

Buckingham

Garden Centre



'Passionate about gardening'

NEWSLETTER

MARCH / APRIL 2019 ISSUE



EASTER JUNIOR GARDENING CLUB SPECIAL

WHAT'S
INSIDE

NEW SHOP PRODUCTS AND PLANTS, GARDEN CENTRE RECYCLING, EASY CARE HOUSEPLANTS, LINDENGATE NEWS, GROW A PINEAPPLE TOP, CROSSWORD COMPETITION AND WHAT'S ON

ORCHID DAY 27th MARCH JOIN US FOR OUR POPULAR EVENT



There is no doubt when it comes to the weather, gardeners are never happy! As we celebrated Fragrant February in all its glory with some of the most amazing Snowdrops, Daphnes, bulbs and early spring blossom displays in years, many of the experts have suggested it's been down to the hot summer of last year coupled with a lack of frost and mild temperatures that has led to much bigger flowers on our plants. So, I suppose it is with some trepidation we enter the start of the meteorological spring which commences on the 1st March through to the 31st May. Our gardens are certainly romping away and there has never been a better time to make a start - from some simple seed sowings Broad Beans and Sweet Peas to starting off your Begonias and Dahlias.

If you are a fan of the hugely popular BBC's *Antiques Road Show* then you may well be interested in our special event on Wednesday 13th March. Woburn-based Charles Ross, auctioneers, will be attending at the Garden Centre between 10am-4pm providing free valuations on jewellery and antiques to our customers who attend on the day. If you are planning to visit on that date, I'm also giving a talk at 4pm on Twelve Months of Colour. So we'll see you there!



Enjoy your spring garden - whatever the weather.

Chris

SHOP MOVERS AND SHAKERS, CHAIRS AND NEW PLANTS

Nothing stands still in business that's for sure, so as the seasons change our plans for the shop and the plant area develop for the spring season. You will have no doubt noticed we have been moving some of the departments around with the Bird Care department taking up new residence in the old shop, neatly sandwiched between Bonmarché and the Houseplants department. The area where Bird Care resided now houses a much expanded Weber BBQ display of the latest must-have models and essential accessories. Conveniently located next to our warehouse facility, we are able to top up the bulky charcoal as well as accessing stock efficiently for our customers. Currently Summer Bulbs and Kinder Garden Plants (plug plants) feature in the main shop. Then as we approach the busy bulb planting season look at our full range of tempting Canna, Dahlias, Gladioli, Lilies and Begonias amongst others.



The Shop has a host of new products including a range of foldable chairs from Leisure Quest (pictured). Featuring robust Q-Tex 2D fabric, these extra comfortable chairs are both breathable, and quick drying. The lightweight aluminium frame is fully reclinable on the Quest Elite range and they have an adjustable head cushion and table. These practical chairs are £129.99 each or two for £250.00. Also included in this range is the Hampton Relaxer which has an all-weather fabric and locks in any position. It has Ergonomic arm rests and sells at £64.99 or 2 for £120.00. For the little ones we have a range of children's animal chairs featuring fun designs - Monkey, Tiger, Pig and Duck. We have an extended our range of Bramblecrest furniture which proved so popular last year - do come and check out our display in the main shop.

Our gift department sees the introduction of some new tempting fragrances - Wax Lyrical's popular range of scented candles. In the Colony range we have three new fragrances - Blissful Sunday, French Lavender and A Day at The Spa. A most recent addition to the RHS range is the flowery Essence of Hydrangea.

We have two fabulous new ranges of toiletries based on a flowery theme. Daisy Garland is Heathcote and Ivory's new Royal Horticultural Society's branded range with the tag line 'Inspiring everyone to grow'. The fragrances include Evening Primrose, Daisy and Marigold and are available in a range of hand creams, body lotions, soaps and lip balms.

