



Members' Newsletter – May, 2020

National Gardening Week : 27th April - 3rd May

Welcome to the May 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 – or just putting our feet up if preferred and watching someone else do it!

We have put together some information from the RHS and the NNHS as well as one or two more light-hearted 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 remember that the June competition is “A Posy of Herbs”, so please send in a photograph of your entry by 31st May to: [Blofieldgardeningclub@outlook.com](mailto:blofieldgardeningclub@outlook.com)

Royal Horticultural Society : Blooming Brilliant News: Issue 1

We have been a bit quieter than we would have liked over the last couple of weeks. Like everyone, we have been coping with lots of changes with many events and projects being postponed. But community is **everything** to us so we couldn't stay quiet for long!

While we can't all get together physically, we would love to continue celebrating all the brilliant stuff going on in our community gardening groups, schools and homes so we have a plan...

Over the coming weeks we will be putting our efforts into growing our online community to create a place where we can share the things we're doing in our gardens, things we've seen on our daily walks and also look back at some of the things we achieved before it all changed. And share some other fun bits and bobs to keep us all smiling along the way.

Below are some of the ways you can join in and an idea of what's to come. We'll also be sending this special newsletter fortnightly to show you some of the week's highlights, in case you aren't on social media or missed the posts.

You can also forward this email onto your fellow volunteers, friends and colleagues so that they can sign up for this special newsletter to share their amazing stories and hear what everyone is up to (link at the bottom of this email). So let's get started!...

Help us grow a rainbow

Over the coming weeks, we'd love your help to do what you do best, which is growing the colours of the rainbow in your gardens, on balconies or in your windows. As we all know, rainbows have become an important symbol during these challenging times so we'd love to help lift spirits and brighten up people's days.

Let's grow brightly coloured blooms for all to see. Maybe you could encourage people in your street or group to each grow different colours? Do you have any resources you could share with others? Just remember to be safe :)

Grow and Tell

Remember when you had to do a 'show and tell' at school? This is similar but less scary! Each week on our [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages, we'll invite you to show us what you're growing or what you've seen when out for your daily exercise. Sticking with our rainbow theme, this week we'd love to see your photos of red blooms! You can join in by using **#GrowandTell**

Tell us a story

Have you been finding creative (but socially distant) ways to keep connecting with or growing in your community? Sharing your stories with us will inspire others and celebrate the work still going on behind the garden gates. The story behind this amazing display will be coming soon! But meanwhile, if you've got something interesting to tell us, [drop us an email](#) and send some photos if you have any!

Grow at Home

The RHS has launched a new initiative called Grow at Home to help support people and boost their wellbeing. It's especially great for people who aren't sure where to start. Each week [this webpage](#) will be updated with activities and advice for people, plus a few fun activities to try out with children. Maybe let your friends or family know if they're trying out gardening for the first time and need a little help.

Family Fun

In case you've not seen, over on our Campaign for School Gardening [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages, we're also sharing activities that are great for keeping children busy, projects for families to do together, plus some fun weekly challenges for young people. Go follow if you'd like to see more!

If you've been forwarded this email, and you want to keep up with the latest community gardening news sign up to our mailing list below. [Sign me up!](#)

The May competition – A stem of a spring-flowering shrub



From Tony Gould



From Sue Rowe

Where are all your pictures then??

and some lovely spring colour from June and Alan Drake's garden



Thanks to all who have sent through their photographs.

Quiet please!
 Kindly don't impede my concentration,
 I am sitting in the garden
 thinking thoughts of propagation,
 Of sowing and of nurturing,
 the fruits my work will bear,
 And the place won't know what's hit it...
 Once I get up from my chair.

Pam Ayres



The hierarchies on our bird-feeders

There are some advantages to the slower pace of life that we are currently obliged to follow and one that we are enjoying is to learn more of the habits of the birds on our bird-feeders. In the past we have glanced at the various birds as they use the feeders or bathe in the bird-bath but lately we have taken to following their behaviour more closely.

