplants
- 7 Feed hungry shrubs and roses
- 8 Sow new lawns or repair bare patches
- 9 Prune fig trees
- 10 Divide bamboos and waterlilies

### FLOWERS

#### Sowing and planting

Hardy annuals can be sown in pots or modules to provide colour in the garden. Annual grasses can be fun to try too: *Briza maxima* (left), *Lagurus ovatus* and *Hordeum jubatum* are suitable examples. In mild areas with light soil, you can sow directly outside. Marking out irregularly shaped seedbeds and broadcasting 'drifts' of different seed gives a more natural look

.Modular trays are useful for sowing half-hardy summer bedding plants such as marigolds (*Tagetes*), *Lobelia*, and *Petunia*. Label each seed tray. You will need to plant them under cover, or in a heated propagator, at the appropriate temperature, only putting them outside when the weather is reliably warm day and night.

If you started sowing early, in March or even February, you may have modules of young hardy annuals now ready for planting out.

Sweet peas can be sown outside this month. Plant out autumn-sown sweet peas that have been raised in pots, and prepare your wigwam supports for them to climb, using a light twine to tie the plants in.

When space becomes available in the greenhouse, pot up cuttings of tender perennials taken last summer and at the beginning of this year. Bulk up plant numbers by taking more cuttings from the largest of the new plants.

Plant summer-flowering bulbs, if not done already. Prepare the soil first, to ensure

that drainage is sufficient to prevent the bulbs rotting. Anemone coronaria tubers, for instance, need particularly well-drained soils.

You can still plant herbaceous perennials such as Geranium, Aстранtia ('Burgundy Manor' pictured left) and Oriental poppies. Check that the plants you buy have strong, green shoots and plant them into well-prepared soil.

Plan a continuous crop of cut flowers for this summer.

Perennials such as delphiniums and annuals can be grown to produce a useful and beautiful display.

Towards the end of the month, in mild areas, you may be able to plant up your hanging baskets for the summer.

## **Cutting back, pruning and dividing**

Perennials that are showing new shoots from the crown can be propagated via basal stem cuttings. Shoots 8-10cm (3-4in) high are cut from the parent plant with a sharp knife. Sometimes a piece of root can be taken with the cutting (which speeds establishment), but stems can be cut without root, and then dipped in hormone rooting powder before striking into growing medium, as for softwood cuttings.

Divide clumps of herbaceous perennials that you want to propagate, those that have become too large for their allotted space, and those that are flowering poorly or have lost their shape. Bamboos and clumps of bulbs or rhizomes can be divided in the same way. Just make sure that the transplanted divisions have roots, shoots, and are given adequate water to settle into their new positions.

Prune penstemons and other slightly tender plants such as Teucrium and lavender. Make the cuts just above fresh, new shoots.

Some perennials benefit from having their flowering shoots thinned out. Although this results in fewer blooms, they are larger and of better quality. Delphiniums, lupins and phlox all benefit from this process.

## **General maintenance**

Apply a general-purpose fertiliser to borders and beds. Take care not to damage emerging shoots, or to burn them with fertiliser.

Put supports in place for perennials before they get too large. Criss-crossing strings from hidden or decorative posts work well, allowing stems to grow up in the gaps between strings.

Remove faded daffodil and tulip flowers, nipping off the heads and seed pod at the same time.

Deadhead pansies, primulas and other spring bedding plants. Pansies will carry on into the spring and even to early summer, if attended to frequently.

Remove tired winter bedding and plants that did not survive the winter.

Check that self-seeded forget-me-nots aren't smothering other border plants. Pull out plants if necessary.

Hoe borders to prevent annual and perennial weeds from spreading and seeding themselves.

Herbaceous perennials infested with couch grass and other perennial weeds should be lifted so the roots of the weeds can be removed.

Bulbs coming up in the rock garden or in containers may benefit from overhead protection from the rain. A sheet of glass or Perspex placed on bricks will do the job.

Top dress spring-flowering alpines with grit or gravel to show off the plants and to help prevent stem rots. Any mulches may need replacing after weed removal.

You could plant up an alpine trough to display some of your alpine plants as many can look their best at this time of year.

Check whether containers need watering. Even at this time of year, they can dry out.

Pots and tubs benefit from topping up with fresh compost. Old compost can be removed and replaced with new to a depth of 5cm (2in) if there is not much room for topping up.

Pot on plants showing signs of being pot-bound. You can tip out the root balls of unhappy looking containerised specimens, to see if they are indeed pot-bound or if they are suffering from some other problem.