The English Soap Company have introduced a range of luxury Kew Gardens Botanical themed soaps and hand creams. The fragrances in this range include Elderflower and Pomelo, Magnolia and Pear, Lemon grass and Lime, Sandalwood and Pink Pepper and Bluebell and Jasmine. Look out for this fragrant range which is presented in specially selected packaging complete with beautiful images from Kew's historic archive.



Our Children's Department includes a selection of children's clothes, fun games and puzzles as well as toys and books. Look out for a new spinner in the kids' section full of collectable stickers. They start from only 99p each and include popular subjects such as Paw Patrol, Peppa Pig and The Gruffalo.

We also have a new range of children's super bright personalised torches in stock. You will find these located at the back of the children's area.

In the Food Hall we have several new varieties of flour in our range from FWP Matthews (pictured right). These include Dark Rye (perfect for rye bread, rich in colour, with a traditional full flavour); Wholemeal Spelt (rich in flavour and perfect for bread making. This is a great, healthy option which is easier to digest than normal flours); also Plain and Self-Raising Organic flours. The kitchen store cupboard favourite, Cottage Delight, looks a bit different now as their packaging has been redesigned but the ingredients are still delicious!



We have expanded our range of drinks, which now includes Foxdenton Gin locally produced in Buckingham. Look out for Damson, Golden Apricot, Rhubarb, Sloe Gin, Raspberry and Winslow Plum. Leicestershire-based Two Birds Vodka feature a wonderful selection of flavours including After Dinner Mint, Blackcurrant, Espresso, Salted Caramel, Passion Fruit and Raspberry. Wellingborough-based Saxby's Cider and Mr Fitzpatrick's cordials completes the latest new arrivals.



The really popular pure apple juices from New Creation Farm which we used to sell last autumn with the fresh apples from the same farm, are now available from the drinks area of the Food Hall.

In the Plant Area we have had some fantastic new benches built to display our range of pot-grown hedging, groundcover, grasses and shrubs. These are all set up behind the Tiny Tunnel just opposite the Plant Information Office. Elsewhere we have updated the benches to include plastic and capillary matting to help the watering of our plants, especially those plants in smaller pots. You'll see good examples of this on our Alpine, Herbaceous and Herb benches. As we found last summer, water efficiency and water conservation is essential on our site. As far as new plants, there will be a range of new grasses, ferns and hostas arriving later this month and will be on a special mix and match offer with additional discounts to our Garden Card members.



This spring you'll see a new grape on sale in our Fruit Section called Vitis 'Crimson Seedless' (pictured left). The 'Crimson Seedless' grape is a very heavy cropper with bunches of elongated pinkish-red fruit with juicy sweet translucent flesh. The flavour is best described as being sweetly-tart bordering on spicy. Delicious eaten fresh as a healthy snack or in fruit salads and or with cheese platters.

Fuchsia 'Pink Fizz' (pictured right) is said to be one of the most floriferous climbing fuchsias on the market and we are looking forward to stocking it very soon.

Described as the next generation of climbing fuchsia it offers a huge improvement over the climbing favourite 'Lady Boothby'. The dangling pink blooms are showy, free flowering and they are produced along the entire length of the stem and not just at the tips. The vigorous upright stems can extend by up to 1.5m (5ft) a height with a spread of 90cm (36 inches) in a single season, making it ideal for covering walls, fences, arches and obelisks. It is hardy down to -10°C (14°F). This hardy fuchsia is tough enough to be permanently planted in a border, so should improve in bushiness each year. It can be grown in full sun or partial shade.



The warmer days of March see the start of the aquatic plants season once again. We'll have a great range of shallow marginals including Acorus, Lobelia 'Queen Victoria', Marsh Marigolds (pictured left), Myosotis, Houttuynia cordata and Iris; pond side plants such as Canna, Gunnera, Cotula, Equisetum, ferns, Iris and

Hosta (pictured right); oxygenating plants, deep water plants, floating water plants and water lilies (named varieties). We'll also stock a range of ready planted contour baskets which you can simply drop into your pond for instant effect.