There is most definitely a hierarchy on those feeders, the blue tits, whilst most numerous are also the most easily muscled out of the way by almost any other bird; the coal tits always seem to treat the feeders as though on a smash-and-grab run, barely staying a moment after grabbing a seed. The goldfinches however like to take their time and are rather selective as to which particular seed they will take, much to the pleasure of collared doves and dunnocks waiting below for the castoffs. We are fortunate to have a pair of nuthatches at the moment and there is no doubt that they consider the feeder as their private restaurant and even the goldfinches have to surrender their perch. Always fascinating to watch the nuthatch's ability to hammer the seeds whilst upside down, again scattering a shower of debris for the fortunate birds below.

The arrival of our great spotted woodpecker however trumps all others and his arrival always means that for two or three minutes he will have those seeds all to himself!

Peter Mackness



Summer Show Rose table – July, 2016

Composting Know-how Part 1: How to get the right compost mix



Living microscopic organisms break down the materials we compost by feeding on them. These microbes include bacteria and other very small organisms and in order to live, they need **food, air moisture and warmth**.

Food: the key to making good compost is to use a balance of different types of materials. Young, wet, sappy materials like grass cuttings and vegetable peelings rot quickly and are known as "greens". Greens need to be mixed with tougher, dry items like old bedding plants and cardboard, known as "browns". Browns add structure to the compost, allowing air in and providing the microbes with a balanced diet. Aim for a 50/50 mix of both wet greens and dry browns, e.g. for every caddy-full of fruit and vegetable peelings you add, match it with a caddy-full of scrunched up paper and cardboard packaging, e.g. egg boxes.

Air: the microbes that make the best compost need air to live. It is important to allow air into the bin to aid composting. This can be done in a variety of ways:

- Add scrunched up paper, cardboard egg boxes or loo roll tubes to ensure air pockets;
- Stick a fork or broom handle as far into the compost as possible and give it a good wiggle!
- Dig your compost over using a garden fork.

Enough moisture: if you have the right balance of greens and browns you should have the correct amount of moisture. However if it is too dry add some more greens, and if it is too wet add some more browns. For a quick fix you can add moisture with a watering can or leave the lid off for a while and let the rain in.

Warmth: microbes need warmth to thrive, so siting your bin in partial sun and keeping the compost covered will ensure plenty of warmth.

Remember however that there are items that should not be put in the compost bin, either because they won't decompose, or will attract vermin, so avoid cooked food, meat and fish scraps, cat and dog litter, dairy products, disposable nappies, plastic, tins, glass, seed heads, perennial weeds, dandelion/thistle/dock roots, diseased plants, foam packaging and coal ash.

Next Newsletter composting topic: how to speed up the compost process

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 Blofieldgardeningclub@outlook.com

Useful information is available on <https://www.norfolkrecycles.com/reduce-my-rubbish/compost/>

News from Norfolk and Norwich Horticultural Society

I am pleased to be able to let you know that at the moment bookings are being taken for the President's Evening on 15th July. Adrian Bloom will be hosting the Society and Affiliated Societies Members at Bressingham Gardens. There will be the opportunity to see Dell Garden and Foggy Bottom before enjoying a buffet in The High Barn. The cost is £15 each and booking must be made no later than 3rd July. Details are available on the NNHS website. <https://www.nnhs.org.uk/>

Susan Brown, the club's link with the NNHS says: At the moment the NNHS is still hoping to have its two autumn shows so, with all the extra time some people have to devote to their gardens this year, perhaps our Club could enter one or two exhibits at the Early Autumn Show on 6th September and the Late Autumn Show on 15th November? Please e-mail Blofieldgardeningclub@outlook.com if you are interested in discussing this further.

