



Spring Newsletter

May 2024

No 172



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Editor's notes

The rain seems to have stopped and the sun has started to shine, so hopefully we can all enjoy spending hours in our gardens, well into the evenings as they warm up. We have plenty of events going on throughout the spring and summer. So please read on for more information.

If you would like to contribute on a regular or ad-hoc basis or have anything that would be of interest to members, along with feedback or comments I would be pleased to hear from you, after all this is your newsletter. Please do email me on marketing@fdhs.org.uk.

Neil Mumford

From the Veg Plot by Dan Bosence



Many have commented on the early spring, and this is confirmed by our native wildflowers. The wildflowers out on Bealeswood Common in mid-March were, on average, 3 weeks earlier than their 15-year average first flowering date.

With an essentially frost-free February and March it has been possible to make early sowings- and get away with it!

Those crops that are sown early may overlap with the previous year's veg that are still producing. I have always liked this demonstration of the annual gardening cycle, whereby the new seedlings are coming up whilst you are harvesting last year's crop. These are crops that need a long growing season and I remember when I started out with veg growing that my winter greens and other crops were never as good as I hoped because I didn't start them early enough, and plant them out in good time.

Brussels Sprouts, and (our preferred crop nowadays) Kalettes or Flower Sprouts, are good examples which can be sown in March-April (under cover) and then grown through April-May before planting out 2'6" to 3' apart. Give them plenty of space, this year's crop grew to 6-7' in height; a very good year for greens and we have been cropping them for nearly 5 months.



Kalettes, sown early in 2023, have been harvested since December. Early pickings are the sweet tasting little “blown sprouts” coming off the stems. This later gives way to shoots resembling purple sprouting broccoli seen here in the background.

Seed is sown directly into 3” pots (on April Fool’s Day this year) and came up within a week. These will be thinned to the single strongest plant and planted out in May-June and netted throughout the summer against White butterflies.



Celeriac- another long-lived crop, with this year’s seedling placed next to the last of the winter’s crop.

I sow seeds inside, in a tray, in February; they need warmth and time to germinate so be patient.

When the second leaves appear, I transplant them into 3” pots and let them grow in unheated greenhouse until the pot is filled with roots and frost is past.

Plant out 9-10” apart (in a grid, in my raised beds). Given a mild winter (like the last) they will overwinter, but I usually have them under horticultural fleece. Keep a look out for slugs that love to excavate tasty homes into the swollen stems.

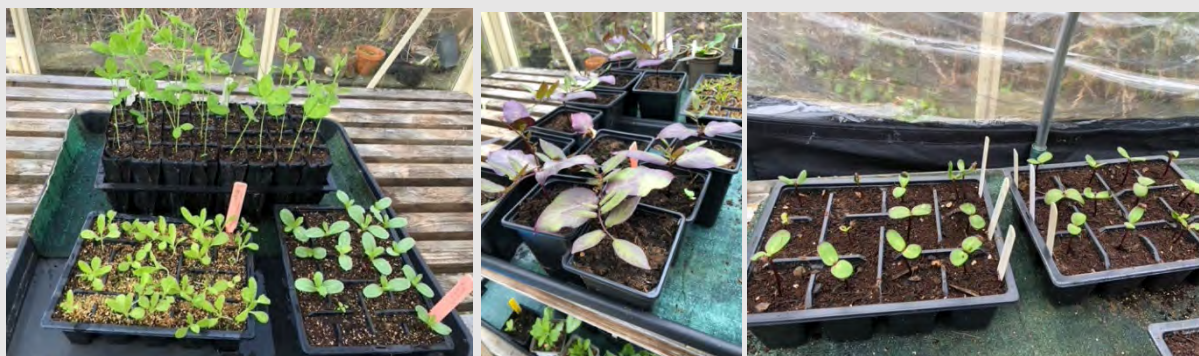
In the Flower Garden with Ruth Murphy

April come she will!