THE ENVIRONMENT - DO WE CARE?

The answer to whether we care about the environment as a company, and for that matter as a family, is 'Yes, we most certainly do', writes Pauline Brown.

Our customers looking at the products we sell would probably conclude that our business is more environmentally friendly than, for example, a car manufacturer or even a large supermarket, so I thought I would look at a few figures regarding the 'plants' side of the business. In an average year we sell approximately a quarter of a million bare root plants. These have been produced in the field with no use of plastic pots, the only plastic involved being the labels used for keeping the varieties identifiable. The hedges and trees when planted out by our customers are very beneficial for the air conditions and also for making our gardens and countryside more attractive and providing habitat for wild life.

All the thousands of pot grown plants we sell are in plastic pots and up till recently these pots have been a problem as local councils cannot re-cycle the plastic as their equipment cannot pick out the black plastic. However, the plant industry has been very concerned about this and this year many plants will be available in 'taupe' pots which should be recyclable by the council.

At the moment the cost of these pots is greater but it is thought to be well worth it. Some of our 'older' customers may remember that about ten years ago we had dug out a very large reservoir (*pictured right*) to take the water from the buildings and the run-off from the paths. This means that to a large extent all our watering of



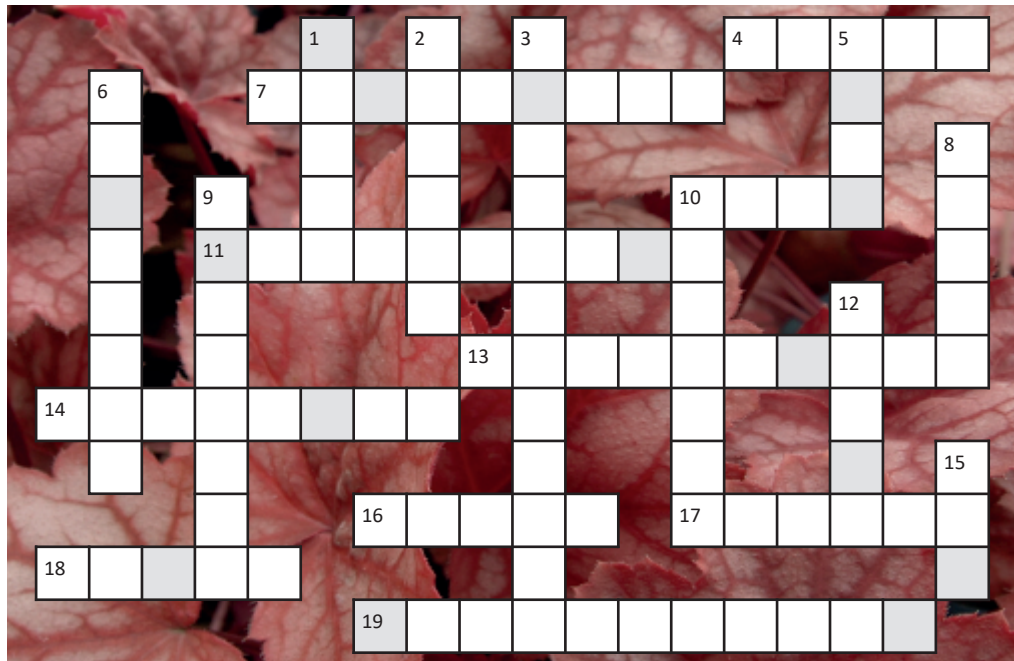
plants can be done using water from this, which is mainly rain water. Local tap water is quite 'hard' and after a while if the plants are watered with this they get a lime deposit on their leaves, which is not only unsightly, but also means they cannot photosynthesize so well. Last summer, due to the high temperatures and lack of rain in the summer months, the water level in the reservoir ran very low and had we continued to use it, not only would the pumps have clogged up with mud, but the many fish who live in the water to keep it clean and free from such things as mosquitoes, would have suffered. This is the first time we have had this problem for a long time. When the rain finally arrived it was great to see water gushing from the large in-pipe and refilling the reservoir.