Royal Horticultural Society www.rhs.org.uk

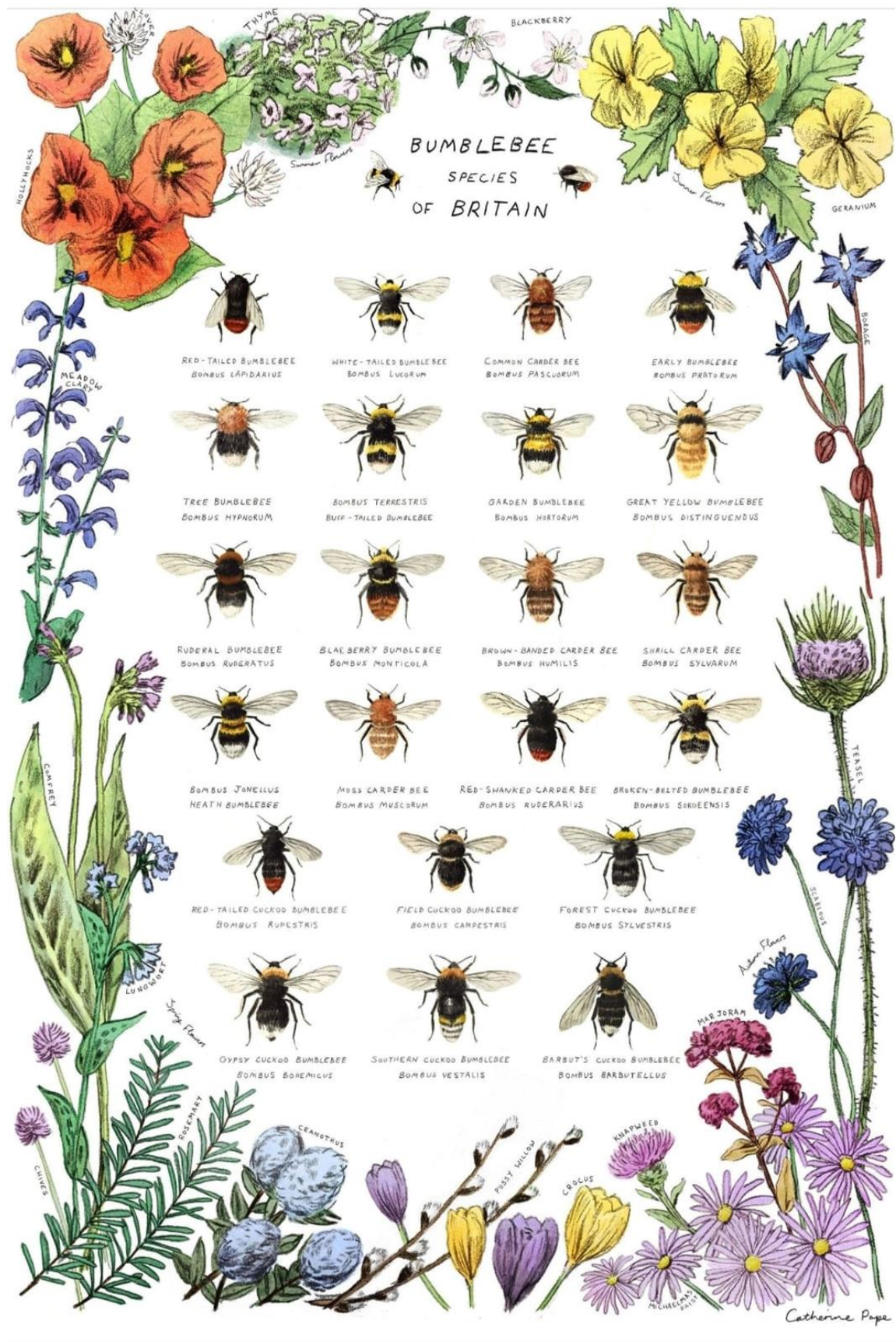
If any members are not familiar with the RHS website it is worth exploration. There is lots of helpful advice and information, together with listing of exhibitors who would have been at Chelsea - so why not go on to look at their individual websites from the comfort of your own chair?

National Garden Scheme <https://ngs.org.uk/>

Although Garden visits have ceased for the moment there are virtual tours of some gardens to be enjoyed on the website.



**“The quiet before the storm” –
2015 Annual Summer Show just before the official opening**



Wishing you all a healthy, safe and productive Springtime –
and do send in contributions for future Newsletters.

Your Blofield & District Gardening Club Committee

<http://blofieldgardeningclub.org.uk/>