



FEBRUARY / MARCH 2020 ISSUE



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CELEBRATING 50 YEARS

In February 1970 the eleven acre site with outline planning permission was purchased and that was the beginning of 50 years of hard work, a great challenge, but with the help of our families and many excellent staff, Richard and I have transformed an empty field with one dilapidated wooden shed into the Garden Centre you see today!

Richard's father was running a nursery in Harrow, north west London, and after a few years he joined us here. Our two sons were born in the mid-70's and spent much of their time using the Garden Centre as their play ground when not at school, then after finishing their education left home but the lure of an opportunity to join the family business was too great and they are now both partners with us bringing their different skills with them.

We have had many an up and down over the years but now in our Golden year we are planning a few celebrations involving staff, customers and of course our family as we are also celebrating 50 years of marriage!



1971-9



View more pictures and history at
www.buckinghamgardencentre.co.uk/50years

*We would love you
to share your
memories of the
Garden Centre in
our Anniversary
Memory Book.*



FLOURS FOR ALL REASONS



Having been a keen cook for many years, I have learnt that the flour one uses makes an enormous difference to the end results, writes Pauline Brown. So, when we decided to add flour to the range in our food hall we did some investigation to find the best quality flour in our local area. Having tried a few, I came to the personal opinion that the flours produced by F. W. P Matthews (based in Shipton-under-Wychwood, Chipping Norton) were of excellent quality. We started with a small range and, as anticipated, they proved to be so popular that we now stock eleven different varieties: Plain, Self-Raising, Strong White, Strong Wholemeal, Cotswold Crunch, Cotswold Eight Grain, Maizebite, Wholemeal Spelt, Pizza Flour, French T55 and Dark Rye.

Here is a brief introduction to four of the flours we stock and opposite a guide to the all of the flours we sell.

Cotswold Crunch, our most popular flour, makes the most delicious bread so easily, whether you have a bread maker or, with a little more time and effort, take a more traditional approach. It is excellent just by itself but, as a small twist to change the flavour slightly, I use about one sixth Dark Rye to five sixths Cotswold Crunch. This flour also makes a wonderful, crunchy crumble.

I was always a little disappointed with the pastry I cooked until I tried Maizebite and since then I use nothing else to get consistently crisp, crunchy pastry. Perfect for either sweet or savoury, either done by hand or in the food processor.

I had never particularly considered making my own pizza dough. Instead being lazy and buying ready-made bases, but not anymore. Using Matthews' Pizza Flour is quick and easy, making soft but crispy bases to add any desired topping to.

Then finally, French T55. If you are a fan of soft white bread this is a great flour to use. Also for baguette lovers, it produces these with a fine, airy and soft texture with an appetising, crispy crust. If you are interested in learning more about F. W. P Matthews their website gives lots of information on the history of the business (dating back to the 1800s), recipes and descriptions of the rest of the range. www.fwpmatthews.co.uk

Just one further thought, for those who enjoy the home-made scones in our restaurant, these are made using Matthews' flour – maybe that's why they are so delicious!

FLOUR VARIETIES AVAILABLE IN 1.5kg BAGS

Plain: multi-purpose white flour	£1.89
Self-raising: perfect flour for cakes	£1.89
Strong White: bakers' grade for bread	£1.99
Strong Wholemeal: tasty wholemeal bread	£1.99
Cotswold Eight Grain: easy multi-grain brown loaves and crumbles	£2.79
Cotswold Crunch: delicious brown bread and crumbles	£2.39
Cotswold Pizza: crisp fluffy pizza bases	£1.89
Wholemeal Spelt: easily digestible bread	£2.79
Stoneground Dark Rye: wonderful 'eastern' bread	£2.29
Maizebite: excellent crisp pastry	£2.19
French T55: soft white bread with crisp crust	£2.29

Buy two or more bags of any variety of Matthews' Flour and get a 10% discount



If you need new or more tins
take advantage of our offer

Set of 3 tins for £12.99
(NORMALLY £16.99)

(Offers valid until 31 03 2020. Subject to availability)

LOOK OUT FOR OTHER FOOD RELATED OFFERS IN OUR FOOD HALL

TIPS ON GROWING YOUR BEST EVER POTATOES

One of the greatest joys in gardening, whether you are a new or experienced gardener is growing a few spuds and harvesting them in early summer. We would always recommend starting off with certified Scottish seed potatoes as they are screened for disease so you have the best chance for a disease-free crop. Potatoes, as brassicas, are a perfect crop for opening up and improving the soil of a new garden or where the soil is heavy. You don't even need a garden to grow potatoes as you can get a reasonable crop from potatoes grown in pots!

FIRST EARLY VARIETIES	SECOND EARLY VARIETIES	MAIN CROP VARIETIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plant Easter onwards • Harvest mid June <p>Recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arran Pilot • Lady Christl • Pentland Javelin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plant Easter onwards • Harvest early July <p>Recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charlotte • Mafona • Viova 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plant Easter onwards • Harvest early July <p>Recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cara • King Edward • Maris Piper

CHITTING is a very simple process but important process. All you need is some egg cartons or boxes to stand the potatoes in. Place the end with the most eyes (the growing tip) facing up! Now choose a bright, warm, frost free spot and wait for 3-4 weeks for the sprouts to emerge. You can do this in a conservatory or window sill or a bright garage. Avoid dark places or will get very long, thin and leggy shoots that are very fragile.