Back in 2014 we decided to put solar panels on the south facing shop roof. On our Garden Centre web-site it is possible to see how much power is being produced by the panels. I had a look at this and was surprised to see that over the last month when the panels were covered by snow for several days and the weather was quite cloudy we were still producing an average of 35.4 kWh per day. OK, this was low, but in the height of summer the panels are producing 212 kWh of power from the sun, and yesterday the panels produced 126 kWh but that may be unusual for February!

We recently decided to take a closer look at our re-cycling of general waste and as a result have changed our contractor. Apart from all the normal items which will be re-cycled we are separating and bagging separately the fresh coffee grounds produced by our restaurant. These are going to a company who process them making them into 'coffee logs' which can be burnt in log burners or on open fires. I hope from these few facts you will see that we do care about the environment, but we are not complacent and we are constantly looking for more things to do.

PUZZLE CORNER - OUR MARCH/APRIL CROSSWORD!

Would you like to win a £25 Buckingham Garden Centre Gift Voucher? Enter our crossword competition below. Use the clues to fill in the answers. Take the letters from the shaded boxes which form an anagram of a popular herbaceous plant with a strong family Garden Centre connection (8,7).



ACROSS

4. Opposite of spindly? (5)
7. There are English ones and less desirable Spanish ones of what? (9)
10. The stem of a raspberry or blackberry plant (4)
11. The biggest _____ in the world? (10)
13. *Prunus spinosa*? (10)
14. Making more plants from one plant? (8)
16. Compact and slow growing? (5)
17. High tea treat? (6)
18. The willow family (5)
19. The theme of one of our workshops this Spring (11)

DOWN

1. Name for a type of potato storage (5)
2. Garden mignonette (6)
3. Snappy, insect eating plant (5,3,4)
5. Popular herb (4)
6. 'Nelly Moser' is a popular choice of ? (8)
8. Found under oak trees by squirrels in autumn? (5)
9. Another name for Daffodils? (8)
10. *Garrya elliptica* produces these from late winter onwards? (7)
12. To place seedlings and cuttings into containers to grow on (3,2)
15. Mountain _____ (3)

Once you have solved the anagram, send the plant name you have discovered by e-mail to competitions@buckingham-nurseries.co.uk with subject line "March crossword" or post your entry to March Crossword Competition, Buckingham Garden Centre, Tingewick Road, Buckingham, MK18 4AE. Closing date 30th April 2019. The answers to previous crosswords are available on our website.

LINDENGATE CHARITY NEWS

There is always something exciting happening in the Lindengate garden, writes Anne Mills. In November of last year we were thrilled and honoured to welcome our own special *Tilia platyphyllos* into the Lindengate gardens. Better known as a Linden or Lime tree, our namesake is a beautiful tall youngster (for a tree), well over 30 years old.

The Linden tree produces fragrant and nectar-producing flowers and the medicinal herb lime blossom. They are very important honey plants for beekeepers, producing a very pale but richly flavoured mono floral honey. The flowers are also great for herbal teas and tinctures and are used in herbal medicine practices. This is why Lindengate, Mental Health Charity chose this lovely tree to represent us.



Tilia is a genus of about 30 species of trees native throughout most of the temperate Northern Hemisphere. In the British Isles they are commonly called Lime or Linden trees although they are not closely related to the tree that produces the lime fruit.



Tilia species are mostly large, deciduous trees, reaching typically 20 to 40 metres tall, standing like a pillar and the branches divide and subdivide into numerous ramifications on which the twigs are fine and thick. In summer, these are profusely clothed with large leaves and the result is a dense head of abundant foliage. Limes are hermaphroditic, having perfect flowers with both male and female parts, pollinated by insects.

