



Blofield & District Gardening Club February 2021 Newsletter

Hello all Gardening club members and friends.

The committee sends you very best wishes, hoping you are coping as well as possible in Lockdown 3. Not an easy time for any of us. It does give us time for planning, however, and getting some seed trays planted perhaps, ready for the better weather.

Garden Club meetings in 2021

Your committee met “virtually” via Zoom recently – a first for the Club ! – and although there were some concerns about how to use the system, the meeting went very well indeed. One of the main topics for discussion was whether to try to hold meetings in late spring / summer 2021. Eventually it was reluctantly agreed that, in view of the uncertainty about government pandemic regulations likely to be in force later in the year, and the lack of confidence many club members may feel about meeting in larger groups, **there will be no face to face meetings of the club, nor the Annual Show, in 2021.**

The committee did not reach this decision easily and all understand that people wish to meet up and discuss something other than the pandemic. At that point a very progressive suggestion was made that regular Zoom meetings could be arranged, inviting members and the wider community to take part. Committee member Lynda Hunt suggested this, and kindly agreed to lead on arranging and running such meetings, for which the committee is most grateful.



The first Gardening Club Zoom meeting will be a light hearted presentation on Wednesday evening, 24th March, at 7:30 p.m. when Lynda will discuss “Bee friendly gardens”. The talk will be about her honeybees and the flowers they enjoy visiting as well as the encounters and pleasures of beekeeping.



We will write to you nearer the time with the link to join this meeting. Some members may already have downloaded Zoom on to their computers and will be familiar with how to join a meeting, which is really very easy – it just takes a little practice. For members who have not yet tried Zoom, helpful information on what it is, how to download it to a computer and how to join a meeting can be found on the WEA website: <https://wea.instructure.com/courses/645/pages/what-do-i-do-next-to-get-ready-to-zoom>

If you would like a “trial run” on using Zoom, or if you are happy using it anyway, there are soon to be two Zoom talks which we are sure you will find of interest.

The first one is a Norfolk and Norwich Horticultural Society Zoom talk on **Monday evening, 22nd February between 7.00 - 8.30 p.m.** The speaker will be Ben Preston of Perennial, the gardeners' charity. **His subject is York Gate, the Perennial garden in Leeds.** Sue Brown has confirmed that York Gate has Grade II national heritage status and there are some lovely photographs of it on the York Garden website to enchant you. She hopes members will enjoy this opportunity to escape from their houses for a while and dream of summer days. Details of the talk are on the NNHS website: [York Gate through the season: Zoom talk by Ben Preston \(Perennial\) - Norfolk and Norwich Horticultural Society \(nnhs.org.uk\)](https://www.nnhs.org.uk/york-gate-through-the-season-zoom-talk-by-ben-preston-perennial-norfolk-and-norwich-horticultural-society)

The second is a free on-line illustrated talk featuring **Birds of the Lower Yare Valley on Thursday evening, 4th March at 7:30 p.m.** This is being presented by local author and naturalist David Bryant (on behalf of The Friends of All Saints Church at Hemblington) and will be a real eye-opener about the many birds which live or visit our lovely local landscape. To reserve your place, please e-mail info@spacerocksuk.com and David will send you the Zoom link to join the talk.

A good way to spend some time during Lockdown – enjoying your garden birds

The RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch took place over 29th – 31st January. We hope you took time to note how many of each species you saw in your garden and sent the results to the RSPB. This is important “citizen science”, something we can all do and a very enjoyable way to lose time in the comfort of your armchair.

For the last few years people have been invited to go to All Saints Church at Hemblington to do a Big Churchyard Birdwatch but it was decided that this year it was too risky to suggest that. However some people did spend an hour there on Friday morning, 29th January, and counted 25 species of birds including a Red Kite, Sparrow hawk, Common Buzzard and a Redpoll. Details of all the birds, butterflies, dragon flies, bees and wild flowers recorded in the churchyard can be found on the Conservation tab of the church website: www.hemblingtonchurch.org.uk



Barbara B.F. got in touch to say: “I don't know if you remember last spring I had a blackbird that kept turning up to ask for scraps. Well he is still here; if I am late feeding I can hear a loud squawk and when I open the door there he is, sometimes accompanied by another blackbird, but this usually results in a fight. I put out peanut butter for birds (this does not have any salt in). They really enjoy this and it disappears in about five minutes.