"Chitting is a simple but important process"

"Over 50 varieties available from £2.05 per kilo"



"Tip: Short of space? Grow potatoes in pots too!"

Once the weather has warmed up a bit you are all ready to go! Plant them carefully without breaking the shoots. Of course, the shoots have to face up when you plant them. Chitting is vital for earlies and useful for main crop. Check out our fantastic range of over 50 varieties of seed potatoes, available either as pre-packs or loose in the shop on your next visit.



SLUG RESISTANT

Second early: Kestrel
Main crop: King Edward, Golden Wonder

GOOD SLUG AND BLIGHT RESISTANT

Main crop: Sarpo Mira, Setanta

STARTING OFF YOUR BEANS

February is traditionally the time to start thinking about starting off early crops such as Broad Beans for planting out later in the vegetable garden. You can also make a head start with tuberous begonias in warmth on a sunny windowsill indoors.



Having soaked your Broad Bean seeds in water for half an hour sow a single seed per cell in your propagating tray using a multi-purpose compost or why not recycle your cardboard loo rolls for seed sowing.



SIX OF THE BEST BROAD BEAN VARIETIES

- | | |
|--|-------|
| • 'Aquadulce Claudia', Thompson & Morgan | £3.29 |
| • 'Bunyards', Thompson & Morgan | £2.99 |
| • 'Masterpiece Green Longpod', Mr Fothergill's | £2.80 |
| • 'Red Epicure' Mr Fothergill's | £2.80 |
| • 'Scorpio', Mr Fothergill's | £2.80 |
| • The Sutton', Thompson & Morgan | £2.99 |


Thompson & Morgan
Established in 1854

New season's seeds now in stock, including a stand filled with 'Seeds to Sow Now' and a rack devoted to a 'Pollinating Range'.

We also have a new range of Micro-Greens seeds and kits. Plus Onions, Shallots, Garlic and Oca.



GROWING TIP: Grow Nasturtiums near your Broad Beans to keep your aphids away.

PLANTING YOUR BEGONIA TUBERS

It's always exciting to start off begonia tubers, however before you rush in and plant, please bear in mind the tuber has a top and bottom. The concave (indentation) is where the new growing shoots will develop from so this is the top of the tuber. The rounded 'base' is where the roots will form so this needs to be facing down into the compost. See photo below.



When you come to selecting varieties some will be marked basket types - trailing foliage and cascading blooms so these are perfect for hanging baskets or windowboxes. The other form of tuberous begonias are referred to as upright varieties, these are ideal as centre plants in pots and in borders with their bushy upright habit of growth. You can start off your tubers into either seed trays or into individual pots containing a multi-purpose compost. Grow your begonias in a well-lit, frost-free greenhouse or on a windowsill.



BEGONIAS AVAILABLE

- Begonia tubers available loose - nine varieties £1.29 each.
- Pre-pack Begonias - many varieties £6.99 per pack. Each pack contains 5 or 7 tubers.

BEGONIA CARE Begonias are sensitive to bright sunlight and need protection from intense heat. They grow best in filtered

light beneath trees, or in an area that gets about four hours of morning or afternoon sunlight but not mid-day. After planting, do not water until the first sprouts emerge after 2-3 weeks. Over watering before you see leaves may cause the tuber to rot. Plant the begonias outdoors when all danger of frost has passed. Water the plants regularly to keep the potting soil slightly moist. Provide a high potash fertilizer such as Tomorite or Phostrogen fortnightly during the growing season. Be sure to provide plenty of air circulation to prevent powdery mildew. Use a sharp knife or florists's scissors to cut spent blooms as soon as they fade.

CUSTOMER SNIPPET From our Mail-Order Department: A customer was asked to confirm her post code, so she promptly and clearly replied 'G' for 'John'.

PLANT OF THE MONTH

In February we have the wonderfully starry flowered *Magnolia stellata*. These are usually priced at £34.99 each but available to our Garden Card holders for just £19.99 each. All our offers are subject to availability. This Magnolia is a really useful garden shrub that delights every spring with its delicate white blooms opening before the leaves.



In March, *Hebe* 'Merlot Memories' (PBR) takes centre stage as our Plant of the Month. The sensational winter foliage colour of deep reddish brown becomes bright green as weather warms. An ideal backdrop to the masses of white tinted purple flowers in summer. They are normally £10.99 each, however, they are available to our Garden Card holders for just £7.99.



Now is the time to re-vamp and energise your containers with some early spring bulb colour with Crocus, Winter Aconite, *Narcissus* 'Tête-à-Tête', Fritillaria or Tulips amongst others. We have these in 9cm pots (£2.49 each or 3 for £6.00) as well as larger 1-litre pots (£3.99 each or 2 for £7.00) while stocks last. Specialist snowdrops including Elwesii, 'Flore Pleno' and Ikariae are £3.99 in 9cm pots. The common snowdrop, *Galanthus nivalis* in a 9cm pot is £2.49 and in a larger 1-litre pot is £5.99 each.

