



SPRING ARRANGEMENTS

LET US HELP YOU CREATE YOUR OWN DISPLAYS

**MARCH/APRIL
2014 ISSUE**

**WHAT'S
INSIDE**

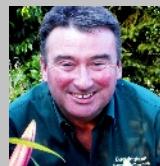
Our Potato Weekend round-up, New Garden Products for the Season, Top 10 Tasks for March/April, Meet The Team - Thomas Clarke, Companion Planting ideas and much more...

Early spring and the garden literally comes alive, well I suppose the question we should be asking is; "Did it ever go into dormancy this winter?" The mildest and wettest winter on record certainly has encouraged our favourite plants into early growth and based on this I think this year we have much to look forward to.

Sowing seeds, starting off young plants, planting new trees, putting down a few potato tubers for the first time, the garden – whatever its sizes - is all exciting as the anticipation of a new growing season takes hold.

After all that rain I think the most important task is to try and revitalise our soils – nutrients easily leach out so now is a perfect time to replace them. To be honest its one area of gardening when it is good to chat to someone on chemistry, as it may appear fairly straightforward but often requires some explanation. So do please come and ask for advice on plant feeding.

Oh, and if you were thinking of how to remove all that soil moisture, well establish some suitable plants of course. Many, including the likes of Alder, Hazel, Hydrangeas, Shuttlecock Ferns and Primulas, have an insatiable appetite for moisture, so in damp locations why not plant a few of these! Whatever the weather, enjoy your garden.



Chris

POTATO WEEKEND ROUND-UP

Our special expert guests, Colin Randel from Thompson & Morgan Seeds, Jason Breed from Kings Seeds, fruit tree and grafting expert Fritz De Zutter from Moulton College as well as members of the National Vegetable Society, were kept busy in February as we hosted our Potato Weekend. We'd like to thank you for supporting this event as well as helping the various local community charities who joined us, including The Medical Detection Dogs, The Woodland Trust, The Barn Owl Project (Aylesbury) and Breast Cancer Care. We have created a photo gallery from the Potato Weekend and this can be viewed at the following link.

<http://www.buckinghamgardencentre.co.uk/eventsgallery.html>



WHAT'S COMING SOON.....

Guess who's coming to our Summer Festival Gardening Event in June? All will be revealed on our website and Facebook soon... Keep checking!



SUMMER FESTIVAL
28th and 29th June 2014

For this year's Summer Festival at the Garden Centre we are excited to be joined by not one but two well known TV celebrities!

KEEP CHECKING THE WEBSITE AND OUR FACEBOOK PAGE WHERE WE WILL BE ANNOUNCING THE NAMES VERY SOON!



NEW PRODUCTS IN THE GARDENER'S ARMOURY



If you find that you are always short of hose fittings, look out for the fittings and nozzle grab bag. This is a starter set containing a hose connector, a water stop connector, a threaded tap connector and an adjustable nozzle all for only £5.99. Bought separately, these would cost a total of £18.46! This a limited offer, available only while stocks last, which might not be long at this price. Please note that these are genuine Hozelock fittings, not cheap imitations that won't last five minutes.



This year we are stocking a wider range of Neudorff organic and environmentally friendly fertilisers, pesticides and weedkillers. Neudorff are a large, long established German company, who for many years have sold ingredients for British brands and who are now selling under their own name in Britain. The range includes organic granular fertilisers. There is a multipurpose fertiliser and fertilisers specifically designed for Lawns (pictured), Roses & Shrubs, Rhododendrons, Azaleas & Camellias, and Tomatoes. These all contain mycorrhizal fungi which greatly improve the



operation of the roots. If you have been paying attention to our previous newsletters you will know all about mycorrhiza and the benefits it brings. We still strongly recommend Rootgrow when planting, but these products will help to build up levels subsequently. There is an organic liquid tomato feed which is a good replacement for the very popular New Horizon Tomato feed which was inexplicably withdrawn by the manufacturer, Arthur Bower's.

