

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 Beverley Ames if you wish to view). Our membership number is 10564709.

EDITORS NOTES

Brian –Stories to ernestperry33@gmail.com hard copy to Chris

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.

THIS MONTHS RECIPE

Vinegar cake

You will need

100 g (4 oz) butter or margarine
225 g (8 oz) plain flour pinch of salt
75 g (3 oz) soft brown sugar
50 g (2 oz) currants

50 g (2 oz) sultanas
45 ml (3 tbsps) chopped candied peel
5 ml (1 level tsp) bicarbonate of soda
15 ml (1 tbsp) vinegar
about 45 ml (3 tbsps) milk

To do

Grease and base-line an 18-cm (7-in) cake tin.

Rub the fat into the flour and salt until it resembles fine breadcrumbs.

Stir in the sugar, dried fruit and peel and make a well in the centre.

Dissolve the bicarbonate of soda in a little milk and pour into the well

Add the vinegar and some more of the milk and gradually work in the dry ingredients, adding more milk if necessary to give a dropping consistency.

Put the mixture into the tin and level the top.

Bake in the oven at 100°C (375°F) mark 5 for 15 minutes, then reduce to 180°C (350°F) mark 4 and bake for a further hour.

Turn out and cool on a wire rack.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- **SUMMER SHOW 6th JULY**
- RHS Sandringham Flower Show – 21–26 July
- **AUTUMN SHOW 12th SEPTEMBER**

Please note Hampton Court is now a bi-annual event & Tatton Park is now every 3yrs

HEATH, MOOR AND MOUNTAIN

TORMENTIL *Potentilla* erecta In many overgrazed and impoverished upland pastures this modest little flower, in association with heath bedstraw is the only relief from bracken and matt grass. It is a relative of the cinquefoils, a creeping perennial growing from a stout red rootstock to a height of 10–15cm. The leaves usually have three leaflets, but an added pair of stipules often confuse the issue and make them look like miniature horse chestnut leaves. They are stemless, toothed and covered underneath by silky hairs.

Tormentil flowers are about 10mm across and usually have four petals (cinquefoils have five). They are kidney shaped, notched, and the flowers are carried on a long stalk growing from the leaf axils. The plant is in flower from mid- to late summer and is widespread over heaths, moors and pastures on most soils except chalk. The name comes from the Latin *tormenlina* meaning colic; the plant was used as a folk remedy.

ROUND-LEAVED SUNDEW *Drosera rotundifolia*

Miniature 'meadows' of sundew are a wonderful sight — a hazy red carpet best viewed from ground level. Unfortunately the 'meadow' is often no more than a veneer over saturated Sphagnum moss. Sundew grows in treacherous places. It is an unexpectedly tiny plant, a circlet of low, long-stemmed, round leaves, out all summer, each about 1cm across and grouped around a tapered rootstock. Each leaf is covered with long red hairs, on the end of which are glands which produce dear sticky drops of liquid. Midges and other small insects become trapped in the glue, then part-enfolded in the leaves, and are gradually digested by the plant to provide it with nitrates. Sundew flowers are very ephemeral. Short lived, they are about 5mm across, six petalled and white in colour. They appear from mid- to late summer, opening one after another on a tall curled stem. The sticky 'dew' on the leaves, which does not evaporate even in the heat of the sun, was once thought to have special virtues, so much that, according to the 17th-century herbalist Gerard, 'cattle of the female kind are stirred up to lust by eating even of a small quantities'.

KITCHEN GARDEN SIMON COURTAULD

DAMSONS

I don't think I have ever come across damsons in France. Prunes de Damas is the name for them, suggesting their origin in Syria. The English damson has also been called 'damascene', which supports the connection, and another small plum, the mirabelle, has the Latin name *Prunus domestica syriaca*.

Whatever the link to that benighted country, damson trees grown in Britain are hardy, and modern varieties require very little space. Farleigh Damson and Prune Damson are said to be full of flavour and reliable in colder areas, and both are self-fertile. Trees and cordons are available from Pomona Fruits, for planting in winter and early spring.

Damsons like clay or loamy soils, and well-rotted manure to retain moisture, but the site should be well drained, as all plums hate being waterlogged. Containers are a good alternative, but the potting compost must never be allowed to dry out.

As damsons are among the earliest fruits to flower, a sunny, sheltered spot (s advisable to protect the blossom from frost. Yields can be greatly increased by the addition of a nitrogen fertiliser, but beware of branches snapping under the weight of fruit. Pruning should be done in summer, when there are fewer spores to enable silver leaf disease to develop on the plants.