Having celebrated Ostara (the Spring equinox) and welcoming the increasing daylight hours, the growing season is well and truly here. The soil is warming, the rainfall is soft (in my dreams perhaps; the rain late winter/early spring has been epic!) and thoughts are turning to preparing seed grown annuals and perennials for their final growing spot.

My sweet peas germinated super quickly on the heated mat having sown them on 31 January. By the 5 February, I had good germination evident across the root trainers. Once they had two true set of leaves, the tips were pinched out to encourage branching and they were moved to an unheated tray within the greenhouse to prevent them becoming too leggy. I have now planted these into the ground at approx. 25cm tall (planted on 7 April). A little early perhaps, but they are beginning to send out tendrils and will soon start climbing the poles, fingers crossed.

The echium, cobaea, and scabiosa have all been potted on and are growing away strongly. I'll gradually harden these off so I can get them in the ground soon. The echiums will be planted later this week time and weather depending. The cobaea are now tall enough for sticks in their pots but will stay protected a little while longer (the wind this last week has been quite chilly) until the weather is more reliably warmer.



Sweet peas, Scabiosa Sternkugel and Echium

Cobaea scandens

Sunflower seedlings (sown 5 April at 7 days later)

Autumn Sowings

The seeds I direct sowed last autumn really haven't fared so well –it's been too wet. I had good early germination of Gysophilla, but they got slugged in the new year. The Daucus carota is holding up well, having had great germination and now good strong leaf growth evident – my biggest pest in this bed Monty, my Chocolate Labrador he loves a carrot and having raided my edible crop bed last year, has his nose tuned into anything carroty! In addition, the Nigella is doing emerging and bulking up well, and I have four Tragopogon that successfully germinated and are growing away strongly, despite being dug over by a fox or cat, requiring replanting!

I think that in future, any autumn sowing will be done in pots or modules and kept in the cold frame (or unheated greenhouse). At least they can be given shelter from extreme rain. Lesson learnt!

I did plant up one of the beds in the prod garden with a mix of narcissus to cut for the house. These have performed well and provided me with a small handful of blooms at a time, just enough for a small vase. The mix comprised of several cultivars, began flowering around early March, with colours ranging from lemon, bright yellow, creamy white and white (some scented). I still have a few in bud but many are now going to seed. I shall dead head and let them die back a little before lifting and replanting into a newly prepared area of garden that is missing early spring colour.

Thanks to the milder winter we have just had, the camellias in my garden have flourished. There are several mature shrubs situated on the west side of the property adjacent to the lounge windows that sit behind a mature box hedge. Back in the summer of 2020, they were hard pruned as they had become too large and were blocking light into the room. Many of you will know that following a hard prune, it can take several years during which the shrubs produce no flowers. However, I'm a patient gardener and with a regime of winter mulching, following a good feed I now have nicely sized **flowering** camellias. Once the flowers have had their floozy moment and begin to fade, I will give them a light prune and a feed with a proprietary feed, such as Vitax ericaceous or blood, fish, and bone. They have been worth the wait though!



Now the soil and air temperature are warming up, I will sow some half and hardy annuals to fill the gaps in the cut flower beds and probably (as I always grow too many) into the wider garden. Cornflowers, zinnias, cosmos, and calendula along with some morning glory 'heavenly blue' seeds left over from last year – which were delightful on the trellis last summer.

The wider garden post winter-tidy up is complete and as I walk around, I see new shoots emerging from many perennials and grasses along with the tulips and alliums. I'm particularly pleased to see that phormium 'Bronze Baby' (which was a cutting from my late mum's garden) is thriving and sending up many new sword-like leaves. Last winter I thought it was done for, it was a complete mess, all slimy from the extreme cold. I was upset and sulked until mid-April before tackling the removal of it only to find that beneath the slimy dieback were many new shoots emerging. Elated (but with bated breath), I gave it a good tidy up, followed by a compost mulch to feed and protect new growth (see photos below). It is very much integral to the planting scheme in this border and tones beautifully with the tulips, perennials, and shrubs.