The leaves of all the *Tilia* species are heart-shaped, another reason why Lindengate chose the tree and most are asymmetrical. *Tilia* species may be propagated by cuttings and grafting, as well as by seed although this is not an easy task.

Come and say "Hello" to our Linden tree at one of our "drop ins" (see dates below) and walk around our stunning 5-acre wildlife haven, which is full of interesting gardens and beautiful all year round. You will get an opportunity to learn how we support those with mental health needs with Social and Therapeutic Horticulture, hear about our unique conservation work and if you are looking for an opportunity to volunteer, our team will help you to decide on the next step.

Contact details: Lindengate, The Old Allotment Site, Wendover Road, Weston Turville, Aylesbury HP22 6BD. Tel: 01296 622443 www.lindengate.org.uk

DROP-IN'S AT LINDENGATE

Free Entry. Refreshments available

Saturday 16th March anytime between 10am and 12noon.

Saturday 13th April anytime between 10am and 12noon.

Wednesday 1st May anytime between 5pm and 7pm.

- Explore Lindengate's stunning 5-acre garden.
- Find out how Lindengate helps people with mental health needs.
- Explore our exciting volunteer opportunities.
- Learn about our conservation projects.



EASY HOUSEPLANTS THAT NEVER DISAPPOINT

Never underestimate the power of indoor foliage plants, says Chris Day. Having spent a few years in the world of commercial houseplant growing, one question often asked was which houseplants would be considered the easiest to grow? Well, the popular subjects of the time (1970s and 1980s) would have been Yucca, Rubber Plant, Cane tree (Draceana) and Kentia Palm. Today the houseplant scene is rather different with a greater attention on growing plants with big foliage colour, unusual leaf shape, interesting structure and form. Our homes have changed too. Warmer conditions from central heating, more light from windows and now the ability to use daylight and LED bulbs means room conditions are far more favourable than years gone by.

So, which of the houseplants are foolproof to grow and resilient in character?

The unusual leaves and habit of *Pilea peperomioides* (pictured above right) has made this plant a bit of an Internet sensation together with its common name Chinese Money Plant which should not to be confused with the normal Money Plant - *Crassula ovata*. The *Pilea* is sometimes called the UFO plant which is much more descriptive of its fleshy circular leaves. Incredibly it belongs to the nettle family. However, its succulent foliage means it's resilient and robust to grow with minimal care. Just give the plant a bright sunny location and to prevent your *Pilea* from growing lopsided, rotate it at least 2-3 times a week since it grows towards the sun. This plant can adapt to lower light areas, but the leaves will turn a darker green and the plant will spread out more. Allow the soil to dry a little between waterings, as *Pilea* do not like soggy soil. In warmer weather, they need to be watered more frequently. Give them a feed every fortnight from March through to September.



The aptly named Monkey Mask plant (*Monstera Adansonii*, pictured left) is the brother to the popular Swiss Cheese Plant and is fun to grow. The classic *Monstera* usually has holes at the end of the leaf, as if someone has cut into the leaf. However with the *Monstera* Monkey Mask the holes are more in the middle of the leaf, by the vein, and the ends of the leaf are closed - as if someone has punched holes in the leaf. That gives this species a very distinctive look. Care wise, bright light, but not direct sunlight, suits it best. Mist spray to keep the air humid and keep

the soil continuously moist throughout spring and summer, and reduce watering in the winter. It prefers warm and humid conditions - ideally above 60°F.

Finally, the impressive and very exotic *Guzmania*. This is a Bromeliad relative, related to the Pineapple plant. (see opposite page). The coloured part of the star 'flower' is in fact a bract, a modified leaf and is very long lasting so can be enjoyed for many months. *Guzmanias* (pictured right) prefer and are happiest in bright, natural light. An east or west exposure would be best but just be sure they avoid exposure to any direct, hot sun because they'll burn. They'll be fine in low light for a few weeks, but won't be as long lasting. *Guzmania* have a tank, cup, vase or urn (the central well which the flower stalk arises out of) and this is how they collect a lot of the water they need. You want to keep that vase about a quarter of the way full of water and flush it out with fresh water every 1-2 months to avoid any build up of bacteria. And, don't over water your *Guzmania* – they don't like to stay constantly wet.