As you know we love Hellebores at the Garden Centre and when we heard of a new cross called Frostkiss® we had to have some. Wow, we've been blown away with the colour range. By crossbreeding several types the breeder, Rodney Davey, has produced a super strong, frost-resistant hellebore with colourful flowers and magnificent foliage. Varieties to look out for include 'Charmer' (huge dark pink flowers with burgundy flecking in the centre), 'Cheryl's Shine' (glowing light pink flowers), Pippa's Purple' (smokey pink flowers with some deep burgundy speckles), 'Sally's Shell' (medium pink with a soft shell-pink centre) and 'Molly's White' (clear white) amongst others. 2-litre pots priced at £13.99 each from Devon.



DID YOU KNOW? We gave away 3,488 branded long lasting jute bags before Christmas - less need for plastic bags now.

LINDENGATE NEWS

Lindengate Mental Health Charity is so thrilled to have been chosen for the second year running to be Buckingham Garden Centre's "Charity of the Year". Over the past year our charity has been supported by the management team, staff and customers from Buckingham Garden Centre.

We are incredibly grateful to you all for your support which has enabled us to help more people with mental health needs on our 5-acre horticultural site in Wendover with Social and Therapeutic Horticulture. Thank you to you all for your generosity.



**Berkshire
Buckinghamshire
Oxfordshire**



This year Lindengate Mental Health Charity are working with Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) to deliver the "Rough Around the Edges" project led by Katie Horgan from BBOWT. With its ponds, gardens, wildflower areas, hedges and trees, Lindengate Mental Health Charity is not only a 5-acre haven for people with mental health needs,

but also for wildlife. BBOWT will be supporting two major projects on site this year: development of the nature reserve and creating a new heritage orchard.

You will be made most welcome at Lindengate Mental Health Charity to see the progress of these projects at our first "Drop Ins" of the year on Saturday 18th April: anytime between 10am to 12 noon. Free entry to site. Refreshments will be available for a suggested donation. Please call 01296 622443 for details. www.lindengate.org.uk

HOW OUR CUSTOMERS CAN HELP LINDENGATE 'BAG' MORE MONEY FROM OUR 100% BIODEGRADABLE BAGS

We are pleased to announce that we will be donating all the monies collected from our 100% biodegradable carrier bags to Lindengate this year. We ask for a voluntary donation to the charity of 5p (or more if you wish to give it!) This can be given either as part of your shop or a donation into the Lindengate charity box. All of this donation will go to the charity.

Lindengate's Anne Mills and Charlie Powell, pictured right, helped kick start the carrier bag fundraiser at the Garden Centre.



**Now Serving Breakfast from 9.00am
in the restaurant (10am on Sunday)**



WHAT'S ON AT THE GARDEN CENTRE

WEDNESDAY 4th MARCH, 10am-4pm After a very busy auction valuation in September 2019, we will be delighted to welcome back Charles Ross Auctioneers, from Woburn, who will be offering their **FREE VALUATION SERVICES** on jewellery and antiques to our customers throughout the day. No booking is required - simply pop along on the day.

WEDNESDAY 18th MARCH, 11am-4pm ORCHID DAY with Peter White.

This year our resident Plant Expert Chris Day starts a new series of **Master Class talks** covering the main plant groups, see listings below. The free talks are open to all, however, we recommend you book at the Customer Service Desk or call 01280 822133.



WEDNESDAY MASTER CLASSES at 4pm in the Restaurant area

12 th FEBRUARY	Vegetable Growing for Beginners
25 th MARCH	Shrubs for the Smaller Spaces
15 th APRIL	Creative Pots and Baskets
13 th MAY	Growing Perfect Perennials
10 th JUNE	A Guide To Growing Roses
1 st JULY	Tom Gadsby's Garden Design Master Class

SATURDAY MASTER CLASSES at 3pm in the Restaurant area or Seasonal Tunnel

21 st MARCH	Shrubs for the Smaller Spaces
18 th APRIL	Creative Pots and Baskets
16 th MAY	Growing Perfect Perennials
13 th JUNE	A Guide To Growing Roses

SATURDAY 26th and SUNDAY 27th SEPTEMBER APPLE WEEKEND which also features the **NORTH BUCKS, BUCKINGHAM AND BUCKS COUNTY HONEY SHOW** on the Sunday, 10am-4pm, both days. The Mid Shires Orchard Group and apple identification expert Gerry Edwards, chairman of the RHS Fruit Group, will be once again joining us for this popular event, which is now in its 16th year at the Garden Centre.



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E-Mail: enquiries@hedging.co.uk, Web: www.buckinghamgardencentre.co.uk
Follow us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/BuckinghamNurseries
Winter Opening Times: Mon-Sat: 8:30am - 5:30pm, Sun: 10am - 4pm.