## **Pest and disease watch**

Continue to protect lilies, delphiniums, hostas and other new shoots from slugs and snails.

Damage to plant roots by vine weevil larvae shows by the plants starting to wilt. On inspection the roots will have been badly eaten, and you may see larvae among them. Apply chemical or biological control if larvae are present, but young and containerised plants are unlikely to recover once badly damaged.

Aphids (left) can multiply rapidly during mild spells. Remove early infestations by hand to prevent the problem getting out of hand. Protect sweet pea plants in particular, as they can get sweet pea viruses

Watch out for downy mildew and blackspot on winter pansies.

Remove dead leaves from around the basal rosettes of alpine plants to prevent rotting.

Top dress spring-flowering alpines with grit or gravel to show off the plants and help prevent rotting around the neck.

## Lawns

Mow lawns when necessary - whenever the grass is growing - the aim is to maintain a constant height throughout the year.

Add the clippings to the compost heap in thin layers (too much grass all at once is likely to be very wet and poorly aerated, resulting in smelly slime rather than compost).

Use a half-moon edging iron or spade to create a 7.5cm (3in) 'gutter' around the lawn edge. This will prevent grass creeping from the lawn into borders.

Sowing new lawns or over-seeding dead patches can be carried out from mid-April to early May. If the soil is very wet or cold germination will be poor, so delay until the weather improves. Prepare the ground for sowing, by cultivating, levelling and lightly firming beforehand.

Do not walk over or mow newly sown grass until it has reached a height of 5-7.5cm (2-3in), and then only give it a light trim at the highest setting.

Apply a high nitrogen spring lawn fertiliser at the beginning of the month to encourage good, strong growth. If moss is a problem choose a combined fertiliser and mosskiller.

April is the best month to apply lawn weedkiller. Always follow instructions on the packaging very carefully as lawn chemicals (including fertilisers, weedkillers and mosskillers) can cause pollution of groundwater if used incorrectly.

Lightly rake lawns with a spring-tine rake to remove old plant debris. This can also be done to rake out dead moss a couple of weeks after applying a chemical moss killer.

Repair bumps and hollows by peeling back the turf, removing or adding soil, and then replacing the turf.

It is still a good time to sow a wildflower meadow, or plant wildflower plugs into existing swards.

## Troubleshooting

If a hosepipe ban is looking likely, consider keeping your lawn a little longer than usual, and even investing in a mulching mower.

Mulching mowers shred the grass clippings very finely and then blow them into the lower layers of the turf, where they act like mulch to help the lawn retain moisture. Because the clippings are fine, the end result is not unsightly, especially later in the season when the lawn gets very dry, and the mulch helps to keep it green rather than brown.

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## **BLOOMING SOLUTIONS FOR EVERYONE**

Blooming Marvellous is a supported volunteer gardening project for those recovering from mental health problems, headed by Rushmoor Voluntary Services in Farnborough. Funded by Broadhurst Welcome Home Community Trust, they aim to empower those who want to volunteer but would like some support to do so.

The group looks after several sites across Aldershot and Farnborough including Aldershot Library garden, Westend Centre garden, and the Farnborough Rotary Access garden among others. They also maintain two allotment plots where their volunteers learn their gardening skills.

In addition, the project offers a free service that helps elderly residents and those with special needs to stay in their own homes by providing one-off visits to make-over their gardens.

"Sometimes residents just need a bit of encouragement," explains project lead Hazel Chant. "One recently bereaved lady had felt unable to go back into her garden following the death of her husband, as the garden was always the place they worked together. Our visit helped to motivate her to get back outside. She told us afterwards that she felt like a great weight had been lifted off her shoulders."

Blooming Marvellous made-over almost 50 gardens last year and is already booked up for the next few months, Kate, one of the volunteers says, "I like having something to do, rather than sitting around getting depressed. The bonus is that we help people in need."

For clients, the service can be a lifeline. One lady in Farnborough says. "The volunteers did an absolutely marvelous job, I can't say how relieved I am to be rid of the overgrowth and weeds. I now feel encouraged to try to maintain it again."

Blooming Marvellous offers a supportive environment for those looking for voluntary opportunities. Some are retirees who want to keep active: most are struggling with mental health issues and looking for a supportive environment in which to recover. Newcomers to the group initially join growing activities on the allotment and after that they can opt in to help out with garden make-overs if they wish.