Superfast & Long Lasting Weedkiller rapidly kills all green top growth of plants and is taken down the roots, which helps prevent re-growth. It is completely effective against annual weeds, young and actively growing perennials, moss and algae. For well established perennials we still recommend glyphosate based weedkillers such as Roundup.



We are now stocking Gro-Sure Planting Magic, a 4 in 1 mix with a 6 month slow release fertiliser, soil improver, water control and root builder. You'll be seeing the product on quirky and fun TV commercials from mid April and May featuring Charlie Dimmock, who suggests that just adding one handful of Planting Magic to each planting hole will help raise bigger, healthier plants!



We are also stocking Gro-Sure Smart Lawn Seed. Each seed has an Aqua Gel coating and a protective shell. The Aqua Gel absorbs up to 400 times its weight in water. This is gradually released to the

seed when needed. This improves germination and seedling establishment, reduces losses due to erratic watering and continues working for the whole season.

LOOK OUT FOR THESE BEAUTIES



Whilst we generally see orchids as exotic indoor plants, there is some great news that Cypripedium, a hardy slipper orchid, looks set to be available to buy and grow in our gardens this year.

This orchid has been specifically bred for easy outdoor culture. We'll be stocking around four varieties, including 'Kentucky' (pictured left), Cypripedium reginae, C. reginae alba and 'Pueblo' in March/April. Expect to pay around £19 each.

They prefer a semi-shady location out of the midday sun in well-prepared lime-free soil, which must never dry out or become waterlogged. If you have an area dedicated to ferns and hostas, these orchids will sit comfortably with them.

LIMITED EDITION HTA POPPY VOUCHER!



To commemorate the 100th anniversary of the start of World War I on the 4th August, the Royal British Legion are encouraging everyone to plant poppy seeds in their towns and gardens. The National Garden Gift Voucher scheme is helping to raise awareness of the campaign by launching a limited edition £25 voucher, and giving a free packet of poppy seeds with it. The seeds of the bright red Flanders poppies (*Papaver rhoeas*), which have been grown and harvested in the UK, are being supplied by Thompson & Morgan.

10 TASKS FOR MARCH/APRIL

SOW hardy annuals outdoors such as wildflower mixes and Calendula, Centaurea, Clarkia, Cosmos, Dahlia, Delphinium, Eschscholzia, Godetia, Ipomoea, Lavatera, Matthiola and Phlox. Many vegetable crops can be sown this month - wait until the



weather turns a tad warmer, checking the instructions on the seed packets carefully and sow away! In the open, sow Broad Beans, Globe Artichoke, Sprouting Broccoli, Kale, Land Cress, Leeks, Orache, Parsnip, early Peas, Salad Leaves, Salsify, Swedes, Spinach Beet, Turnips, Carrots and Calabrese. If you are limited for

space, module-sow outside (you don't need a cold frame, just something to keep slugs at bay) and plant out as space becomes available.



AFTER all the rain it's hardly surprising to see it's warm enough for slugs to get going, so be alert. Traps or pellets, for example the ferrous-based organic ones such as Growing Success Advanced Slug Killer, seem to be very effective. Apply them around Irises, Delphiniums and Hostas and where emerging vegetable seedlings are coming through to get the slimy beasts before they really start chomping in earnest.

GET PLANTING! If the weather is kind, now is the time to plant lovely flowering trees and shrubs such as Magnolia stellata, M. x soulangeana, Pieris Forest Flame (Pieris, in pots, if your soil is alkaline), Crab apples (Malus), Flowering cherries (Prunus), Spiraea, Ribes and Amelanchier (pictured).



