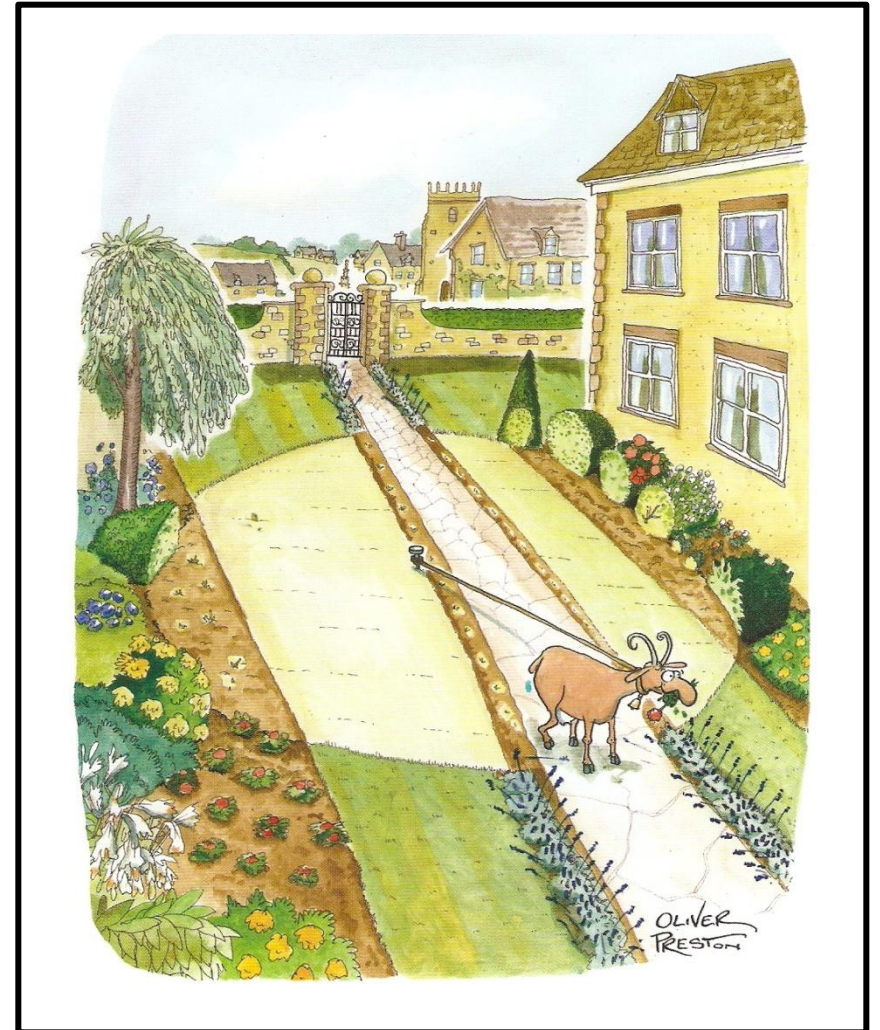


Ash Parish Garden Club

www.ashparishgardenclub.org.uk



Monthly Newsletter May 2019

ASH PARISH GARDEN CLUB OFFICERS

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EDITORS NOTES

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.

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

THIS MONTHS RECIPE

MINT JELLY for your Spring Lamb

You will need

1 pint vinegar
Half lb castor sugar
1 lemon jelly
1 lime jelly
Finely chopped mint

To do

Boil vinegar.
Add castor sugar.
Put both jellies into vinegar.
Cool before adding mint.
Stir well while setting to stop mint rising.
Pour into jars.

GARDENING CALENDAR MAY

With the bulbs fading and the herbaceous border growing in leaps and bounds, it is now clear that summer is approaching. Sowing and planting out bedding can begin in some areas of the UK, depending on regional weather variations. It's also time to get back into the lawn mowing regime, as the lawn will be loving the warmer temperatures this month brings.

Top 10 jobs this month

Watch out for late frosts. Protect tender plants

Earth up potatoes, and promptly plant any still remaining

Plant out summer bedding at the end of the month (except in cold areas)

Collect rainwater and investigate ways to recycle water for irrigation

Regularly hoe off weeds

Open greenhouse vents and doors on warm days

Mow lawns weekly

Check for nesting birds before clipping hedges

Lift and divide overcrowded clumps of daffodils and other spring-flowering bulbs

Watch out for viburnum beetle and lily beetle grubs

Flowers

Sowing and planting

Plant out cannas and dahlias when danger of frost is past. Tubs can be planted up with summer bedding in milder areas. In cold areas, it is advised to wait until well into June, or until all risk of frost has passed.

