

NEWSLETTER

MAY 2010

Rose watch

ROSES are beautiful plants, but they can be susceptible to pests and diseases, writes *Peter Mason*. My roses are looking good at the moment with their bright shiny new leaves, but I know that in a few weeks' time I might be the proud owner of some *Rosa nigra maculata aphidii* (also known as black spotted, greenfly infested roses). The good news is that we have Rose Clear 3 on offer. The 800ml ready to use gun is £3.99, or 2 for £7. The 200ml concentrate is £6.99, or 2 for £12. Rose Clear 3 contains bifenthrin and myclobutanil which are highly effective as an insecticide and a fungicide. The bad news is that Rose Clear 3 is being withdrawn and we only have limited stocks, so it's a question of "buy now while stocks last" as when it's gone it's gone. There will be a replacement called Rose Clear 4. The ready to use will be based on fatty acids and sulphur and is likely to be less effective than Rose Clear 3. The concentrate will be an insecticide only, and will need to be used in conjunction with Fungus Clear, which is less convenient.



Plant of the month: Lavender



The timing of this month's Plant of the Month couldn't be better planned as we feel this is definitely the best time to establish new lavender hedges and individual plants into the garden. The soil is warming, the plants are that bit larger and the roots are active, perfect for successful establishment. We sell three forms of English lavender through our mail-order service and the Garden Centre: Old English, Hidcote and Alba (White). These young plants are perfect for hedging, but through the Garden Centre larger 11cm, 1-litre to 3-litre plants will become available as the season progresses and these will give that instant look.

We also stock French lavender including *Lavandula* 'Anouk', 'Fathead', 'Garden Butterfly', 'Midnight Sky' and 'Papillion'. Hardiness is sometimes an issue and you really need to add generous amounts of horticultural grit to your soil to help drainage. These lavenders are sun-lovers, so a baking south or west facing border is ideal for them.

Garden Talks and Outing

- We may have a few seats available on Wednesday 12th May, 10.30am for Laura Donovan's talk, 'Getting Started with Chickens'.
- Advanced notice: Our speaker on the Wednesday 9th June, 10.30am will be Gerald Sinclair and he will be speaking on 'Hemerocallis, the wonderful day lilies'.
- On Wednesday 19th May, Chris Day will be running his two popular Grow Your Own Talks for Beginners; 10.30am on 'Vegetable Growing' and 2pm on 'Fruit Growing'. Each talk lasts around one hour with time for your gardening questions.
- We are visiting Highgrove and Westonbirt Arboretum on 13th August 2010, spaces are limited and tickets, which cover admission to both gardens and the mini bus travel, cost £50.
- For full details of all of the above and to book, please contact our Customer Service Desk on (01280) 822133.

Did you guess right?



Picture puzzler: We hope you solved the plant identification in our last newsletter (pictured to the right); the answer was *Dracunculus vulgaris*, the aptly named voodoo lily.

This month's teaser - just for fun - the berries on the plant pictured below belong to which popular shrub? Answer in our next newsletter!



Increasing your work space

There are two new items in stock which could be of interest to greenhouse owners. The first is a 'Work Station' which is a great all round working area with a low storage shelf, a working bench 45in (115cm) wide and 22in (56cm) deep, then two high level shelves. It is ideal for both potting and storage. It comes flat packed, is easy to assemble, is made of sturdy aluminium and the cost is £67.18.



The other which could be a really useful addition to your greenhouse, is the 'Seed Tray Frame'. This is a high quality, lightweight aluminium frame which is maintenance free, space saving and easily movable and comes complete with seed trays. It takes nine standard size trays and so is an ideal for over-wintering tender garden plants, or at this time of the year for germinating and growing on seedlings prior to planting out. It comes flat packed, is easily assembled and costs £35.40. They are on display here in the white Elite greenhouse by the 'Potting Bench'.



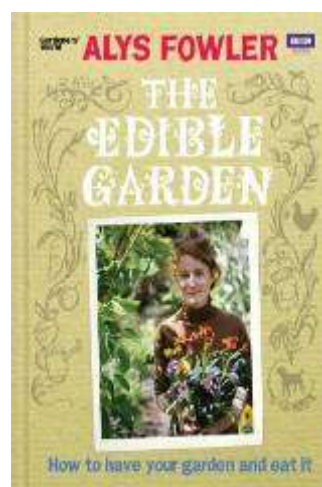
Time for practical TV?

