



Members' Newsletter – June, 2020

Welcome to the June edition of the Gardening Club Newsletter. Here we are, still in “lock down”, and with luck getting lots of useful jobs done in the house and as importantly in the garden and veg patch.

We have put together some information from the RHS and the NNHS as well as one or two other articles to cheer you up.

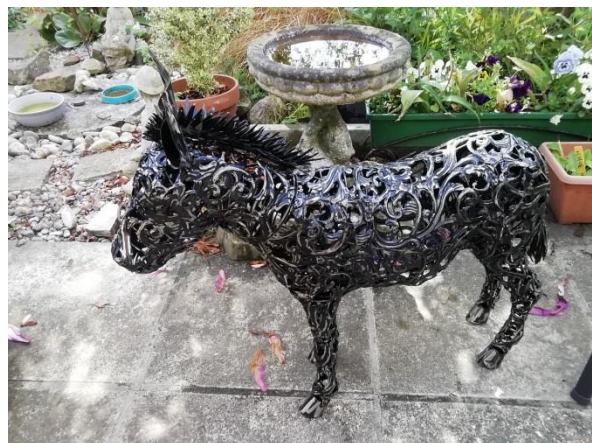
If you have come across something that you think fellow members would like to see, please send it in to us. Also do bear in mind that, as unfortunately the Annual Summer Show cannot be held this year, perhaps you'd like to try making, photographing (then eating) the Honey Cake which was going to be the standard recipe at the show (see page 2).

Please send in a photograph of your cake by 30th June to: Blofieldgardeningclub@outlook.com



A lovely view of the garden
to keep spirits raised –
thanks to Celia G for
sending this in

And some “interesting visitors” to the Drake garden!



Walnut and Honey cake

Ingredients:

300 g / 11 oz self raising flour
100 g / 3 ½ oz caster sugar
3 eggs

250 g / 9 oz honey
100 g / 3 ½ oz walnuts
1 lemon

225 g / 8 oz butter
2 tbsp icing sugar

Method:

- Preheat the oven to 160 C / Gas 3. Grease and line a loaf cake tin.
- Put the butter, sugar and honey in a pan, stir until it's all melted. Bring to the boil then turn the heat right down for a minute. Pour into a bowl and leave to cool.
- Beat the eggs and put into the cooled honey mixture along with the grated zest from the lemon, the flour and the chopped walnuts.
- Pour the mixture into the cake tin and bake for about 1 hour 20 minutes (or until a skewer inserted in the middle of the cake comes out dry).
- For a nice sticky syrup topping, squeeze the juice from half of the lemon into a jug with the icing sugar. Mix then drizzle over the top of the cake. Decorate with additional walnuts, chopped and whole. *(Then photograph for the July newsletter please.)*

(NB if anyone would like to buy some Blofield Heath Soft Set Honey, you can contact Linda on (01603) 715 933 to see if she has any spare)

The Royal Horticultural Society: Blooming Brilliant News: Issue 2



Welcome to the second issue of our special newsletter, highlighting some of the brilliant stuff going on in communities across the UK. This colourful 'rock garden' was created in the Bloom coastal town of Hunstanton by the Town Council to show their appreciation for key workers.

Below is a round up of some of the great stories that have been shared with us and you can see more over on our Community Gardening [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages. You can also share your own stories with us by emailing us at communities@rhs.org.uk. And don't forget you can send this email on to your fellow volunteers, colleagues and friends and they can sign up at the bottom to be added to the mailing list.

Grow and Tell

For the past couple of weeks you have been helping us to create a rainbow across social media. Last week you shared the most beautiful orange blooms and the week before we saw your radiant reds. From Tuesday, keep sharing any yellow blooms you're growing or have spotted in your local area and maybe tell us why you love them! Join in on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#) or you can [email us](#) too!

Beating the boredom!

The amazing volunteers that make up East Midlands in Bloom have been finding brilliant ways to keep people connected and engaged. Bloom groups were invited to share the history of their group, which the EMiB team will be sharing over time. Young Bloomers have also been invited to submit drawings, paintings or models of their favourite flowers, which have been showcased on [Facebook](#). And there is a lot more fun to come too so do check in to see what they're doing!

A colourful tribute

Durham County Council's Clean and Green Team paid a wonderful floral tribute to NHS workers. Using surplus bedding plants and spare stones, the team (safely) created this rainbow display on a busy roundabout for all to see. Durham has a fantastic heritage and a long-standing floral tradition making it a consistently outstanding Bloom entry. You can find out more about what Bloom means to the city [here](#).

Do you have a story to share? [Email us](#) to let us know.



Supporting through videos

One of our brilliant Bloom UK Finals judges, Alan Hulme, has been creating weekly videos to help the Gardening Club at N-Vision, a Blind Home in Blackpool. *"The sound of laughter each week in the polytunnel is a joy to behold so you can imagine my horror at the news of a lockdown. My answer has been to produce weekly videos. Every Wednesday they hear my familiar voice and come out to the polytunnel with an amazing carer called Jenny. They do the activity then leave the results in the polytunnel for me."* Alan's videos are all on YouTube and may be a valuable resource for care homes, groups in isolation or even families who don't know where to start. [Check out episode 1 here](#) and do share them on.