Many of the plants in the ornamental beds in my garden have been grown from seed or cuttings and this summer will see some of them at their full maturity (4-6 years in the ground). I have some grasses that have taken a while to get going so really looking forward to their interaction with their planting partners. I have taken inspiration from various garden visits over the years and leave you with a few of the combinations I am (or would like to be) nurturing which provide contrast through colour, form, and plenty movement! Great to sketch!



Dahlias with Pennisetum villosum (Nymans)



Calamagrostis Karl Foerster with Hylothelephium (Wisley)



Symphiotrichum with Calamagrostis brachytricha
(Bury Court)

I would like to thank Ruth for supporting this new look newsletter with two great articles, however Ruth has advised me that due to other commitments she will be unable to continue contributing any further articles on the flower garden. I would like to keep a regular article relating to the flower garden in the newsletter and If you can help, can you please contact me on either 07894 471000 or marketing@fdhs.org.uk



Society noticeboard

May Meeting- Quiz

We will be holding a light-hearted horticultural Quiz and cocktails on Thursday 23rd May at 7.30pm for an 8pm start.

Frensham Fayre Plant Stall

For more than a decade, Caroline Plant has managed our plant stall which raises vital funds for the society, we also give a donation to the Frensham Fayre equal to 30% of the profits.

This year we need your help:

We desperately need you to donate any surplus flower and in particular vegetable plants, seedlings, shrubs, etc and Caroline needs your help manning the stall.

If you can help in either way, please contact any committee member or Caroline by email: caroline.tonkinxxx@gmail.com

MEMBERS OPEN GARDENS

A number of members will be opening their gardens on Thursday 9th May. This gives you the chance to gain inspiration and meet other members for tea and cake. If you have not yet expressed an interest, please contact Caroline Plant by email: caroline.tonkinxxx@gmail.com

July Meeting- ALPINES

Being held on Thursday 25th July at 7.30pm for an 8pm start. We welcome John Evans from the National Alpine Society.

Garden Visit Friday 28th June

On Friday 28th June we have arranged a visit to The Hanging Hosta Garden in Lindford. The collection of over 1700 Hosta cultivars, is one of the largest in England. Hosta's are displayed at eye level to give a wonderful tapestry of foliage and colour. Islamic garden, waterfall and stream garden, cottage garden. There are three National Collections. The Asiatic and European Hosta collections comprise one third of the total collection.

There is also a National Collection of daylily (Hemerocallis) species, their varieties, and forms.

Please email Karen Williams on events@fdhs.org.uk if you would like to be part of the society visit and please advise if you require a lift or can car share.

Frensham Fayre - The Rose Show

In 2022, we introduced a Rose Show to the Frensham Fayre with massive success. Once again, we have been asked by the Fayre to hold another one. There will be a number of different classes, all of which are open to members and non-members.

The Perring Cup will once again be awarded for the most points across the show by a society member. Roses must be grown in your own garden and exhibitors are limited to one rose per category. Please bring along your entry before 1pm on the day of the Fayre. Judging will be by a people's choice vote and winners will be announced at around 3pm.

The classes are:

- Best scented Rose
- Best Rose bud
- Most unusual rose
- Most romantic rose
- Best wedding buttonhole

We look forward to seeing you there.

Bridget's Kitchen

A perfect recipe for one of the very few fruits to be in season during the spring.

Rhubarb Upside Down Cake

Serves 6-8

480g rhubarb
60g soft brown sugar
60g butter
Grated zest of 1 orange
125g unsalted butter
175g caster sugar
3 eggs
175g flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon milk
crème fraiche and demerara sugar
to serve.
toasted flaked almonds.