LAST CALL This is a good time to divide late-flowering perennials such as Aster, Echinacea, Rudbeckia, and Sedum. Lift and separate into good-sized pieces, discarding any congested, woody centres. Replant in good soil with some well-rotted compost, Bone Meal and Rootgrow. This is the last chance to cut back hard those shrubs that flower on this year's growth, such as Buddlejias and Hydrangeas. You can remove weak

growth of Magnolia grandiflora, Euonymus, Viburnum and evergreen Olearia now. Also give straggly lavenders a quick haircut. Remember to apply some Vitax Q4 around the base of these plants which have been pruned to help encourage good strong growth for the summer. Likewise, if you are revamping existing containers add some slow release fertiliser such as Westland's Gro-Sure Planting Magic to the compost as well as working in some new potting compost to bring the level up to what it should be.



UNDER GLASS For every cold night there will be a bright day, so shade young seedlings and newly potted plants. Keep your greenhouse well ventilated and start monitoring for aphids, thrips and mealy bugs. From the middle of April, plant out indoor Tomatoes, Peppers, Cucumbers and Aubergines into

greenhouse beds and grow-bags. Make further sowings of Basil and Tagetes to plant with Tomatoes for companion planting. Towards the end of April think about planting out firm, healthy Dahlias which you



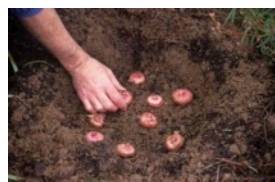
Californian Poppy
Red Chief



have been raising undercover. You'll have to protect the new shoots from any errant late frosts and put down slug traps as tender shoots are all too tempting.

LAWNS Unfortunately regular mowing from early March may be necessary. Start to lower the blades at each successive cut (easily adjusted on a Flymo, pictured). Don't go too low, though, as this will just mean more cutting. A hover machine might be your safest bet, especially if the grass is long as this winter has been relatively mild. If your lawn gets heavy traffic it's a good idea to aerate, scarify and apply some spring fertiliser so that it goes into summer in top shape. Remember many of the lawn products contain fertilisers as well as moss killer, especially important this spring in view of the high rainfall. Get to grips with persistent lawn weeds by using a broad leaved weedkiller such as Verdone Extra to tackle difficult weeds such as Plantain, White Clover and Dandelion. As always please use chemicals wisely in the garden.

PRODUCTIVE In frost-prone areas you can now plant out strawberries. Mulch and water any newly planted fruit. Keep nectarines and peaches covered against leaf curl. A simple frame covered by protective fleece usually suffices. If pollinating insects can't reach flowers then hand-pollinate (a bit of rabbit fur, small feathered duster or a paint brush works best). The pollen is ripest at midday. Spray with a fine mist of water to help ensure setting. You'll need to hurry if you want to plant bare-rooted fruit trees and soft fruits such as Gooseberries, Raspberries and all the Currants, before they spring out of winter dormancy.



GLADIOLI are having a rightful renaissance. Weather permitting, plant their corms towards the end of the month. In borders, plant the corms in clusters 5-10cm (2-4 in) apart. If you're on heavy Buckingham soil add some grit to the base of each planting hole. For a continuous display its best to plant three or four successive groups at fortnightly intervals.

This is something of a one-trick wonder, though, as if you leave your corms in during the following winter, they'll all flower at the same time the year after.

NOW is the time for a thorough spring clean, especially after the very wet conditions in our gardens; weed and dig over your borders incorporating as much organic matter as you can - those chilly winds will really help to dry out the soil. Mulch bare soil once you have done the work and



remove dangerous and potentially slippery moss and weeds from paths, terraces and driveways. They may be boring tasks but if you don't get on top of the garden now (especially the weeds!) you will find it a nightmare for the rest of the season.