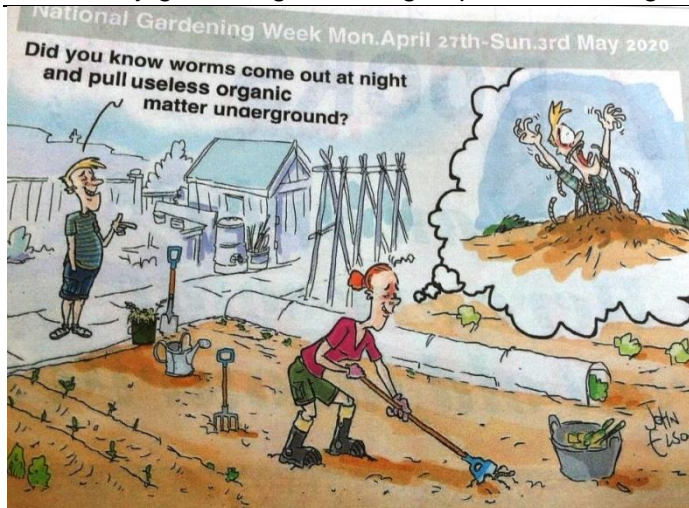
3 minutes with... Last week we chatted to Cath, a community gardener in Birmingham who is working hard to support local people by growing plants for others, doing deliveries of the plants along with pots and compost, and growing food in community sites to share. You can read the full interview [here](#).

Spreading sunshine We've seen many lovely stories of people using sunflowers to spread some sunshine in their local community. Sharon, owner of [Kindergarden Cooks](#) (a gardening and cooking school for children) and parent volunteer at Ballycarrickmaddy Primary School in Lisburn has been putting together sunflower growing packs to support Maghaberry Community Association. People are encouraged to grow their sunflowers as part of a competition and later collect the seeds to share on again next year. Are you doing anything similar? Let us know!

And finally... free sunflowers! We have around 1,200 packets of sunflower seeds (variety 'Moonshine') that were to be used for our Grow Social initiative this year. We would love for them to go to good use so if you would like some of these seeds to share with people in your community [please click here](#) to let us know! Please note: due to the limited number, there is a max limit of 10 packets per person/group and packs will be allocated on a 1st come 1st served basis.

Add yourself to our mailing list

If you've been forwarded this email or found it online and you want to keep up with the latest community gardening news, sign up to our mailing list by clicking the link: [Sign me up!](#)



Thanks very much to Barbara Basey - Fisher for sending in this very amusing cartoon from the EDP

Message from Lesley Webdale – Norfolk & Norwich Horticultural Society:

I have received a message from Ian Tinton of Woodview Garden Maintenance Ltd. together with a list of seeds he is able to supply ([attached](#)). He said: “The idea is for summer sowing, then autumn and winter harvesting. If you think your clubs would be interested please circulate. It is fair to say there has been a significant change in attitude towards soil maintenance and all our products are performing well in this difficult year.”

Grow Wild update: a national outreach initiative of the [Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew](#)



This month's update is a little different than usual, since many of us are still at home and are not able to get out, sowing and growing. Grow Wild's projects remain in 'hibernation mode', but we're still working away behind the scenes!

Although we can't currently bring you news from the 'field' (gardens or community projects) we've put together some tea-break reading for you to get stuck into at home. We hope you enjoy reading and learning with us.

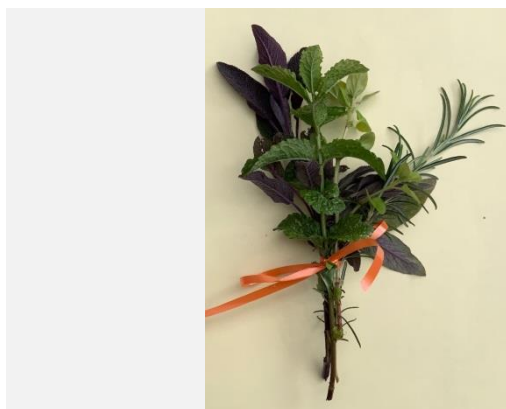
Grow Wild Blog

Taking a leaf out of wildflowers' book:

Learning from plant behaviour to maintain our wellbeing through challenging times – click on link below:

https://www.growwilduk.com/blog/wellbeing-wildflowers-learning-plant-behaviour?utm_campaign=568398_May%202020%20Newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Grow%20Wild%20%28Board%20of%20Trustees%20of%20RBGK%29&dm_i=4VE8,C6KU,RK1PQ,1D0WB,1

“June meeting competition entries: A Posy of Herbs”. Thank you for sending these in.