1. Preheat oven to 180degreesC/Gas 4
2. Cut the rhubarb at an angle into slices about 5cm long.
3. Melt the brown sugar and butter with the butter in an ovenproof pan (approx. 26cm)
4. Add orange zest and remove from heat.
5. Cover base of pan with rhubarb
6. Cream butter and sugar until light in colour.
7. Gradually add eggs one at a time beating as you go.
8. Fold sifted flour, baking powder and salt into mixture.
9. Spread the mixture over the rhubarb.
10. Bake for about 30minsuntil cake mixture is firm to the touch.
11. Leave to cool for about 20mins and then invert onto serving plate.
12. Sprinkle with toasted almonds (if wished) and icing sugar.

NB: you could just melt butter and brown sugar in saucepan and then add to ovenproof tin/ dish if easier.

The Humble oven glove scoops top prize

Despite all of the winter and spring rain threw at us, we had another successful spring show. We received 189 entries, which was an increase from last year's 166.

The open classes were once again very well supported.

Our President Caroline Plant opened the presentation ceremony by thanking all the exhibitors and visitors for another successful show and introduced, Sarah Squire, Chairman of the family owned Squires Garden Centres, she thanked Sarah for the generous support of Squires mentioning that the sponsorship money helps towards the costs of putting on the show including judges' fees and hall hire. Sarah also kindly agreed to present the trophies.



Sarah commented "Last year you had to contend with the very harsh frozen weather which killed many a shrub and I was pleasantly surprised at how you managed to put on a fantastic show and this year you have had to contend with a mild but extremely wet weather, and it was pleasing to see that once again you put on a show with such quality and quantity of the exhibits".

The home industries section again proved very popular and provided a good number of high quality entries. Judge Kate Shipton commended the quality of all the home industries exhibits, particularly the oven glove made by Sharon Bleach. Having compared this to all the other winning exhibits in the show. The Judges were unanimous in awarding this exhibit, the Darling Cup for exhibit of highest merit in the whole show (picture left: Sharon receiving the cup from Sarah Squire).

This is the first time in many years that a home industries exhibit has won best in show. Sharon was however just pipped to the Barnes Cup for most points in home industries by competitive Penny Hearn.



Exhibit of highest Merit



Floral arrangements judge: Elizabeth Barralet



Annabel Sommerfelt who was also show organiser, continued her dominance of the Huitfeldt Cup, winning for a third year in succession for best Floral Arrangement for her interpretation of the floral class 'Sparkling Gold':

Annabel also won the Wood Cup for the best exhibit in classes 19 and 20- shrubs and the Diver Cup, for highest points in the flowers and shrubs section.

Simon Bleach won his first cup in a society show, The Peattie Cup for the best exhibit in photography classes 39-42 His scenic photo take in Scotland was first in Class 41 'Winter Skies' and the considered the best overall. Well, done Simon.

Congratulations to our other winners.

- Frensham Spring Cup, judged the best exhibit in classes 5-9, daffodils: Penny Hearn
- Pat Mattin Cup, the best floral arrangement in the Junior Section: Lily Easton
- Dene Cup: Highest points for a junior: Imogen Huband
- Most exhibits: Kate Atkin



Lastly. The worthy winner of the People's Choice award, first introduced in 2022 and voted for by the show visitors from a selection of exhibits chosen by the judges, was won by Stuart Easton for his basket of dried vegetables, well done Stuart.

Many thanks to the judges, Kate Shipton (Home industries), Elizabeth Barralet (Floral Arrangements), Annabel Chaplin (Flowers & Vegetables) and Simon Claiden (Photography).

Noreen Madgwick

It is with extreme sadness that I am writing this to inform you that one of our former members Noreen Madgwick has passed, peacefully in her sleep on Sunday 7th April in Plymouth, where she moved to, to be near her daughter after selling her house in Rowledge a few years ago. I did not know Noreen personally, only through the research for our history book. Noreen's daughter has advised us that she is hoping to arrange a celebration of Noreen's life, later in the year.

