

Newsletter April 2006



Buckingham's Going Live

Regular customers will know that Chris Day, our plant buyer and advisor, can often be heard giving gardening advice on BBC Three Counties Radio (The Gardening Programme with Lorna Milton, Saturdays 9am-12noon). The tables will be turning on Friday, 21st April when you'll be able to hear many of the staff and customers from Buckingham Garden Centre, live on air, on Luke Ashmead's radio show which will be broadcast between 1-3 pm.

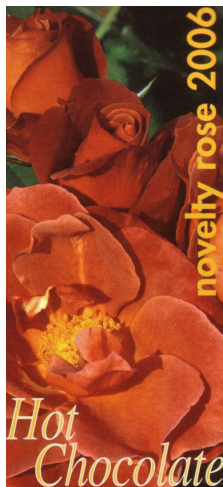
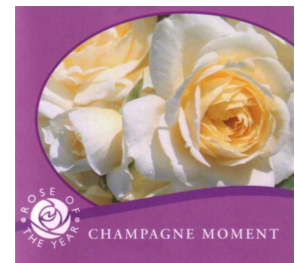
Luke, who is a keen and passionate gardener, will be looking at all aspects of the garden centre at this busy planting time, including advice, learning more about our Outdoor Living Weekend (Saturday 22nd and Sunday 23rd April), container gardening as well as Luke's interest in fruit and vegetable growing.

Please do tune in, here are the all-important radio frequencies 90.4, 92.1, 94.7, 95.5, 98, 103.8 and 104.5FM and online at bbc.co.uk/threecounties between 1-3 pm on Friday 21st April.



Everything's Rosy

The gardening season certainly is in the hands of Mother Nature at the moment, but do cheer yourself up and check out some of the new plants coming into the garden centre at the moment, including the 2006 Rose of the Year, 'Champagne Moment'. This stunning new rose, from the same breeding stable as previous roses of the year, including 'Summertime' (yellow patio climber, 2005), 'Golden Memories' (yellow bush rose, 2004) and 'Rhapsody in Blue' (a new blue, 2003). 'Champagne Moment' produces lovely apricot to pale pink lightly fragrant blooms all summer and best of all, it's compact growing to just 2-3ft (60-90cm) high. Do check out our roses – we've plenty of the David Austin English shrub roses to tempt you!



If you are looking for something very different in the rose world, how about this year's novelty rose, 'Hot Chocolate'? Yes, the blooms really are chocolate brown with a pleasing fragrance, alas though, not chocolate scented!

Elsewhere, you have some new additions to the dicentra family (bleeding heart) with 'Candy Hearts' and 'Gold Heart' taking centre stage. Check out the colourful potfuls of wallflowers, Brompton Stocks (deliciously fragrant) and Erysimum 'Apricot Delight', a real orange corker for pots and borders.

We've now our stock of this year's Inkarho (lime-tolerant) rhododendrons and we have extended the range to include larger specimens as well as ultra dwarf yakushimanums. These specially grafted plants will grow well in the ground in this area as well as in pots.

Look out for the bright blue pots of our latest alpine supplier, located just outside the large seasonal tunnel brimming with hardy bedding plants, camellias and colourful seasonal plants.

Fruit and vegetables will be featured in our white and green tunnel, and will include pack vegetables as well as greenhouse favourites like tomatoes, peppers and cucumbers. New varieties will be available weekly, so do check out what's looking good on your next visit.

10 Gardening Tasks to Conserve Water

1. Whatever you plant this season, do work in good quantities of moisture retentative compost, manure or peat-substitute, placing generous amounts in with the soil you remove to make the planting hole. Don't forget to apply a good soaking of water to settle the plants in and then mulch around the newly established plants with a 2-3in (5-7cm) layer of home-produced compost, well-rotted manure or planting compost to help conserve the water and stop it evaporating away.

2. If you are planting bedding, summer bulbs, trees and shrubs, make sure you apply some RootGrow ® in direct contact with the roots. You should also treat last-minute planted bare-root stock as well, to give them the best possible start in life.