If you want to grow your own spring bedding for next year, many common choices (including wallflowers, pansies, and *Betas perennis*) need to be sown between now and July in order to flower next spring, as they are biennials.

Winter bedding plants for the following winter can also be sown from now until July. Cutting back, pruning and dividing

Divide clumps of herbaceous perennials that you want to propagate. Bamboos and clumps of bulbs or rhizomes can be divided in the same way. Cutting back clumps of spring-flowering perennials such as *Puimonia* and *Doronicum* can encourage a fresh flush of foliage.

Divide *Primula* (primroses) after flowering, planting them in a nursery bed until they are ready for planting out again in the autumn, for a display the following spring. Divide hostas as they come into growth.

Spreading and trailing plants such as the annual *Lobelia* (sweet alyssum), and the perennials *Alyssum* and *Aubrieta*, can become tatty and patchy. Trimming them back after flowering encourages fresh growth and new flowers. Lift and divide overcrowded clumps of daffodils after they have flowered. Deadhead tulips and daffodils.

Propagation

Take softwood cuttings of perennial offenders like *Argyranthemum*, *Pelargonium* and *Fuchsia*. They will provide new plants for display later this summer. Perennials that are showing new shoots from the crown can be propagated via basal stem cuttings.

General maintenance

Apply a liquid fertiliser to spring bulbs after they have flowered, to encourage good flowering next year, and help prevent daffodil blindness.

Allow the foliage of daffodils and other spring-flowering bulbs to die down naturally. Lift clumps of forget-me-not once the display wanes, and before too many seeds are released. They can become invasive if left unchecked.

Put supports in place for herbaceous plants before they are too tall, or for those - like peonies - that produce heavy blooms.

Harden off plants raised from seed and cuttings by leaving them outside for gradually increasing periods of time. Start with only the warmest part of the day, and build up to overnight exposure. Doing this for 10-14 days before planting them outdoors permanently (whenever the risk of frost has passed), will reduce any check to their growth while establishing in their final position.

Thin out direct sowings of hardy annuals. This is best done in two or three stages at fortnightly intervals. Final spacing should be between 10-20cm (4-8in), using the upper limit for tall or spreading plants, and the lower limit for smaller plants. Prick out indoor sowings when they are large enough to handle without damage.

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

Sweet peas need training and tying in to their supports to encourage them to climb and make a good display.

Pinch out the leading shoots on plants such as chrysanthemum and Heiianthus to encourage bushy plants. However, if tall thin sprays are preferred, they can be left un-pinched, perhaps removing a few buds (known as 'disbudding') to encourage larger blooms.

Liquid feed plants in containers every two to four weeks.

Keep tubs, hanging baskets and alpine troughs well watered. Use collected rainwater, or recycled grey water wherever possible.

Remove faded wallflowers and spring bedding from beds and containers, to make space for summer plantings.

Pot on plants showing signs of being root 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

Inspect lilies for the scarlet lily beetle as the larvae can strip plants in days. Vine weevil larvae can be a serious pest of containerised plants, and become active this month. Tip out the rootball of suspect plants, and inspect for the creamy, orange-headed maggots, which tend to curl up into a 'C' shape. There are various chemical and biological controls available.

Aphids 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-Continue to protect lily, delphinium, hosta and other susceptible plants from slugs and snails.

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 regularly and continue adding clippings to the compost heap. Use the half-moon edging iron, or a spade, to create a 7.5cm (3in) gutter around the lawn edge. This will prevent grass from creeping into the border from the main lawn. Apply a high nitrogen summer lawn fertiliser to encourage a healthy-looking lawn. Sowing new lawns or over-seeding dead patches can still be carried out in early May. 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. Ensure new lawns (either from turf or seed) do not dry out during dry spells. Keep off them for as long as possible to allow establishment. Don't worry over a flush of weed seedlings in newly seeded turf. These will disappear once regular mowing begins.

Troubleshooting

If moss is a problem, choose a combined fertiliser and mosskiller when feeding the lawn.

Selective lawn weedkillers will kill the weeds but not the grass or any naturalised bulbs. However, be warned - they will kill wild flowers growing in the turf.

