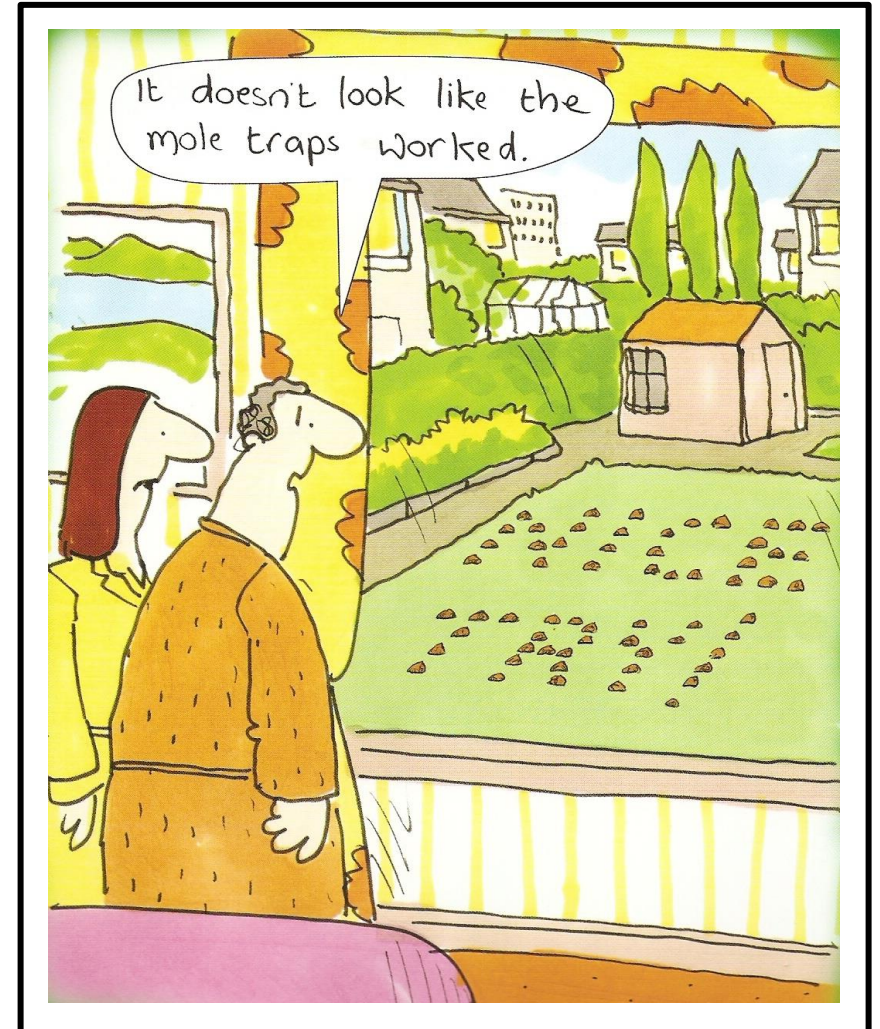
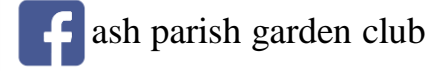


# Ash Parish Garden Club

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



Monthly Newsletter June 2020

**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

RHS Malvern (spring)	<b>CANCELLED</b>
RHS Chelsea	<b>CANCELLED</b>
Gardeners World Live	<b>CANCELLED</b>
SUMMER SHOW	<b>CANCELLED</b>
RHS Tatton Park	<b>CANCELLED</b>
RHS Hampton Court	9 - 15 Sep
AUTUMN SHOW	12 Sep
RHS Malvern (autumn)	26 - 27 Sep

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## APGC TRIPS FOR 2020 – at the moment

5th July Visit to RHS Wisley Gardens. **CANCELLED**

19<sup>th</sup> July. Visit Diple Mill, **CANCELLED**

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## A TALE OF TWO PLOTS

DAVID WHEELER

Friends have come to visit, bringing with them - among gastronomic delights and cheery banter - some nourishing garden talk. I especially enjoy their chatter, not least because they live on the other side of the country and work a garden so very different from our own. Both were or, rather, are engineers, and having tasted the joys of retirement now find themselves, in part-time capacities, back on two separate payrolls.

The principal difference between our gardens is size. We struggle with eight rural acres; Colin and Elaine triumph on a village plot measuring 80ft by 40ft - by my dodgy arithmetic, a tad less than a tenth of one acre, or about one-and-a-half tennis courts.

We and they have both worked our respective land for 25 years.

Then there's climate. We're in a river valley on the border between England and Wales at an altitude of around 500ft, while they are on Cambridgeshire's highest point at 300ft. We are irrigated by some 32 inches of rain annually; they by 24. Our soil is acidic clay over gravel; theirs is clay with glacial erratics over chalk. It's acid vs lime, enabling us, for example, to enjoy blue hydrangeas, while they must put up with pink and red ones.

That said, both gardens are structured formally (partly designed by my partner Simon) and we share - the above conditions notwithstanding - a similar range of plants, both herbaceous and woody, enhanced by frequent swaps.

I think it was a former Rothschild who so memorably quipped that 'no garden, however small, should contain less than two acres of rough woodland!' (My exclamation mark.)