3. If you intend to plant up patio containers, including hanging baskets, opt for larger sizes to hold more moisture. Bigger pots will give a much better display rather than lots of smaller containers. It's also a good way of utilising your water more effectively.
4. Shredded newspaper (not glossy magazine print) makes an excellent moisture sponge – perfect to add to your trenches when planting vegetable crops – especially members of the pea and bean family. Do soak the paper before covering it with soil, otherwise it is less likely to break down effectively.
5. If you are planning large border re-plants, do consider rolling out landscape fabric over the area you intend to cover to suppress weed growth, conserve moisture and provide a cool root run for your newly-planted stock. Do this and you'll save so much time not having to pull those undesirable weeds out!!
6. When selecting shrubs, perennials and grasses, opt for forms that will grow well with limited water. We'll be highlighting plenty of plants at the garden centre over the next few weeks, but for starters good ones to go for are herbs, alpines, silver-leaved shrubs, such as *Convolvulus cneorum* and *Seneio greyii*, rock roses and groundcover geraniums. Olives, callistemons, phormiums and hardy palms are superb for hot, sunny aspects and will survive on relatively small amounts of water, providing they are planted in good sized pots.
7. Use water retaining granules mixed with your compost when planting pots and hanging baskets and also when planting hardy plants close to rain-shadow areas, say next to a solid wall or fence, or close to the house.
8. In true 'Blue Peter' fashion, make yourself some fizzy drink water tubes for sinking close to the roots of any newly planted tree, shrub or perennial. The 2-litre size fizzy pop bottles are best. Cut off the flat bottom, make two or three holes on one half only of the bottle in the four inches nearest the neck of the bottle, then insert the bottle neck down with the side with the extra holes facing the roots of your plant. You might need to sink the bottle down by one-third for best effect. The water will be directed straight to the roots, so maximising the water you apply.
9. Start using 'grey water' to water your plants – this water must contain soap only – never use water containing bleach or strong detergents, but washing-up liquid and bubble bath water are fine.
10. Make sure you are prepared for the drought by installing at least one water butt. Simple diverter kits are available to remove water from house, greenhouse and conservatory down-pipes.

Launch of New Garden Discount Card at Outdoor Living Week-end, 22nd - 23rd April

For years we have had a discount card which was only available to members of local Gardening Clubs, but as many of our loyal customers are not members of Clubs for various reasons we have decided to change the availability and terms of the cards.



The new cards, available to any customer at the Garden Centre, will give a 5% discount at the till off all garden plants, pond plants, seeds, bulbs and houseplants at anytime, plus double discount on Wednesdays. We will be running special offers for Garden Card holders which will be well advertised, plus organising talks and possibly outings if holders are interested. Regular Newsletters will be sent out giving topical tips and other news. For lifetime membership for this new card the cost is £10.00, (or £5 if you are a member of a registered local Gardening Club) and existing Garden Card holders will automatically be transferred to the new scheme on the 22nd April at no cost. Final discount vouchers from the old cards will be sent out shortly.



To help promote the launch of this new card we are putting the names of the applicants for the new card into a box and one name will be drawn at the end of the week-end, and the lucky winner will receive an Alexander Rose 4ft mahogany bench worth £129.

BUCKINGHAM NURSERIES AND GARDEN CENTRE

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

SPRING & SUMMER OPENING HOURS

Monday-Saturday: 8:30am to 6.00pm, Sunday: 10:30am to 4:30pm (open 10am for viewing)



OUTDOOR LIVING WEEKEND

22-23rd April

Barbecue Cooking Demonstrations

Expert barbecue cooks to demonstrate how to make the best of your barbecue. Plus local farmer with fresh meat from the farm to cook on the barbecue.

Swimming Pool Expert

Local swimming pool company to discuss indoor and outdoor swimming pools. Show pool (sorry not filled!) and show buildings.

Olives Galore

Loads of varieties of olives to eat, excellent for hors d'oeuvres or with summer salads.

Good Cheeses and a Chocolate Fountain

Sunday only

Drunken Monk Tavern

Excellent range of 'small brewery beers', unusual ciders, English fruit juices and wines.

Get your dog washed for charity!

Our local Pooch Mobile will be washing dogs in her hydrobath! All profits will go to the Hearing Dogs for Deaf People.

BBOWT – Local Wildlife Charity

Talk to a representative from our local wildlife charity and find out about talks, walks and places to visit this summer.

Chrissie's Owls

Talk to Chrissie about her work with Owls and meet one of the owls!

Launch of New Discount Garden Card

*Apply for our card and save 5% on Plants, Seeds & Bulbs, and 10% on double discount day - Wednesday. **Sign up at the weekend and be entered into a draw to win an Alexander Rose 4ft Mahogany bench worth £129.***

*Full terms & conditions available on request.
Lifetime membership cost £10.*