Tony Gould



Chloe Veale



Adrian Conneely



June Drake

Composting Know-how



Part 2: how to speed up the compost process

Making compost is simple as all the hard work is carried out by nature. As a general rule you will get usable compost after about 6 – 12 months. However it's not always as fast as one would like. Here are some tips on how to speed up the composting process.

Add water: a dry compost bin can slow down the rotting process. Compost should be moist like a wrung out sponge. If necessary you can add water to the bin gradually, using a watering can and then mix with a fork or broom handle to ensure there is plenty of air.

- Siting the bin – warmth speeds up the composting process, so it's best to site your bin in partial sun.
- Cut up any large items – the smaller the bits the faster they'll rot.
- Get the right mix (see topic 1).

Speedy ingredients: green sappy materials that are quick to rot will activate and get a compost bin started by adding more nitrogen to the compost. However there are certain plants and liquids that can also be added.

- Grass cuttings, comfrey and nettles are very rich in nitrogen. Adding these to the compost bin will speed it up.
- Both human and animal urine is a great source of nitrogen and potassium. It can be diluted and added to a compost bin. However too much will raise salt levels and discourage worms, so be careful. Manure and bedding from vegetarian pets are also good sources of nitrogen.

<https://www.norfolkrecycles.com/reduce-my-rubbish/compost/>

Next Newsletter composting topic : how to compost grass cuttings

Stop press:

Norfolk County Council are offering subsidised compost and Bokashi bins through [GetComposting.com](https://www.getcomposting.com), which now has the new reduced prices live on its website. A 220 L black compost bin now costs £10, with a 2nd bin for £5 offer, and a Bokashi bin twin pack for £15 (there is a £6 delivery charge on each order). Please promote this wherever you can!

If you have any composting queries, useful suggestions about composting, or any photographs that would be helpful in this series, please contact your composting agony aunt Sue on Blotfieldgardeningclub@outlook.com

Greenhouse and Conservatory Slug Attacks – some advice from Tony Gould.

Slugs are nocturnal and shelter during the day under flower pots and crevices under seed trays making them difficult for us to find. At this time of year they can play havoc devouring our newly developing young succulent plants. They have a huge appetite and with their multi teeth can double their own body weight in a night munching on our newly formed plants.

This year instead of chemicals, copper rings, salt and beer traps I thought I would try another combat approach and catch them at it. Once it gets dark enter your greenhouse or conservatory armed with a torch or flashlight and bucket plus tissues if you don't want to get slimed.

Start scanning with the torch beam on the roof working your way carefully down the walls then floor as soon as you spot one remove it and deposit it in the bucket. Finally start scanning the plants this is where you will find most slugs on your plants doing the damage.

As you progress make checks to ensure the slugs you've captured are not attempting to escape by climbing up the inside of your bucket. When finished flush the offenders down the toilet. Now wash your hands.

This procedure will take some time to complete depending on the size of your conservatory or greenhouse I would suggest weekly night time trips. You should notice fewer slugs will be found on each trip. This year I found this experimental method most satisfactory with hardly any plants suffering damage and no fatalities. I started the procedure early in Spring after sowing the first seeds in trays and have carried it out on a once a week basis and especially after potting up.

RHS: a reminder that it is still possible to find assorted videos which were made a part of the Virtual RHS Chelsea Flower Show by searching the Virtual Chelsea Flower Show website. Sue Brown had watched Andy Sturgeon's tour of his tiny courtyard garden in Brighton, for example. He gives all sorts of ideas for those of us with small or not so small gardens. Have fun exploring these videos.

**Some lovely pictures have been sent in by Gardening Club members, to cheer us all up!
Thank you.**

*From Chloe Veale: a bearded iris
I bought from Simon Dodsworth
of the English Iris Company when
he gave a talk to us last November.*



*From Sheila Ashford: something red before the tulips finally
go over.*



*Two photos from Pat Thomas's garden. She says "I
have enclosed a photo of my Camellia - it has sports
among the flowers: these blooms are on the same
stem. The left hand one is the correct variety but I
don't know its name."*

*Also: a buff-tailed Bumble Bee on an Agapanthus
flower.*



*A lovely "clematis in a box"
courtesy of Adrian Conneely*



And very importantly, please don't forget Alan Drake's fantastic Tool Sharpening Service is still available



Garden Equipment

Repair and Sharpening Service

Make your gardening tools "as good as new"

<i>Equipment</i>	<i>Charge</i>
Garden shears – all types	£4.00
Secateurs	£2.50
Kitchen knives	£0.50
Hedge trimmers	£10.00
Rotary lawnmower blades	£2.50
Edging irons, hoes	£0.50
Pruning saws (non-hardened teeth)	£2.50
New handles fitted to forks, spades, etc.	£5.00 plus cost of materials

Please 'phone Alan Drake – 01603 713 501

to discuss collection and delivery.

A 20% contribution will be made to Blofield & District Gardening Club funds