Their work has not gone unnoticed and last year volunteers picked up an award at Rushmoor in Bloom's awards presentation for the community gardening work they do in the borough.

Volunteer Alexandra Toomey says, "Blooming Marvellous goes far beyond gardening as the common interest. It is also a chance for members to socialise and get out and about. We go on trips throughout the year - to gardens including Wisley and Hampton Court, the Isle of Wight, nurseries and garden centres, arboretums, walks in the countryside, and much more. We also have cookery sessions where we use produce from our allotment, including dishes for the summer barbecue which we hold on the allotment itself,"

The project offers training courses in first aid, food hygiene, petrol mower and strimmer use. The team actively encourages members to progress and move into paid employment. Alexandra now works two days a week as part of the herbaceous team at RHS Garden Wisley; another member has just started work in a local garden centre. Two further volunteers started their own garden maintenance business after the experience they gained with Blooming Marvellous.

"Even if we're just a stepping stone for a few months, it's finding a way through, like a plant under concrete." says Hazel. "You can help people but ultimately it has to come from them. It's wonderful to watch the volunteers flourish and grow and find themselves again."

[rvs.org.uk](http://rvs.org.uk)

### Tony's story

Now In his fifties, Tony spent many years living rough on the streets. He had to resort to food parcels in the past and has not had his own home for many years. Now living with his brother and his wife, he was signposted to Blooming Marvellous by his social worker. At the allotment, he's learnt to prepare the ground, plant seeds, weed and harvest the crops and now also enjoys cooking with the produce. "I love coming to the group," he says, "it's helped me build my confidence and make lots of new friends."

### Eddy's story

Eddy suffered a mental break down around nine years ago and has been involved in Blooming Marvellous for the last three years. He now works in the core team, making-over gardens around the borough. He has taken qualifications to use a petrol strimmer and lawn mower and has recently completed a first aid course, skills which have helped him into employment. Eddy has recently started working part time at a local garden centre; however he still joins the group once a week to benefit from the supportive atmosphere and being among friends.

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**POETS CORNER**

Beauty of Flowers

The flowers are nature's jewels with whose wealth

She decks her summer beauty; primrose sweet,

With blossoms of pure gold; enchanting rose,

That like a virgin queen, salutes the sun, Dew-diadem'd.

**GEORGE CROLY (1780-1860)**

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**APGC TRIPS FOR 2019****Sun 14TH APR Wisley**

Meet at Victoria Hall at 1.00pm and return at approx 5pm, cost £4 for Minibus.

Members can use own transport and meet us outside Wisley Entrance at 1:30pm

**For all following garden visits a deposit of £10 is required at time of booking.**

**Sun 19th May Leonardslee Gardens , Horsham Cost £17 each**

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

Stopping off at Hilliers Garden Centre, Horsham for Lunch

<https://www.hillier.co.uk/garden-centres/locations/horsham/>

Leaving Victoria Hall at 11am, returning approx 5:30pm

**Sat 8th June Houghton Lodge Gardens, Stockbridge Cost £15.50 each**

<https://houghtonlodge.co.uk/>

Stopping off at Andover Garden Centre for Lunch

<https://www.wyevalegardencentres.co.uk/product/andover/2214>

Leaving Victoria Hall at 11am, returning approx 5:30pm

**Sun 14TH JUL Lavender Farm Selborne Rd, Alton UK Cost £10 each**

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

Stopping off at Avenue Nursery Lasham for Lunch <http://avenuenurseries.com/>

Leaving Victoria Hall at 11am, returning approx 5:30pm

**Sun 8TH SEP Great Comp Garden, Sevenoaks**

<https://greatcompgarden.co.uk/> We shall be having Lunch at the Great Comp Tearoom.

This is a RHS Partner Garden.