Ten years ago it was all about quick-fix garden makeovers and 'instant' gardening, writes *Chris Day*. Today we are gardening in very different economic times and TV gardening has been slow to take up the gauntlet, but I am enjoying '[The Edible Garden](#)', now showing on BBC2 and BBC HD featuring Alys Fowler and the highly productive back garden to her Victorian property. It's inspirational, and above all, highly practical, and Alys shows how it was possible to grow her own fruit and vegetables, despite having a few problems along the way.

Elsewhere, landscape gardening makes a big appearance in Channel 4's 'The Landscape Man', (Thursday, 8pm). Being billed as a sort of Grand Designs for gardeners, it looks at huge landscape projects in terms of size, and budget. This is no Ground Force, that's for sure!

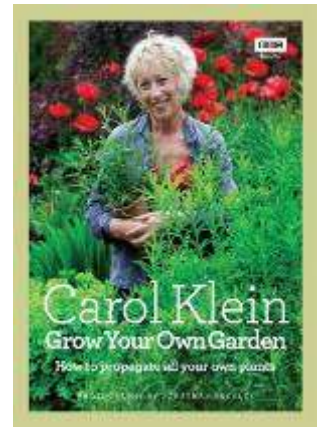
The stalwart of Friday night, 'Gardeners' World' (Friday, BBC2, BBC HD, 8.30pm), is settling down after its re-vamp. It's returned to a basic, yet practical format, and has thankfully lost the silliness and gimmicks of last year's one-hour format.

Carol Klein's mini master classes on specific plant families are always fascinating and you do learn nuggets of information. Toby Buckland guides us through the week-to-week routine chores, and



the projects are taken care of by Joe Swift and Alys Fowler. But 'Gardeners' World' does beg the question: can you attract a new, beginner audience and at the same time satisfy the knowledgeable and experienced gardener? I think this is where GW isn't getting the balance right, but perhaps I am wrong!

So, what's on the horizon elsewhere for gardeners? Well, there is Carol Klein's eagerly anticipated '[Grow Your Own Garden: How to propagate your own plants](#)' which is coming soon on BBC2, with a book of the same title due out later this month. Now, finally, we are getting back to gardening basics, but with passion!



Bird care reminder



If you are one of the many thousands of people who have been feeding the birds in your garden over winter, please do not give up now, even though other natural food is appearing. Birds become dependent on us to feed them (such as this jay, pictured) and at this time of the year when they are busy nest building and soon rearing young it is important for them to be well fed.

One word of advice though, make sure any nuts are in a suitable container so the parent birds can only peck small pieces at a time. Large pieces or complete nuts can cause choking with tiny birds. Alternatively, buy peanut granules, which can be safely fed from a bird table throughout the year.

Feeders should always be placed away from cover where cats can hide but close enough to bushes so that birds can seek safety should a sparrowhawk appear. If you are fortunate enough to have masses of birds in your garden, or if those that you have have voracious appetites, you may consider investing in a Jumbo Seed Feeder as this is enormous and one filling will last a long time.

Whatever feeders, bird tables and bird baths you have it is important to keep them clean. Some feeders are quite difficult to clean but there is a range of Ring Pull Feeders which come apart in seconds for easy cleaning. Also there are some products to help your cleanliness campaign. Feeder Fresh is a non-toxic inert substance similar to sand which, if added to the feeder when filling, will help to combat the growth of harmful moulds.

Also there is Bird Safe which is a spray disinfectant that kills bacteria and viruses on bird tables, drinkers and baths. For general cleaning, a good scrub in hot washing up liquid on a regular basis will help keep feeders hygienic, and if they are moved around in the garden frequently you will not get a build up of harmful matter under the feeders

Bird Brain?

A man was digging in his allotment with his faithful dog nearby when he became aware of a blackbird looking straight at him and issuing its normal alarm cry. He became very puzzled at this unusual behaviour so put down his spade and slowly approached the bird. It did not fly off in alarm but stopped calling and flew a short distance to a bush.

