



Newsletter - January 2024

Letter from the Chair

Hello members and gardening friends

Welcome to another gardening year in our beautiful corner of the world.

Let's hope that we've seen the last of the wind and rain for a while; but, after all, as I write it is still January.

I always look forward to the ancient festival of Candlemas (or St Brigid's Day if you prefer the Celtic version) which takes place on 2nd February. It always seems to me to be time when the first signs of Spring start to really show in the garden, and in nature as a whole, and the air and the earth start to warm up.

Your Committee have not been idle at this quiet time of the year for gardeners, we have lots of interesting and enjoyable things lined up for 2024 - more of which below.

We have been informed that, at some point during this year, renovation and improvement work is going to start on Grosmont Town Hall. It's not entirely clear when yet - but we think it may be August. It will be great to have better facilities and access in the building, but it does mean that for a while we will need to hold our meetings elsewhere. This will probably be Ewyas Harold Village Hall, but we'll keep you posted.

In the meantime I wish you a happy, productive and floriferous 2024.

Alison



Notes for your diary



Our next meeting will be on **Tuesday 6th February** at 7.30pm in Grosmont Town Hall.

Our speaker will be Thomas of Tom's Yard talking about pots and container gardening. You can find more details about Tom later in the newsletter.

If you haven't yet renewed your membership, and you'd still like to, then you can do so at the meeting - or alternatively make a bank transfer to:

Bank account name : Grosmont and District Gardening Club

Sort code : 30 99 50

Account number : 34619268

If you pay by this method, please also notify our Treasurer, Barbara,

at: **barbararees549@btinternet.com**



Speakers for the rest of 2024 will be:

5th March - Alun and Jill Whitehead from Aulden Farm on
Hidden Gardens of Herefordshire

2nd April - Nick Morgan on
A Productive Year in a Small Greenhouse

3rd September - Marion Stainton on
Vegetable Legends

4th October - Michael Marriott
David Austin English Roses

We are particularly excited to be welcoming Michael to speak to us, as he was a key figure in David Austin Roses for 35 years, and was directly involved in developing the gorgeous English Roses we enjoy in our gardens today.



Our Annual Plant Sale will be on the morning of **Saturday 1st June** at Ewyas Harold Memorial Village Hall.

It may seem like a long way ahead, but we absolutely rely on our lovely members to provide us with plants to sell; and it is our main fund raising event. So as you come to the time of year when you are sowing seeds and dividing up perennials; please put a little extra aside for the Plant Fair.



Our Summer Social will be held on the evening of **Tuesday 18th June** at Blackbrook Estate, Skenfrith.

We are delighted to have been invited by the owner, Boo Vaughan, to this beautiful garden on our doorstep. It isn't open to the public, so this will be a lovely opportunity to stroll around with a glass of wine - or two!



Keep an eye on the newsletter for more Summer events - including our fabulous Grand Day Out.



If you are interested in discovering more about snowdrops, there is a National Garden Scheme online talk called

'In celebration of snowdrops' on **Tuesday 30th Jan at 7pm.**

Chief executive George Plumtre will kick off the new season with a panel of garden owners who all open their gardens for snowdrops and other treasures of the late winter. Tickets are £10 with all proceeds supporting the NGS nursing and health charities. Tickets available from ngs.org.uk.



WHAT'S IN A NAME ?

For those not completely at ease saying “ I saw some lovely *Hyacinthoides non scriptus* in the woods today” (or.. *bluebells* to you and me) .

If there is one thing that makes gardeners want to chew the carpet, it is possibly the use of Latin names to refer to our favourite plants.

Despair not! This article urges you to embrace the Latin name challenge, and hopes to convince you that what initially may seem like academic mumbo jumbo will bring you increased clarity and understanding, enhancing your enjoyment of plants.

Importantly, don't worry about the pronunciation. The last genuine Latin speakers died around 2,000 years ago, so your idea of how to say “Cicero” is as good as an Oxford don's, so it's all guesswork...

The first thing is to clarify how plants are named. Like most of us they have at least 2 names. The first is the wider type, or genus.

For example , **all** roses are “Rosa” , **all** honeysuckles are “Lonicera” , **all** heathers are “Erica” etc.

The first name also usually has a capital letter. The bit that makes it interesting is the second name. This tells you the class of plant and its characteristics within that genus or group. For most gardeners that is the bit that tells you what you are really getting : is it big, small, scented, what colour is it, who is it named after?