FUN GROWING FRUIT PROJECT - THE PINEAPPLE



Did you know that the leafy top of supermarket-bought pineapples can be rooted and grown as an interesting houseplant? Simply choose a fresh pineapple from your local supermarket, cut the top off and sprout your plant.



Rooting and growing pineapple tops is easy. Once you bring your pineapple home, cut off the leafy top about half an inch below the leaves. Then remove some of the lowest leaves.



Allow the pineapple top to dry from several days to one week prior to planting it up in a pot. This helps the cut surface to heal and discourages the problem of rotting.

Although it's possible to sprout a pineapple in water, most people have better luck rooting them in a multi-purpose houseplant compost. Place the pineapple top with the soil up to the base of its leaves. Water thoroughly and place it in a bright position out of direct sunlight. Keep it moist so the roots develop. Placing the pot and plant in a clear polythene bag will act as a propagator. It should take about two months (6-8 weeks) for roots to establish. Once significant root growth has occurred, you can start giving the plant additional light.



When growing pineapple tops, you'll need to provide at least six hours of bright light. Water your plant as needed, allowing it to dry out between watering. You can also feed the pineapple plant with a soluble houseplant fertiliser such as Baby Bio once or twice a month during spring and summer. If desired, move the pineapple plant outdoors in a semi-shaded location from late May returning it to the warmth of the indoors in September.

Since pineapples are relatively slow-growing plants, do not expect to see blooms (see photo below) for at least two to three years, if at all! It is possible, however, to encourage the flowering of mature pineapple plants. Laying the plant on its side between watering is thought to help promote the flower-inducing production of ethylene. You can also place the pineapple in a plastic bag with a well-ripened apple or banana for several days. Both of these fruits are well known for giving off ethylene gas and with any luck, you should find flowering occurs within two to three months of this treatment. Learning how to grow a pineapple top is an easy and fun way to enjoy the interesting, tropical-like foliage of these plants in the home or school year round.



CALLING ALL JUNIOR GARDENING CLUB MEMBERS! We are still looking for a name for our new Potato character! We would love to hear your thoughts on a suitable potato name! Please let us know at the Customer Service Desk with the name together with your contact details. We will be giving out a small prize for the best name used!



EASTER SPECIAL COLOURING IN COMPETITION

CALLING ALL CHILDREN - ENTER OUR COMPETITION! Simply colour in the picture below and fill in your details and return to the Garden Centre by Monday 15th April. We'll create a gallery of the best entries and there will be spot prizes for the most colourful entries.



YOUR NAME

AGE

YOUR SCHOOL

CONTACT DETAILS

ARE YOU A MEMBER OF OUR JUNIOR GARDENING CLUB? YES / NO

JOINING IS EASY. PLEASE CONTACT THE CUSTOMER SERVICE DESK TO SIGN UP.

WHAT'S ON THIS SPRING

WEDNESDAY 13th MARCH 10am-4pm. We are delighted to welcome Charles Ross, Auctioneers, from Woburn who will be offering their valuation services on jewellery and antiques to our customers throughout the day. No booking is required - simply pop along through the day between 10am and 4pm.



WEDNESDAY 13th MARCH at 4pm Colour is the key essential in every garden and this updated talk - Twelve Months Of Colour - covers a whole range of garden worthy plants that can provide just that – with fabulous foliage, flower, stem, leaf and berry colour for year-round interest and enjoyment. Chris Day also looks at how colour can excite the senses and also the current trends gardeners need to be considering in their pots, baskets and borders. Booking is essential either at the Customer Service Desk or call 01280 827133. Garden Card holders free, £3 for non-holders.