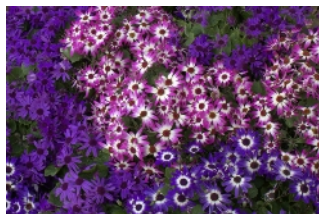
REPLACE your storm ravaged fence with some fast growing hedging before the season for establishing bare-root plants comes to an end shortly. Mixed Native Hedging, Hornbeam, Beech, Rose and Yew will make robust hedge lines quickly. Evergreen toughies to add to your list would include

Cotoneaster, Pyracantha, Golden Leylandii and Thuja, the Red Western Cedar. Do check with us on suitability for specific locations as well as availability of stock. Cell-grown and pot-grown hedging continues the season after the bare-root ends,

however not all the plants sold by us as bare-rooted are necessarily available in small pots, so again please check if unsure. Check out our website www.hedging.co.uk or come along and have a chat with the Team in the Plant Information Office.

OUR PLANTS OF THE MONTH

Take a look at our bright and colourful alpines for March, which include a range of one-litre plants at £3.99 each or 3 for £10. April is all about the multi-coloured Senetti. These enduring half-hardy bedding plants never fail to disappoint and they really jazz up lacklustre containers.



Finally, we can get going on the plot with our vegetable 6-packs at £1.99 each or pick and mix from a choice, any 3 for £5.00.



Tomato
Sweet Aperitif



FIVE MINUTES WITH THOMAS CLARKE



Thomas is one of our Garden Centre Assistants

Tell us about the Apprenticeship you are currently involved in?

I attend Moulton College in Northamptonshire once a fortnight studying a course in Landscape Horticulture and I've been doing this for the past 6 months. I get regularly assessed from the College and the last time was when I was working in the grounds of Whittlebury Hall.

What tips would like to give to someone thinking about coming into horticulture in 2014?

Be prepared for any working situation. Oh, the weather and protecting yourself with knee pads – absolutely essential! However, it's all very rewarding once tasks are completed and, best of all; you get to see a lot of nature close-up.

Where do you live and perhaps describe your garden?



I live in Buckingham and I would describe the garden as medium sized with a patio and deck. The garden is flanked with rectangular borders featuring shrubs, bamboo one side and the other, a rockery featuring lots of plants in containers.

We know this is going to be a difficult one, but if you were stranded on that castaway island, which plant would you like to take with you?

The Corkscrew Hazel (*Corylus avellana* 'Contorta') is cool. It has great shape and structure, especially in the winter.

And least favourite?

Pyracantha (Firethorn) by miles. This plant is never easy to prune and cut back, a bit unruly to handle to say the least!

Your favourite edible?

Apples, but most recently 'Egremont Russet' as I (pictured) just really enjoy its unique flavour and colour.

Your favourite gardening activity?

Rotavating and turfing. I get great satisfaction from using machinery and you see something for your graft.

What do you love about your job?

Satisfaction of knowing you are making a difference to the garden and the opportunity of meeting new people as well.

Do you have a gardening tip you would like to share with us?

When working on a project/task do be prepared to stand back and survey what you have done so you can fine tune to get the best results. All too often people make the mistake of not paying enough attention to detail.

If you have one Super Power what would it be?

To be able to stop/control time, so you are able to be one step ahead and to be able to complete a task without problems.

Facebook or Twitter?

Facebook and maybe in the future I would have a business Facebook site to promote my own business.



YOU CAN'T STOP TIME...



COMPANIONSHIP IN THE GARDEN FOR 2014

We all know who we like to have around us in the garden and also who we do not want, and this is true of the plants growing in our garden as well, writes Pauline Brown. For instance if you have Cypress Spurge (*Euphorbia cyparissias*) planted next to your fruiting vine, the vine will 'take umbridge' and fail to produce fruit, whereas if you plant Hyssop nearby this should increase the yield of fruit, and Hyssop will attract cabbage butterflies, so if you are trying to grow Cabbages this should lure those little beasties away from your vegetable patch.



You may think facts like this are 'old wives' tales', but from my own experience of many years of gardening and that of my father and grandfather before me, I certainly think many are true even if I do not know the scientific reasons for the results.