Similar to damsons, although spherical rather than oval, are the wild plums on a tree that has grown here for years and is probably a bullace. They are purple/blue when ripe, and last autumn we gathered more fruit from the one tree than from)ur five apple trees. Very few plums have appeared this summer, but we still have plenty of plum chutney from last year's crop.

Driving through Normandy in August, we enjoyed not damsons but the delicious greengages the French call Heine Claude, and an eau de vie made from mirabelles. These little plums, of Syrian and Anatolian origin, are grown in abundance in north-eastern France and vividly used for making jam.

If you want to try growing a different plum, Mirabelle de Nancy and Mirabelle le Metz are recommended.

DAME MARY BERRY

Dame Mary Berry, who celebrated her 90th birthday last year, is most famous for her baking and cooking. But when she's at home, her passion for gardening shines bright. Chris Young met her to learn more about her love of plants and why she's written her first ever gardening book, *My Gardening Life*

There's one clear way to know when you're talking to a true gardener – and that's the way they use plant names. Some people are nervous and hesitant so stumble a bit; some know the name but can't pronounce them; others use both common and proper names interchangeably with an easy fluency. And Dame Mary Berry is definitely part of the latter group.

Now in her 91st year, Mary Berry remains a national treasure in the kitchen – though her gardening fame blooms a little more quietly. So why has she written a book about it now? "I really love gardening and thought it was a good time to share all that I've learned over my lifetime," she explains. "I wanted to talk about the plants I've loved, the mistakes I've made, and the people I've learned from. This book was the perfect way to put it altogether."

Mary grew up in Bath, then lived in London as newlyweds with her husband Paul, but it wasn't until they lived as a family (with three young children) in Buckinghamshire did she really start thinking about gardening. "I had been formally trained as a cook, but for gardening, I've picked it up along the way – I didn't really get going with it until I was in my early 40s."

Like so many of us, Mary has learned by trial and error. "I remember our little house in London, where we had a tiny courtyard – it should have been planted with ferns and shade-loving things, but I put in a load of plants that needed full sun. Unsurprisingly, they all failed!" As a result, her mantra of "always read the label" has put her in good stead. .

Learning by doing

When Mary, her husband Paul and their children moved to the Red House, in Buckinghamshire, that was where the excitement – and challenge – of gardening took hold. "I really started to understand about where the sun rises and sets, the type of soil we had, different aspects of the garden... all these things that help you understand the garden and help you get the right plants into the right place," she explains.

Over the course of a few years, she slowly made her impact on the one acre garden. But she had to work hard to know what to do: she set about going to lectures, gardening talks and visiting other gardens to get inspired. Reading magazines and books (she currently loves Alan Titchmarsh's *The Gardener's Almanac*) and speaking to people (she cites garden designer Bunny Guinness and former RHS Garden Wisley Curator Matthew Pottage as two greats) have all been part of her gardening education. "I love learning from people – gardeners are such generous people and always willing to impart the knowledge they have." Maybe that's where her passion of cookery and gardening overlap, with the generosity of spirit and desire for anyone to succeed.

Much of Mary's gardening ethos goes back to those formative times of learning, planting, entertaining and pottering. "I do admit that I'm a bit of a fairweather gardener at times," smiles Mary. "When the dogs need a walk, I don't give the weather a second thought – I just crack on and get dressed for it. But when I'm gardening, I prefer it to be nicer weather!" One such place Mary loves is her greenhouse: a place where she spends a lot of time sowing seeds (including herbs such as basil and parsley), harvesting tomatoes, mini cucumbers and growing chillies, and taking cuttings from favourite plants like penstemons.

Making a new garden

Mary's current garden, in Oxfordshire, is home to all of her favourite plants. The garden layout was designed by Bunny Guinness in 2019, but since then

Mary and her gardener Kevin Pryce have adapted it further – and continued to buy plenty of plants! "We love the structure and formality of the yew hedges," explains Mary, "and also the fact that I have plenty of space to grow my very favourite roses... especially Chandos Beauty". There are few conversations that go by without Mary extolling the virtue of this soft, apricot-pink, highly-scented rose.

But she also has plenty of other plants growing. Tucked behind the tennis court, Mary grows cider gum (*Eucalyptus gunnii*) for cutting – "the fresh leaves are so useful for cutting in spring; eucalyptus can grow very quickly but this species responds well to being hard pruned". Opposite the orangery, a beautiful hosta bed is establishing well – "hostas look wonderful in pots or in shady borders like I have, growing in a dry-stone retaining wall beneath a chestnut tree." A long border along the front of the house welcomes one of Mary's other favourites – white *Hydrangea arborescens* 'Annabelle'. "This is one of the very best hydrangeas," she explains, "and a sheer joy in the garden, with a nice upright habit and huge, white pom-pom flowers."