WEDNESDAY 27th MARCH Join us for an **ORCHID DAY** in the company of the 'Orchid Master' Peter White. Peter is President of the British Orchid Society and President of the International Phalaenopsis Alliance. His no-nonsense advice will be available from 11am onwards with Orchid MOT's until 3.45pm. There will be two Orchid talks, the first at 11.00am and the second at 2.00pm.

WEDNESDAY 10th APRIL at 4pm Timothy Walker's talk 'Bordering on Insanity' - creating an all-year-round border. This talk looks exclusively at the herbaceous border designed by Timothy's wife's in a previous garden. The border was created over 25 years and the talk covers the principles and practicalities that were adopted in an attempt to create a border that is interesting all-year-round. It concludes with a look at a collection of must-have plants for such a border, and associations in which they may be grown. See March 13th talk for booking details.



FRIDAY 26th APRIL between 10.00am-1.00pm. **SPRING PROPAGATION WORKSHOP** hosted by Clare Price. There are only 15 places available, so it will be on a first come first served basis. The cost to our Garden Card holders is £19.99 and to others £24.99, the price includes tea or filter coffee. Booking is essential either at the Customer Service Desk or call 01280 827133.

WEDNESDAY 8th MAY at 4pm Our chosen charity of 2019, Lindengate, will be talking on their aims and work. Come and hear how Lindengate Charity supports those with mental health needs using Social and Therapeutic Horticulture. Learn about their stunning 5 acre garden and conservation work, and the part it plays in recovery. Except it is much more than that! See our March 13th talk for full booking details.

SUNDAY 12th MAY is GARDEN DAY. The aim of the day is to celebrate the mental and physical benefits gardens bring us all year round and to connect with neighbours, family and friends. We'll have everything you need to dress your garden for this special celebration so whether you are a family gardener, allotment aficionado or a houseplant enthusiast, do try and take part! Whether it's for tea and cake, a plant swap or a more-the-merrier lunch, celebrations of shapes and sizes are encouraged. More details at www.gardenday.co.uk.

XL VALUE BULB PACKS

£5.99 PER PACK

3 FOR £15.00

GARDEN CARD HOLDERS WILL RECEIVE AN EXTRA DISCOUNT
OF EITHER 5% OR 10%. OFFER SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY



SPECIAL GARDEN CARD HOLDERS' OFFER COUPONS

PLANT OF THE MONTH: MARCH

HEUCHERA 'PALACE PURPLE'

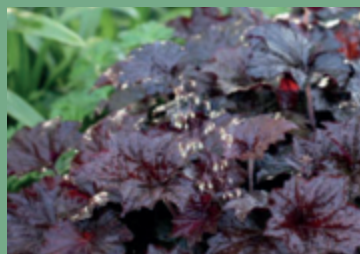
Normally £8.99 each

Garden Card Holders' Price:

£5.99

PLEASE PRESENT THIS VOUCHER TOGETHER WITH A
VALID GARDEN CENTRE DISCOUNT CARD FOR OFFER

OFFER SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY



PLANT OF THE MONTH: APRIL

FESTUCA 'ELIJAH BLUE'

Normally £7.99 each

Garden Card Holders' Price:

£4.99

PLEASE PRESENT THIS VOUCHER TOGETHER WITH A
VALID GARDEN CENTRE DISCOUNT CARD FOR OFFER

OFFER SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY



PLANT OF THE MONTH: MAY

HOSTA 'STING'

Normally £7.99 each

Garden Card Holders' Price:

£4.99

PLEASE PRESENT THIS VOUCHER TOGETHER WITH A
VALID GARDEN CENTRE DISCOUNT CARD FOR OFFER

OFFER SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY



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E-Mail: enquiries@hedging.co.uk, Web: www.buckinghamgardencentre.co.uk

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Summer Opening Times: Mon-Sat: 8:30am-6:00pm, Sun: 10am-4pm. Closed Easter Sunday.