The most common second names describe either colour, habit, foliage, perfume, type of flower, country of origin, or person that bred/discovered it. The list on the next two pages is not complete, but will give you some common ones that you will often see.



Category	Latin	English
Colour	Alba Argentea Aurea Atropurpurea Cinerea Coccinea Glaucia Lactea Lutea Nigra Sanguinea Viridis	White Silver Gold Purplish red Ash grey Red Sea green Milky white yellow black red green
Habit	Arborea Fastigiata Globosa Magnifica Nana Pendula Prostrata Repens	Tree like Stiffly upright Rounded Large Dwarf Weeping Growing flat to the ground Creeping
Foliage	Augustifolia Dissectum Hirsute Latifolia Macrophylla Microphylla Picta Sempervivens	Narrow Finely cut Hairy Broad leaved Large leaved Small leaved Coloured Evergreen (“always living”)
Perfume	Aromatica Citriodora Foetida Graveolens Suaveolens	Aromatic Lemon scented Strong and Unpleasant Unpleasant Sweet smelling
Type of Flower	Campanulata Floribunda Grandiflora parviflora Pauciflora Plena Spicata	Bell shaped Many flowers, free flowering Large flowers small flowers few flowers double spiked

Origin	Sinensis/chinensis Japonica Darwinii Banksiae Name ending in “ae” Name ending in “ii”	From China From Japan Named after Charles Darwin Named after the wife of Joseph Banks (not after Banksy!!) Named after a woman Named after a man
--------	--	---

This list could go on and on, but hopefully it gives an insight into how useful some knowledge of what is behind the Latin names can be.
Happy Latin hunting!



Our Next Speaker



Tom was raised in Herefordshire, a county he passionately loves.

He studied at the Royal Agricultural University in Cirencester, and then spread his wings and went off to work with Europe's largest retailer of decorative antiques and garden ornaments, running their main Tetbury showroom.

Since opening the gates to his business, Tom's Yard, he's been fortunate to supply many passionate gardeners. From Country House estates to space-restricted balconies - his pots now reside across England, Wales & Scotland. Some have even made their way into Europe, with orders in France, Germany and Belgium.

He has worked with some of the country's leading garden designers and horticulturalists (including RHS Chelsea Gold medal Winners), supplied Amazon, the BBC, Channel 4 and ITV, and leading hotels, such as The Newt In Somerset.

He is an Industry Coordinator for the YPHA - Young People in Horticulture Association. The body now holds over 700 members across Britain and is a fantastic group for bringing together and celebrating young people working in horticulture.

Through the business and his close proximity to a local garden, The Laskett Gardens, he is a Perennial Partner. Perennial is the UK's only charity dedicated to those who work in horticulture, and their families, when times get tough. The Gardeners' Benevolent Institution (now Perennial) was founded in 1839 and still exists today in the aim to carry out its mission to support all of those who work in horticulture.

Auntie Rosemary and Uncle Basil's Problem Corner



Your Garden Conundrums: Rosemary and Basil to the Rescue !

Rosemary and Basil between them have decades of gardening experience and we are delighted they have agreed to help our Gardening Club by looking at our readers' gardening queries



Why do my daffodils not flower? They do well in the first year, and then I just seem to get leaves.



This isn't – as some people believe – a permanent or "inherited" condition. It mainly happens due to poor or incorrect growing conditions and care. Providing you buy large, good quality bulbs, and plant them correctly as soon as possible, they are guaranteed to flower in their first year since they come with the flower bud already in them. There are a number of reasons why daffodils don't flower – or come up blind in subsequent years.

1) The bulbs haven't been planted deep enough, and during the summer - especially dry summers - the flower buds dry out and die. Dig up the bulbs in April/early May (certainly before the foliage dies right down or you may not be able to find them) and plant deeper. There needs to be at least two times the height of the bulb of soil above the bulb.

2) As daffodil bulbs age they go through a lifecycle. The large flowering (mother) bulbs multiply every year or so to produce much smaller, younger bulbs – or bulblets – that aren't large enough to flower. The mother bulbs then die and it takes a year or so for the smaller ones to reach flowering size. Keep the bulbs well fed - add a granular high potash feed in early March, and liquid feed with Phostrogen, Miracle-Gro or similar liquid fertiliser every 10-14 days after flowering and until the foliage dies down; and plant a few bulbs every year, so they don't all reach the same stage in this lifecycle at the same time.