There's no doubt that Mary's skill of gardening and growing has been borne from hard work, experience, learning, plenty of failures but ultimately a huge passion for plants and their virtues. We all know Mary as a wonderful cook, but maybe it's time we see her as a wonderful gardener too.

Dame Mary Berry's favourite plants for...

The front of borders or along a path Catmint (*Nepeta racemosa* 'Walker's Low'): long flowering from summer to autumn, it likes a sunny spot
Sedum (*Hylotelephium caudicicola* 'Coca-Cola'): loves full sun, is drought tolerant and has pretty, deep-pink star-shaped flowers
Lamb's ear (*Stachys byzantina* 'Silver Carpet'): rosettes of soft, silver-grey, evergreen foliage (if there's a rogue flower, then snip it off)

The middle of a border for impact

African lily (*Agapanthus*): there are lots of different selections, but I like the blue and white ones best, with large, spherical flower heads

Californian tree poppy (*Romneya coulteri*): it takes a while to get going, but it stands 2m high, with huge, pure white flowers

Argentinian vervain (*Verbena bonariensis*): easy to grow, it reaches 1.5m high -with wiry, branching stems topped with lavender-blue flowers

Back of border stateliness

Asters (*Aster* and *Symphyotrichum*): great for bridging the gap between summer and autumn, they have a range of colours

Witch hazel (*Hamamelis x intermedia* 'Pallida'): a lovely shrub or small tree with sweetly-scented, yellow, spidery flowers December to February

Sweet peas (*Lathyrus* selections): who doesn't love the pinks, whites or blues of these summer stalwarts climbing a cane or wig-wam?

APGC TRIPS FOR 2026

Belvedere, Garden close lane, Newbury, RG14 6PP, on 11th July (To be confirmed),

Leave Victoria Hall at 11am return by 6 pm. Cost £18 per person, includes Transport and Entrance fees. Teas available at own cost on site. Stopping on the way at Hilliers Garden Centre, Aldermaston

Titsey place and gardens, Pitchfront Lodge, Water Lane, Titsey, Oxted, RH8 0SA, 30th August www.titsey.org

Leave Victoria Hall at 11:00am return by 6 pm. Cost £24 each,, includes Transport and Entrance fees. Teas available on site. Stopping on the way at Knights Garden Centre Oxted Rd, Godstone RH9 8DB

SUMMER SHOW

MONDAY 6th July 2026

Staging time for exhibitors is between 7:00 pm and 7.45 pm. Please complete staging before 7.45pm.

Awards will be presented at 9:00 pm Exhibits may only be removed after the presentation

SECTION 1**FLOWER, FRUIT & VEGETABLE**

Vases are provided, AND MUST BE USED, for Classes 71 to 77 & 82 - 86 inc.

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|-----|-----------------------|--|
| 70. | Competition Plant | (Seeds Available @ Feb and March meeting) Show 1 in a 5" pot |
| 71. | Rose | Large Flowered (HT) 1 Bloom |
| 72. | Rose | Cluster Flowered, 1 stem. |
| 73. | Rose | Miniature, 1 stem (miniature in all aspects of size of flowers, foliage & growth) |
| 74. | Rose | 1 variety. Shrub Rose or Climbing Rose. 1 stem |
| 75. | Rose | 1 stem any variety judged for fragrance only |
| 76. | Everlasting Sweet Pea | 3 stems, 1 variety, displayed in a FAN shape. |
| 77. | Annual Sweet Pea | 3 stems, 1 variety, displayed in a FAN shape. |

All Pot Plants not to exceed 60cm width or depth

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|----|------------|--|
| 78 | Pot Plant | 1 Plant, foliage only, pot not to exceed 12.5cm in diameter |
| 79 | Pot Plant | Pelargonium. Pot NOT to exceed 25cm in diameter |
| 80 | Pot Plant | Any type not in classes 78 to 79. Pot NOT to exceed 25cm in diameter |
| 81 | Pot Plant | Cactus or Succulent. Pot NOT to exceed 25cm in diameter |
| 82 | Delphinium | 1 spike |

Plates are provided for Classes 87 to 92 inclusive

87	Lettuce	1 Any variety.
88	Potatoes	3, of 1 variety.
89	Any other Vegetable	1 variety, minimum of 2
90	Gooseberry	12, with stalks
91	Currants, red, black or white.	6 bunches, as grown
92	Any other Fruit	Number optional
93	Hanging Basket	Any number of plants growing in a Hanging Basket 38cm Max. diameter (exhibit to be viewed all round).

70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84
85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93						

Please give your entries to, ring or email:-

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