He was then astonished to see the bird's mate with its foot tangled in the bush and unable to free itself. He approached gently and very carefully managed to free the bird, whose leg and foot were not damaged. The two flew happily away, so where did the expression 'Bird Brain' come from?!!

Why not share your favourite gardening related story with us for possible inclusion in our next newsletter? The wittiest entry can win a £10 Buckingham Garden Centre voucher.

Send your contribution to competitions@buckingham-nurseries.co.uk The closing date for entries is 31st May 2010 and we'll print the best.

Savvy deals to get you growing

In the Plant Area we've some cracking deals on summer bedding and basket plants in 9cm pots, normally £1.69 each or 7 plants for £10.00 and in our Vegetable Tunnel, we have selected lines of vegetables at £3.50 per pack or any three for £9.00



Enjoy the Great Outdoors

Our new season of furniture and barbeques are now on display with plenty of choice to suit all gardens. New for this year we have printed deck chairs and colourful parasols plus a windbreak to give shelter for those summer days out. Have you considered adding some accessories to your Garden? We have a wide range of lighting, both solar and mains, lanterns and candles which will help you to enjoy yourselves for a little longer outside, and also make the garden interesting to look out onto from the window when it is definitely too dark to stay outside.

Whilst sitting out enjoying the sunshine why not use that time to gen up on your gardening knowledge? We have a good range of informative gardening books including some excellent value bargain books.

Local Event In May

WEDNESDAY 12 MAY, Home Farm, Stowe Landscape Gardens, Stowe, Buckingham. 7.00pm. AGM of Mid-shires Orchard Group, followed by talk by Ted Green, MBE of the Ancient Tree Forum. Talk on Ancient Trees and their benefit to the environment.

All welcome. If the weather is good bring a picnic and enjoy it in the orchard of Home Farm before the meeting.

Further details can be found on www.msog.btik.com or contact Andy Howard on 01295 810516 or 07950 006813.

Local Garden Event In June

FRIDAY 18 JUNE to SUNDAY 20 JUNE (10.30am - 5.30pm Friday and Saturday, 12.30am-6.00pm, Sunday). 5 beautiful town gardens, all in the old part of Buckingham. A £5 ticket (ideally obtained from Hill House, where the administrative arrangements are based, but also available at the other gardens too) will give you access to all the gardens for Friday and Saturday.

Hill House is the only garden open on the Sunday and is having a "Pig Roast" on the Friday evening at 7pm in aid of the Buckingham Music Festival. Route map available with your ticket:-

- Hill House, Castle Street
(Mr & Mrs Peter Thorogood)
- 4 Willow Reach
(Mrs Barbara Edmondson)
- Walnut Yard, Church Street
(Mr & Mrs Bill Robins, pictured)
- Manor House, Church Street
(Mr & Mrs Rodney Shirley)
- 10 Well Street
(Mr & Mrs Paul Burns)

Food and drink (not included in the entry ticket) will be available at all times during each day at Hill House, including homemade cakes, coffee and cream teas. Come and enjoy a lunchtime sandwich (also available at Hill House) in any of these lovely gardens and buy



your garden plants for the summer from the comprehensive Plant Stall at Hill House.

Further information, photos and maps can be found on www.bacab.org.uk/3/future/0.htm Both are in aid of BACAB, raising funds for our local Citizens Advice Bureau. For details available from Mrs Sharon Humphries: Telephone 01280 815648, email sharon_humphries@yahoo.co.uk

10 Jobs for May

ESTABLISH perennials such as aquilegia, delphiniums, foxgloves (digitalis, pictured) and hollyhocks (alcea) amongst others into well-prepared soil. Work generous amounts of compost, blood, fish and bone and add Rootgrow ® to the planting hole to help establishment. Feed your spring bulbs including daffodils now they are going over with general fertiliser such as Growmore or Vitax Q4.



Don't be too eager to tidy up bulb leaves or you will spoil next year's display. For instance daffodil leaves should be left for six weeks after flowering and should not be tied in a knot.

BE WATER SAVVY and set up water butts if you haven't already done so for this season. Rainwater is essential for all ericaceous plants (e.g. azaleas, camellias, rhododendrons and pieris) grown in containers as tap-water in the Buckingham area contains calcium (lime) and this can cause yellowing of the foliage as well other complications.