Q & A**Q**

I bought a beautiful peach-coloured foxglove in the hope that it would seed all over my garden, as the usual ones do. However, I have since learnt that these are sterile. So how do they reproduce?

A

Sterile plants are normally raised by tissue culture. Pieces of plant tissue are put into revolving glass flasks and raised in growing medium under lights. Thompson & Morgan (thompson-morgan.com) has an Illumination Collection of foxgloves grown in this way. They are not fully hardy, so are better treated as a bedding plant. If you want a seed-raised peachy foxglove, I recommend Sutton's Apricot (suttons.co.uk), which flowers in June. This produces lots of seeds, which can be sown to produce more plants. Foxgloves are disturbance plants: the seed germinates on the ground only in bright light, so it's best to raise your plants from seed and put them where you want them.

A SMALL STEP FOR A PLANT, AND A GIANT LEAP FOR PLANT KIND.

A sprouting cotton seed on China's Chang'e 4 lunar lander is the first plant ever to germinate on another world, heralding a new era for life in space.

Seeds including cotton, oilseed rape and potato were carried to the moon as part of a biosphere experiment, along with fruit fly eggs and some yeast.

Understanding how to grow plants in space will help lay the foundation for a moon settlement.

Pictures sent back by the probe show the cotton seeds sprouting on 7 January, a few days after Chang'e 4 landed on the far side of the moon.

The organisms are in a sealed canister, protected from the extreme temperatures and radiation on the surface. Understanding how to grow plants in space will help lay the foundation for human settlement on the moon, the scientist leading the experiment, Liu Hanlong, told the South China Morning Post.

The six organisms are intended to form a mini-ecosystem, with the plants making oxygen and food to sustain the fruit flies. Yeast could process the flies' waste and dead plants to provide another food source.

In a future human settlement, potatoes could provide food, rapeseed could be a source of oil and cotton could be used for clothing. A study in 2014 reported that plants could germinate and grow in a simulant of lunar soil for 50 days without any additional nutrients. Over longer periods, human waste could help support plants' nutritional needs.

These lunar green shoots aren't the first plants in space. Astronauts on the International Space Station have grown crops including peas, radishes and cucumbers. They got their first bites of space-grown romaine lettuce in 2015.

Apart from growing plants, Chang'e 4 could tell us more about our satellite's history by studying rocks in the Von Karman crater, where an impact may have exposed material from the moon's mantle.

China has four more lunar missions planned, beginning with Chang'e 5 due to launch later this year. The aim of that mission is to return 2 kilograms of moon rock to Earth.

The China National Space Administration eventually hopes to put humans on the moon. "We are studying the programme of sending astronauts to the moon, but it is still in very early stages," deputy director Wu Yanhua told the South China Morning Post. "We haven't got the approval yet."

Others have ambitions for a lunar base too. The European Space Agency has outlined its vision for a "moon village" where multiple organisations, including private companies, could come together to establish a lunar community.

Sam Wong

POETS CORNER

Sowing beans

One for the mouse,

One for the crow.

One to rot,

One to grow.

ANONYMOUS

APGC TRIPS FOR 2019

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

SPRING SHOW RESULTS

Most points in Section 1	Spring Cup	1st	39	Jan Berger	2nd	32	Hazel Chant	3rd	31	Kathy Wagstaff
Best exhibit in Section 1	Certificate	Class 37 Barrie Ames								
Best Daffodil exhibit	Silver Daffodil Medal	Class 11 Laura Chant								
Best Spring Container	Chelsea Silver Medal	Class 34 Jan Berger								
New Exhibitor with most points in Section 1	Ken Hooper Cup	Brian Cresey								
Most points Section 2	Spring Shield	1st	0	Ruth Sewell	2nd	0	Brenda Winton	3rd		
Judge's favourite floral	Certificate									
Most Points Section 3 Cooking	Home Craft Cookery Shield	1st	21	Laura Chant	2nd	9	Hazel Chant	3rd	5	3 people
Best Exhibit in Section 3 Cookery	Certificate	Class 42 jam Tarts Laura Chant								
Most points Section 3 Handicraft	Handicraft Plaque	1st	18	Laura Chant	2nd	18	Hazel Chant	3rd	10	Ann Poole
Best Exhibit in Section 3 Handicraft	Certificate	Class 55 Dress hazel Chant								
Most Points in all 3 Sections	Michele Cup	1st	63	Laura Chant	2nd	59	Hazel Chant	3rd	45	Kathy Wagstaff

DAVID WHEELER TALKING

RHODODENDRONS

The charm of small-leafed, small flowered rhododendrons far outweighs their diminutive appearance. They only need a few square feet of lightly shaded ground and they're away. Acidic conditions suit them best, so gardeners on chalk or other kinds of limy soil can grow them successfully in tubs filled with ericaceous compost easily procured from local garden centres.