3) The foliage wasn't allowed to die down naturally. Because daffodil foliage – as it ages – looks ugly, many people cut it off or tie it in "neat" knots. This prevents the essential food that the leaves make, building up the bulbs' strength for the following year.

Leave the foliage alone until it dies down naturally, or remove it no sooner than eight weeks after flowering finishes. Also, remove the developing seed pod to prevent plants wasting energy on producing seeds.

4) Dry weather. Warm, dry springs can result in poor flowering the following year, as the bulbs haven't grown enough to develop the following year's flower buds.

Water the soil/compost when needed when the bulbs still have foliage, to prevent it drying out. Feed every 10-14 days with a fast-acting liquid fertiliser too.

5) The flower buds have been eaten by the larvae of the narcissus fly. There's nothing you can do for the current year's display, but you can protect the bulbs for the following year. Hoe regularly around the plants to kill any larvae, and to make sure there are no large cracks in the soil around the bulbs down which the adult narcissus flies can crawl. Be careful not to damage the bulbs.



Parts of our lawn have flooded during the recent heavy rain due to the predominantly clay soil. Can I improve matters by adding lawn sand? If so, when should I apply it?



Lawn sand is actually used for moss control, so I wouldn't use that. You would need a gritty sand, such as plasterers' sand. This would need to be worked into the soil; so aerate the lawn with a garden fork or, better still, a hollow-tine aerator first and then brush the sand into the holes.

For good results, you'd need around 1.75kg per sq m (2lb per sq yd). This can be done in autumn or spring - although autumn is probably best.



When is the best time for pruning fruit trees; I have a pear, plum, cherries and apple, and they are very old and in very rough shape.



Plums, cherries and other stone fruit don't really like a lot of pruning - otherwise they become shy at fruiting and it can take a few years for them to get back into fruiting mode.

I would try to limit yourself to removing dead, dying, diseased or damaged wood, branches that are too low or spread too far, those which cross from one side of the tree to the other and those that are touching or rubbing.

Pruning of all stone fruit must be carried out any time from May to August.

Apples and pears can either be pruned in winter or in summer.

Winter pruning encourages growth, and summer pruning encourages flowers and fruit. But try to limit how much you do - or do it over two or three years.

After pruning, give a feed with a balanced granular fertiliser.



My roses are suffering terribly from black spot and rust, yet I have sprayed them a couple of times with a recommended fungicide. What's going wrong?



Lovely rural communities with clean air like ours do suffer more from fungal diseases, as the sulphur in air pollution kills the spores - however, in the overall scheme of things, I think that it's a small price to pay!

Once a plant is severely affected by a disease it is often very difficult to control - fungicides are usually used as a protectant, not a cure.

If you want to use chemicals, then you should start your spraying programme in late winter/early spring, treating the leaves just as they are beginning to emerge; RoseClear Ultra is particularly effective against these diseases.

Pick up and destroy badly affected leaves, especially in the autumn, as the disease spores will overwinter on them in the soil. **Don't** put them in the compost. In winter, prune back the stems by up to half to remove diseased wood, then spray the rest of the plant.

Personally, I don't spray. Instead I look for varieties of rose that are bred to be particularly healthy and disease resistant. This is more difficult with red roses, as they are more susceptible, particularly to black spot. Any quality rose supplier will be happy to advise you.

Garden Jobs to do in January/February



Cut the leaves off hellebores. This will discourage fungal disease, show off the flowers and stimulate new leaf growth. Be careful to avoid cutting flower stems.



Start forcing rhubarb.



Tidy greenhouses, and clean pots ready for Spring



Prepare vegetable seed beds and sow some salad crops under cover



Once snowdrops have finished flowering, divide them and replant them whilst they are “in the green”.



Prune wisteria back to three buds in February, prune again back to six buds in July/August



Cut back deciduous grasses left uncut over winter and remove dead grass from evergreen grasses.



Order your lily bulbs for flowering this Summer. Lilies in pots can be started in a cold greenhouse in February

Committee Members for 2023/24



Sarah Bell

Jenny Bond

Paula Crawford

Chrissy Collingwood

Barbara Rees

Gilli Urch

Christine Williams

Charlotte Wilson

Alison Ward (Chair)

If you have any questions or ideas, if for any reason you no longer want to receive our monthly newsletter, or if there's anything you'd like included in future editions, then please email

alison.marlborough@btinternet.com

or phone Alison on 07542 800815