VEGETABLE sowings and plantings can continue in earnest, but be cautious about establishing tender vegetables like runner beans, tomatoes, peppers etc, until the threat of frosts has passed. You can always cloche or fleece to protect crops, but do make sure the plants are well-hardened off before planting outdoors or in unheated greenhouses.

Prior to seed sowing and vegetable planting, apply Growmore at 200 grammes per square metre (8oz per square yard) to help boost seed growth.

GRAPE VINES will need feeding with Vitax Q4 or Blood, Fish & Bone to encourage strong, productive growth. As the flowers open, it will be necessary to promote fertilization by carefully shaking the main stem at around the middle of the day as this will help the fruit set.



Elsewhere in the fruit garden, apply a top-dressing of Sulphate of Potash round the trees and bushes, including apples (pictured below). This helps encourage flowering and it will also help strengthen developing flowers and fruit.

CHECK your hanging basket chains! It may sound stupid but rusty worn chains can create a major hazard as the container may decide to topple onto your postman's head! Replacement chains are available from our basket display under the Seasonal Canopy, where you'll also find a great range of open and solid rustic baskets to choose from. We also have a great choice of upright, filler and trailing plants for all summer containers, so there should be no excuses for not having imaginative displays. However, do come and ask at 'The Potting Bench' if you need some advice on plant specifics or colour theming.

WEEDS must be removed from ponds regularly,

otherwise they become almost impossible to get rid of. Fishing nets are perfect for this job and once removed the weeds can be added to the compost heap. It is always advisable to put the weeds you have removed from the pond into a bucket before removing to the compost heap as this will give you the chance to look carefully through it to make sure you have not fished out useful water creatures, young newts, water snails etc. Put these back into the pond before composting the weeds. If your pond is large enough then water lilies are great for discouraging pond weeds as they cover the surface of the pond in the summer.

Elsewhere, keep the Dutch hoe going around the borders to remove any surface annual weeds and leave these on the soil surface to die. Ground elder should be allowed to put further growth on before spraying off with Round-Up or Bayer Glyphosate in late May.

SPRING cleaning should continue in the garden, so tidy up perennials to help encourage strong basal growth and feed with blood, fish and bone to help develop strong flowering stems. If you weren't able to preserve your fences, arbours and pergolas through the winter months, this is your last opportunity before major plant growth hinders the process!

Remove the old flower heads from your hydrangeas but leave them around the garden so birds can pick them up and use them for nesting material.

TIE IN your climbers before they become intertwined and messy. Remove any dead, damaged or diseased stems in the first instance and then thin out if there are too many overcrowded shoots – generally 5-7 stems from the base are sufficient for most climbers.

Tie in with raffia or Haxnick's Soft-Tie, but not too tightly. Annual climbers such as sweet peas can also be planted now. Set them at the base of plastic support netting, or plant them 3in (8cm) apart around wigwam or obelisk structures. Sweet peas produce tendrils which quickly wrap around any support, including any woody stems close by, so again keep a watchful eye and guide them where necessary!

WEATHER WATCH The dry April weather may have helped with our planting plans, but the pressure is on to keep our newly planted hedging, fruit and shrubs growing well. Watering is a chore, but it is the most important task in the garden, so avoid watering 'little and often', good 10-15 minute drenches are much more effective. Likewise, help to conserve the water you are applying by adding mulch around the base of your plants. Sunny days in spring often lead to chilly, cold nights and frost which can be a problem, especially if you are establishing tender flowers, fruits and vegetables. Keep the horticultural fleece handy and cover if frosts are forecast.

LAST CHANCE for potato planting. Time is running out to get your tubers in and established. We have limited availability, but don't delay as the season for planting is drawing to a close. Set your chitted seed potatoes ('sprouted') in rows, 12in (30cm) between early varieties and 15in (40cm) for your maincrop varieties. Spacing between the rows – 24in (60cm) for earlies and 30in (76cm) for maincrop.

Buckingham Nurseries & Garden Centre

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

Mon.-Sat.: 8:30am to 6.00pm, Sun.: 10:00am to 4:00pm