If you are fortunate to have a large enough garden to allow a wild corner to develop where such plants as stinging nettles can grow, then you can harvest the young nettles for tea or even rub the leaves on rheumatic joints to relieve the pain. However, if you do not mind having nettles growing

alongside your herbs the essential oils in some of the herbs will increase dramatically: 10 to 20% in marjoram, 10% in Sage and 10% in Peppermint. Should you decide to give this a go then get stung whilst harvesting your herbs, just find some leaves from a member of the sorrel family which includes Dock, and rub these on the affected skin and they will relieve the symptoms. If your garden does not have such leaves available I understand Rhubarb leaves, which are highly poisonous unlike the edible sorrel, (Rhubarb being in the same family – polygonaceae - as Sorrel) can be used but I have not tried this myself as I have a good supply of sorrel as we love this in salads. Another use for stinging nettles is to make them into a 'tea' and water this over Broad Beans as this will act as a feed and will help to ward off blackfly. This is easy to do – just pick a good pile of leaves, cover them with water (preferably rain water) then simply leave for about three weeks by which time they will have disintegrated and the resulting liquid will be ready for use.

Chives, which are quite an attractive plant and useful for cropping, can be planted around apple trees and they will help to prevent scab. Also, if planted adjacent to Carrots they will stimulate the growth of the Carrots. A mistake which you could make is to plant Dill alongside Carrots, as although the Dill when in flower will be great for attracting honeybees, it will suppress the growth of the Carrots.

As you are probably aware, Cucumbers do appreciate some shade whether grown in the greenhouse, in a cold frame or outside. If you do grow yours outside it is good to provide the shade by planting bush beans alongside as the beans will help the Cucumbers and vice versa. Also if you still have some stinging nettle liquid this is good against the downy mildew often found on cucumber leaves.



If your Rose beds suffer from harmful nematodes, then planting French Marigolds amongst them will alleviate the problem as they excrete a substance from their roots which will control the nematodes and the flowers will look good if your roses are white or yellow, but if you like colour co-ordination it will not work for pink or red Roses. Using Marigolds in the greenhouse or vegetable garden is always beneficial as they act as a natural cure for white fly as the odour of the old varieties is a very effective insect repellent. Another plus is that they will self seed so they will come up year after year to do their good work.

Two new tips I have been given recently which may be worth trying as it will not do any harm even if it does no good! The first is to rub leaves of Lemon Balm (*Melissa officinalis*) inside a bee hive when hiving a new swarm, although the scent from the Lemon Balm may become infused in the honey later. This, I am told, will stop the swarm from moving on again. We certainly should have given this a go this summer when our bees kept swarming in that very hot weather.

The final one again concerns livestock, but this time ones which are not wanted – mice. I have heard that by planting Everlasting Peas (*Lathyrus latifolius*), Spearmint, *Euphorbia lathyrus* and *lactea* in an area where mice can be a problem will deter them. I really cannot believe this will work, but it is worth having a go as they are attractive plants and will enhance the appearance of the garden if nothing else!



Nasturtium
Firebird



SHOP UPDATE



In our Gift department we have a fantastic Three for Two offer, buy any three items from the Bronnley Citrus Collection and get the cheapest free. Limited offer until 21st April.

Although it's never too early to think about alfresco dinning, we are expecting new ranges of furniture from Alexander Rose and Kettler over the next few weeks.

Check out our seasonal Mothers Day displays, which include plenty of gift ideas, cards and as a special treat, houseplants and planted arrangements purchased running up to and including Sunday 30th March will be

entitled to a free gift wrap! Never standing still, we'll be tweaking our Shop and seasonal plant displays as we run up to Easter. Oh, and we have a great offer on Chocolate candles, that's right you read that correctly, Chocolate candles, with a buy one get one free offer on these.

VIZ·A·VIZ®

Our clothing department now includes a new range of Viz-A-Viz clothing, which features a lovely range of pastel blues and pinks in a range of clothes best described as a classic range, being dressy and fashionable, think M&S type style!



Finally, we are now stocking a range of bottled beers from the Silverstone Brewing Company. The brewery was established in 2008 and offers a wide range of fine real ales using the best natural ingredients – English malt, hops, yeast and water. We hope you can give them a try!