Some information for you about “Garden Organic”

This charity brings together thousands of people who share a common belief - that organic growing is essential for a healthy and sustainable world. Through campaigning, advice, community work and research, their aim is to get everyone growing ‘the organic way’.

Garden Organic, the working name of the Henry Doubleday Research Association, is a registered charity in England and Wales (no. 298104) and Scotland (SC046767)

<https://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/>

Attached is a copy of Garden Organic's leaflet entitled “The Principles of Organic Gardening – the natural way to grow”, which we hope you will find of interest.

Garden Organics podcast: We were delighted to win the Radio Broadcast or Podcast of the Year Award 2020 from Garden Media Guild Page at the end of last year. Put your feet up, grab a cuppa and settle down with this month's podcast: <https://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/news/january-podcast--start-year-our-award-winning-podcast>

Top winter tasks from Garden Organic

<https://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/your-organic-garden-december-and-january>

Although the weather is none too inviting at the moment, Garden Organic have some good tips on [what to do in your organic garden during the winter months](#), including how to keep your compost heap tip-top. If you have a wormery, now is the time (if you haven't already) to put it inside to protect it during coldest months.

Message from Norfolk Master Composters: we are planning to deliver a further 6 home composting webinars from the second half of February and through March. We will publicise the dates when they have been confirmed.

Bargain bins still available Norfolk County Council is continuing to offer subsidised compost bins at reduced prices through GetComposting.com. A 220 litre black compost bin costs £10, with a 2nd bin of the same size for £5. A Bokashi bin twin-pack starter kit is £15. There is a £6 delivery charge on each order.

The Hardy Plant Society of Norfolk and Suffolk meets at both Hethersett Village Hall, NR9 3JJ ([map](#)) and Roydon Village Hall, IP22 5RB ([map](#))

The main contact is Chris Davies (whom you may remember came to speak at the club about brightening up dark corners a couple of years ago). E-mail: norfolkandsuffolk@hardy-plant.org.uk

For full details including current talks programme please visit the [Norfolk and Suffolk Group Website](#). Hardy Plant Society: Norfolk: Suffolk (hardy-plant.org.uk)

Had to tie my attempt at growing an Amaryllis to the window catch to save it and the potting compost falling out of the pot - sadly knocking off a bud in my rescue attempt.

If I grow one again I shall use a stronger compost and a bigger pot.

Regards, Celia G



Nature taking its course with the lawn aeration - saving me another February job of spiking the lawn!

Tony G

Please help to brighten the next edition of our Newsletter!

Please forward a photograph of some spring flowers in a vase.

No prizes I'm afraid, but it will doubtless make us all feel a little better to know that spring is on the way.

E-mail your photographs to: blofieldgardeningclub@outlook.com by 14th March



Thank you!



Some news from the Royal Horticultural Society

[Read our RHS monthly gardening tips & advice - February / RHS Gardening](#)

Spring is in sight!

This month there are signs of the approaching spring, with bulbs appearing and wildlife waking up as light levels and temperatures increase. There's plenty to do indoors this month to prepare for the season ahead. Outdoors, as the garden comes to life again, it's time to prune shrubs and climbers, such as **Wisteria** as well as evergreen hedges.

Prepare vegetable seed beds, and sow some vegetables under cover

Chit potato tubers

Protect blossom on apricots, nectarines and peaches

Net fruit and vegetable crops to keep the birds off

Prune winter-flowering shrubs that have finished flowering

Divide bulbs such as snowdrops, and plant those that need planting 'in the green'

Prune *Wisteria*

Prune hardy evergreen hedges and renovate overgrown deciduous hedges

Prune conservatory climbers such as bougainvillea

Cut back deciduous grasses left uncut over the winter, remove dead grass from evergreen grasses

Houseplants

Even if you don't have an outdoor space, you can still enjoy gardening. Growing indoors opens up new opportunities for exotic or tender plants, and houseplants can bring many health benefits

See our guides to the different types of houseplants you can grow, ideal for lots of places at home.

Houseplant inspiration

From beautiful contemporary hanging displays to traditional terracotta pots, there are hundreds of inventive ways to grow and display houseplants.

Choosing and growing houseplants

Make sure your houseplants thrive, with our expert growing advice and recommended plant choices.

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/types/houseplants>

NB Please don't forget to send in a photograph of some spring flowers in a vase to blofieldgardeningclub@outlook.com by 14th March.