Cost for RHS members £10 each

Cost for those without RHS membership £17.50

Leaving Victoria Hall at 10am, returning approx 5:30pm

**CLUB EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES –**

**Please contact secretaries direct for further details.**

- 1st Esher Molesey MINI SHOW – A Celebration of Spring.  
Ann Beauchamp 0208-979-1415
- 4th Aldershot Floral Design Demo: What a wonderful world, with Eliz. Graham  
Dee Kelly 01252-350944
- 6th Churt SPRING SHOW Village Hall  
Sandra Probert 01428-481048
- 6th Frensham SPRING SHOW, Marindin Hall  
Ruth Murphy 01252-793267
- 6th Headley (Hants) SPRING SHOW, Village Hall  
Jill Howard-Duff 01428-714073
- 6th Thursley SPRING SHOW, Village Hall  
Pat Clake 01252-706869
- 7th Surrey Chrysanth DAFFODIL SHOW Abinger Hammer Village Hall RH5 6QX  
Kevin Taitt 01420-474528
- 7th Tilford SPRING SHOW, Rural Life Centre  
Janet Arm 01252-783133
- 10th Nat.Veg.Surrey New vegetable varieties. Ian Clemens. Redhill Methodist Ch.  
Sally Coleman 0208-399-8809
- 13th Chiddingfold SPRING SHOW  
Els Trovo 01428-684548
- 13th Dorking SPRING SHOW, at The Christian Centre, Dorking  
Cliff Weight 01306-888286
- 13th Grayscott SPRING SHOW, Village Hall  
Ros. Henshall 01428-607879
- 13th Hardy Plant Soc. On the Wild Side – New Naturalism, with Keith Wiley 2 pm  
Sandra Hartley 01372-727715
- 13th Witley SPRING SHOW, Chichester Hall  
Gina Ellerton 07876-228242
- 16th Tilford Hampshire Hops, with Bill Weeks  
Janet Arm 01252-783133
- 17th Chiddingfold 365 Days of colour, with Nick Bailey.  
Tickets from Els Trovo 01428-684548
- 24th Ripley The story of the National Gardens Scheme, by Margaret Arnott  
Jackie Purrett 01483-222168
- 

**DAVID WHEELER TALKING**

How can a gardener hope to keep up with May? There's much to do and even more to enjoy. Seldom in my experience, at least in the milder parts of the country, do

Shakespeare's 'rough winds' shake the month's 'darling buds', bringing instead a gentle shower of scent and colour in four short glorious weeks. Lapses do, however, occur. The phrase 'Chelsea Flower Show weather' is a familiar downer in this household, recalling gales, heavy rain and muddy turf occasionally endured at London's premier horticultural event.

I don't always 'do' Chelsea, preferring in some years to seek out provincial shows with the advantage then of acquainting myself with local and often smaller nurseries whose budgets prohibit the taking of expensive stalls at the big urban affairs. The Malvern Spring and Autumn Shows in May and September bring together exhibitors mostly unknown to London and Home Counties gardeners and, like the Hampton Court Flower Show, you can shop tirelessly in more spacious surroundings with on-site car parking facilities. The Malvern shows also profit from their location: set in glorious orchard-rich rural Worcestershire, just outside the town itself, it is possible with little effort to imagine its great whaleback chain of nearby hills echoing to the sound of Elgar's best music.

Having never worked behind the scenes in the nursery business, I'm a stranger to those mysteries of plant husbandry that lead to the synchronized display of unlikely (unseasonal) floral partnerships. How, under the roof of one marquee in May, is it possible to delight in the juxta positioning of January's

snowdrops and the roses and delphiniums which, in Britain, belong to later months? I don't need to know the intricate workings of such magic; it's enough to revel in the results. And with the use of camera and notebook I rush to record the names of desirable plants to add to that Wants List that all gardeners carry in their pockets or their heads. Increasingly at such shows, too, there are stalls selling all kinds of horticultural sundries and domestic bric-a-brac as well as fresh regional food - much of it to be relished repeatedly if the producer/vendor operates a mail-order service. Hope for good weather and go for the whole day.

Apart from the straightforward business of buying plants, bulbs or seeds at these events, there is the possibility of seeing new plants and new plant associations. Which of us has not come away from some such show with his mind juggling potentially costly neoteric ideas? I love having my long-held prejudices swept away, having perhaps fallen in love with familiar plants hitherto ignored or long ago abandoned. Danger comes when you are totally smitten by things new, triggering a complete makeover of the home patch. It's not unknown. After visiting some gardening melees I have in the past dug up and given away barrow loads of long-established plants in favour of parvenus.

My fascination with sombre coloured pelargoniums emanates from such encounters, as does my recent intoxication with hydrangeas -midsummer and autumn-flowering shrubs destined I'd say for a huge popular renaissance. Both the Savill Garden in Windsor Great Park and the Subtropical Gardens at Abbotsbury in Dorset are currently running hydrangea trials in advance of a major trial to be held at the Royal Horticultural Society's garden at Wisley a couple of years hence.

What, then, will steal my heart this year? In courtship right now with fragrant lilacs, old-fashioned sweet peas, heritage roses and autumn crocuses, it won't take much to throw me over the edge.