WHOOPS!



In our September/October newsletter we stated: "Wimbledon champion Fred Perry used to play tennis here with King George IV we are told." Well, of course a typo slip and it should have read King George VI. The older King ruled from 29th January 1820 – 26th June 1830, a good few years before the Fred Perry days!

Pictured: The Duke of York, later King George VI, plays at Wimbledon in 1926. Image Credit: Central Press

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



Farmers' Markets on Thursday 13th March and Thursday 10th April, 10am-2pm on the Garden Centre Car Park.

Our Garden talks programme: Wednesday 12th March, Paolo Arrigo from Seeds of Italy will talk on 'From Seed to Plate'. On Wednesday 9th April, BGC's own Chris Day will be talking about 'Containers That Keep On Growing'. On Wednesday 14th May, Geoff Hawkins (pictured left) gives us the low down on 'Simple Plant Propagation Techniques'. Usual venue in the Talks Room within the Restaurant from 4:30pm and lasts approx 60 minutes

with time for questions. To book, please contact the Customer Service Desk, but there may be seats available on the day. Entry is free to Garden Centre Discount Card Holders, £3 for non-members. Details of our 2014 Garden visits programme can be found on posters in the Shop and on our website.



Beetroot
Rainbow Beet



STOP PRESS!!



★ Buy 2 Get 1 Free on 6-pack Pansies & Violas, £3.49 per pack.

★ Buy 1 Get 1 Free on these two fabulous plants!
Primula 'Gold Lace',
in 1-litre, £2.99 each
and Snakeshead



Fritillaries (*Fritillaria meleagris*), in
1-litre pots, £4.99 each.



★ Coming Soon... Buy 2 Get 1
Free on J Arthur Bower's Tree,
Shrub & Rose Planting Compost (50-litre),
£5.99 each.

All offers subject to availability*

Buckingham Nurseries & Garden Centre

Tingewick Road, Buckingham, MK18 4AE. Tel: 01280 822133

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 (until 30/3/2014)

Summer Opening Times: Mon-Sat: 8:30am-6.00pm, Sun: 10am-4pm (from 31/3/2014)

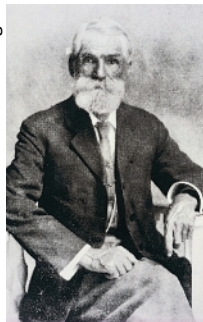
Mr Thompson



Thompson & Morgan

Experts in the Garden Since 1855

Mr Morgan



Heritage

Thompson & Morgan is one of the oldest firms in the UK horticultural business. From humble beginnings in a small garden behind a baker's shop the business was founded by Mr William Thompson and joined later by financier Mr John Morgan.

Recognised worldwide through its mail order catalogue the brand retains the identity and reputation for

innovation and quality. With over 2,000 different varieties of seed T&M is one of the world's leading packet seed suppliers and the only UK packet seed company to breed and develop its own varieties - with work on over 50 different species.

From the first catalogue specialising in rare and unusual plants Thompson & Morgan continue today, with an unbroken line of 155 years, as one of the country's greatest seed firms with a reputation for introducing more species and varieties to the British gardening public than any other seed company.

Turn of the century



T&M London Rd site



T&M show beds



High profile partnerships

The core T&M packet range is enhanced through innovative products and high profile partnerships with Kew Gardens, The Royal Horticultural Society and HRH Prince Charles' charity Duchy Originals.

T&M research



When only the best will do

Continually striving for quality Thompson & Morgan puts all seed through vigorous testing twice a year to ensure only the best seed with the highest germination rates make it to market. This has been proven by an independent study by Gardening Which? where T&M was adjudged the Best All-rounder seed company. The report praised T&M for the successful germination of its seeds. 83 percent of seeds produced healthy plants – better than rivals tested and significantly better than most.

T&M Head Office