Sir, I beg to differ. In their tenth-of-an-acre plot, Colin and Elaine have their woodland, comprising three glorious, white-stemmed Himalayan silver birches and several compact shade-loving shrubs over bluebells and cyclamen. Our five acres of woodland - size matters - houses some 1,200 trees and shrubs, and an assortment of thuggish perennials but, sadly, fewer bluebells.

Colin is muscle (lawns, hedges, digging and building); Elaine is aesthetics (plant acquisition and placing, nurture and pruning). Our labours are similarly divided, although my input is currently somewhat restricted by a temporary disability - thus a hefty amount of my 'responsibilities' have been hived off to already overworked Simon. (Talking of hives, C and E keep a skep of bees, while Simon carries an EpiPen wherever he goes, being acutely allergic to insect stings.)

While we each relish the beauty of bark and foliage, we also ensure there's something in flower in every month of the year, relying in winter on hellebores, snowdrops, aconites and witch-hazels, and far too many plants to mention during the other three seasons.

Colin and Elaine grow a wider range of fruit and veg than we do. Our pride and joy is an orchard of some 30 different, unrestricted apple varieties. They have nine heavily pruned top-fruit trees, raspberries, strawberries, gooseberries and red currants, assigning such other culinaries as potatoes, peas, beans, artichokes, beetroot, carrots and onions to an allotment a mile away.

Our garden boasts some dozen follies, including a dovecote, belvedere, fishing 'temple' and one glorious original greenhouse with vines possibly planted more than a hundred years ago. In this last respect, we are trumped by Colin's newly-built 'pamplemousserie'. Although lacking a grapefruit tree, it sports a fig, a lemon, a

blood orange and an olive, which last year gave them a jarful, currently sitting in brine on a pantry shelf.

Already we're negotiating our next batch of plant swaps, thereby safeguarding our rarities, sharing plants that wouldn't normally come our way.

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## **POETS CORNER**

from June

When the Spring has dipped her foot,  
Like a bather, in the air,  
And the ripples warm the root,  
Till the little flowers dare,  
There is promise she will grow  
Sweeter than the Springs of old,  
Fairer than was ever told.  
    Heigh-ho!

Harrisons. Morris (b 1856)

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## **THIS MONTHS RECIPE**

### **CHERRY BUNS**

#### **You will need**

4oz butter  
3oz castor sugar  
Half beaten egg  
There quarters teaspoon vanilla essence  
2oz finely crushed cornflakes  
1 oz glace cherries

#### **To do**

Cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy.  
Beat in egg and vanilla, add flour and salt.  
Work mixture into dough and make into 14 balls.  
Roll each one in crushed cornflakes until they are well coated.  
Place well apart on greased baking sheet.  
Flatten tops and press on cherry.  
Bake 15-20 mins. in moderate oven.

***Mrs. R. Hall***

**GARDENING CALENDAR JUNE**

June is all about regular, consistent maintenance of your plants; in short, remember to weed, water and feed your plants, and do it often.

**Feed**

Pay special attention to container plants, bedding plants and veggies. Liquid-feed tubs and baskets every two weeks if you haven't already mixed in controlled-release fertiliser. Feed tomatoes, peppers and aubergines with a high-potash feed such as Tomorite every two weeks (also useful for feeding pelargoniums).

**Harvest**

June is also the time for harvesting onions – the right time is when the leaves turn yellow.

**Bring indoors out**

To maximise on summer blooms, move any summer flowering house plants into the garden.

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**ELECTRIC FIELDS**

Can you really boost crop yields by exposing plants to electricity? Donna Lu and David Hambling investigate

AT FIRST blush, the huge commercial greenhouse on the outskirts of Beijing doesn't seem unusual. Inside, lettuces sit in neat rows and light pours in through the glass above. But there is a soft hum and an intense feeling in the air, almost as if a thunderstorm is on the way. The most obvious sign that this is no ordinary growing space is the high-voltage electrical wiring strung over the crops.

This place may be different, but it is far from unique. Over the past few years, greenhouses like this have sprouted up across China, part of a government-backed project to boost the yield of crops by bathing them in the invisible electric fields that radiate from power cables. From cucumbers to radishes, the results are, apparently, incredible. "The overall quality is excellent," says Liu Binjiang, the lead scientist on the project. "We're really entering a golden age for this technology."

Using electricity to boost plant growth -not by powering heaters or sprinkler systems, but simply by exposing plants to an electric field - is an old idea. It is also controversial. Electro culture was tested in Europe many decades ago and found wanting, with the results too inconsistent to be any use. The mechanism was also

mysterious: no one knew how or why electric fields might boost growth. So what exactly is going on in China's new greenhouses?

At the end of the first world war in 1918, the UK set up the Electro-Culture Committee, a group of scientists and farmers, who were able to show increases of 20 per cent which were considered to be hardly economic even if obtained in most years. Nevertheless, the scientists seemed to think the effect was real, if erratic.

Research in electro culture slowed to a trickle for some 50 years, then, in the 1980s, Liu began looking into the technique, it was when the Chinese government began giving out grants in agricultural science, allowing him to expand his study.

Liu worked with a company in the southern Chinese city of Shenzhen to develop a commercial generator to power the wires in 2000. Within a few years, electro culture greenhouses were being set up in Beijing, Dalian and Tianjin and they were reporting increased yields of up to 40 per cent for Lettuce and cucumbers.

We wait to hear more?