Since being seduced many years ago by varieties with blue flowers in springtime in the woodland Dell at the National Trust's Bodnant in North Wales, I've been waiting for the right conditions to start a small colony of them for myself. The time has come. My small (five-acre) arboretum, begun on 1st January 2000, now provides shade enough for these dainty-looking but thoroughly tough little shrubs to flourish.

I'm beginning with *Rhododendron augustinii*, discovered near Patung in China's Hupeh Province by celebrated Irish plant-hunter Augustine Henry in 1886. Its first European flowering was in France. Only in 1900 was it introduced to British gardens by Cotswold-born Ernest Wilson, who at the time was collecting seed for his principal employer, the Arnold Arboretum on the outskirts of Boston, Massachusetts. So it's been with us for more than a century and some venerable plants might have attained a height of 25ft. Worry not domestic gardeners: secateurs will keep it within limits.

Needless to say, the original blue-flowered species have gone through many nurserymen's hands, resulting in 'better' or 'improved' selections and crosses with similar species. I have 'Electra', raised by Lionel de Rothschild at Exbury in 1940. The flowers are two inches wide, violet-

blue with a yellow-green flash, with up to seven individual flowers on each truss. Magnificent. Another is 'Exbury' - no prizes for guessing its provenance - bearing mauve-blue flowers. Both flower as early as April in a kind year, lasting well into May. A few clicks of the computer mouse will direct gardeners to more varieties and, importantly, suppliers. One such in Hampshire reckons 'Exbury' makes a slender bush some five or six feet high in ten years, which will probably do for most of us. There are many other variants, some with lighter, paler flowers, some darker. All are evergreen and 'easy' in cultivation, even without our own woodland dell.

These blue-flowered rhodos look especially good with yellow-flowered kinds. Look out for evergreen 'Yellow Hammer' which, like small specimens of the blues, should cost no more than between £15 and £20. Paler in colour is *Rhododendron lutescens* which, given optimum growing conditions, can be quite greedy for space; again secateurs can restrict it. This last plant should not be confused with *R. luteum*, a deciduous rhodo thought of as an azalea. I've lined a long diagonal path in my arboretum with this two-season plant, having five years ago found a wholesaler online selling plants just six inches tall for less than a pound each. I bought 200 and they stand now shoulder high to a six-foot man, their rich, egg-yolk yellow flowers perfuming the air for yards around on a warm spring day. 'Two-season' plants? Yes. Having flowered profusely in the spring they'll give the most audacious Japanese maples and liquidambars a good run for their money when it comes to fiery autumnal foliage colours.

Rhododendrons are indeed woodland shade-loving plants, but interplanted with, say, a viburnum or two, roses that prosper in similar conditions and, supremely, a couple of hydrangeas - no more than a dozen plants in all - the smallest of gardens denied daylong sunshine will be bright and cheery from April to November. In her late seventies, in her suburban garden, my mother achieved just that.

GARDENERS BEWARE OF THE COTTON STRINGY SCALE INVASION

An invasive pest that lays vast strings of eggs on garden plants has landed in Britain. The cotton stringy scale, or *takahashia japonica*, comes from Asia but has spread around the world with the plant trade.

It was found on what was thought to be an imported magnolia in Berkshire and has now been confirmed as an invasive pest by the RHS. The bug causes no damage but its eggs can ruin the look of a manicured garden, with dozens left on branches.

Juvenile scale insects that hatch from the eggs can spread to other plants on the wind. They be combated by pesticides that are most effective when the eggs hatch in the summer.

Victoria Allen



PLANT SALE

At the Victoria Hall
(Ash Hill Road, Ash Vale)

Saturday 11th May
10am - 1pm

Alpines

Shrubs

Bedding Plants

Annuals

Perennials

Vegetables

Basket Plants

For further details or information contact
Beverley Ames on 01252 686303