From the archives, at the Autumn show, she won the Morris Cup (exhibit of highest merit) twice in 2011 and 2015. She also won the Atherton Cup in 2015.

Here are some of the memories, members have shared with us of a much-loved member.

"She won one of the prizes in the Rose Competition with a rugosa rose that was enormous, she said, this was due to the home brewed potions with which she fed it! Nice lady".

Caroline Plant

"I am sorry to hear of Noreen's death, however my garden has so many plants that she gave me or told me I had to buy, when we were out on garden meetings, that I will constantly be reminded not only of her knowledge and skills but also her friendship. One example- she gave me a lovely fern complete with detailed information sheet and it has come up again this year."

Annette Clayson

"I had the privilege of being invited to tour Noreen's Garden in Rowledge, it must be 10 years ago. By which time was becoming rather overgrown but fascinating because Noreen knew everything about every single plant and insect in the garden. I still have a catmint she gave me that day. Oh yes, and the day Noreen arrived at one of the shows I was organising, she noticed that there weren't many entries in the flower arranging classes, popped home and came back with a beautiful flower arrangement she'd just rustled up and I think she won the class!"

Penny Hearn

"Noreen was an amazing plants woman, and her main aim was to 'garden with nature' so lots of insect-friendly planting and all organic. Noreen was originally an artist I think, certainly she trained at the college in Farnham and loved talking to me about colour/texture etc. in the garden. Suzanne Mclean will remember the evening meeting the society had one summer, where we visited members compost heaps. We began at our house, Dan was away, and I did the tour of our (old) heaps, at the time in a very shady inaccessible corner and not very successful compost! Not sure if we visited another garden but we ended up at Suzanne's with those wonderful big bins for leaf and grass cuttings and were about to wind up with refreshments when Noreen stepped forward. She had bought with her lots of wonderful potions, she had made: some compost, bits of her wormery and bottles of homemade plant food, one from nettles, I think and one with liquid feed from the wormery. She was also a beekeeper and very keen on butterflies too. She really enjoyed the garden club, and it was sad when she became so ill and moved away",

Alison Bosence

Gardeners Diary

There are many events held throughout the year nationally and locally. For this edition I have listed a number of events that are being held this year, so that you can put any relevant ones in your diary. In future editions I will focus on the events being held between newsletter editions. If you know of any events that are not listed including national garden scheme events, that you feel should be included, please let me know by email: marketing@fdhs.org.uk

National Events

9 th -12 th May.	RHS Malvern Spring Festival
21 st -25 th May.	RHS Chelsea Flower Show
13 th -16 th June	BBC Gardeners World Live, NEC Birmingham
14 th June.	International Orchid Show, Malvern
2 nd -7 th July.	RHS Hampton Court Flower Show
19 th July.	RHS Flower Show- Tatton Park

Local events

Most of May	Allium Extravaganza: Arundel Castle
5 th May	Surrey Plant Heritage Plant Fair- Denbies, Wine Estate, Dorking
3 rd -5 th May	BBC Gardeners World Spring Fair, Beaulieu, New Forest
11 th May	Grayshott Village Hall, Plant sale
1 st June	Dockenfield Day
5 th -8 th June	Festival of Flowers- Chichester Cathedral
7 th -9 th June	The Garden Show at Stanstead Park, Standard Park, Rowlands Castle
15 th June	Frensham Fayre- FDHS- Annual Rose Competition
16 th June	Nature Walk- Wildflowers of Bealeswood Common. email Dan Bosence for further details: dwbosence@btinternet.com
20 th July 2024:	Albury Produce Association's Annual Produce Show and Fair: Albury Sports Ground -GU5 9DG
13 th July 2024	Tilford Flower Show -

National Garden Scheme

There are plenty of gardens that will be open again under the National Garden scheme and you can find details on the following website: <https://findagarden.ngs.org.uk>