



STEP INTO CHRISTMAS WE'VE GOT CHRISTMAS ALL WRAPPED UP

**NOVEMBER/
DECEMBER
2014 ISSUE**

**WHAT'S
INSIDE**

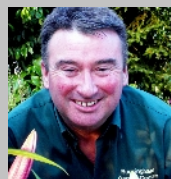
A round-up of great Christmas gift ideas, Plants of the Moment, The Big Organic Debate, Christine Walkden's Glorious Gardens From Above, Top 10 tasks for Late November/December and much more...

Deck the Halls with Holly 'tis the Christmas season. In the gardening business you normally can't write the script, especially when the weather, our nemesis, gets in on the act. This year's mild autumn has delayed the lifting of bare-rooted hedging plants and trees and I think for the first time ever at the Garden Centre we received our potted Christmas trees before the first Quickthorn, Beech and Privet whips arrived! Never fear, the season will no doubt get back on track, so let's hope the planting conditions remain good so there's no further delay.

If you are in the throws of planning your Christmas, don't forget we really do have a fantastic Christmas shop display again this year. We have greatly extended our Food Hall to include lots of foodie treats. And just a seasonal reminder, Garden Centre customers can enjoy free mince pies and mulled wine (fruit squash will also be available) on Saturdays and Sundays throughout December leading to Christmas.

Whatever you are doing over the festive period – visiting family and friends, pottering and planting, present searching and wrapping – we wish you all a lovely Christmas from everyone at the Garden Centre.

Chris



APPLE WEEKEND IN PICTURES



It was great to see so many of you over our September Apple Weekend event. Just a quick special thanks to our guests – fruit experts Gerry Edwards and Fritz De Zutter, seed expert Jason Breed from Kings Seeds, our local chef Chris Wright as well as Phil Banks, magician and face painting artist Lin Banks. If you missed the weekend, please follow the link to our website gallery to see photos of the weekend.

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

POTATO WEEKEND 7th & 8th FEBRUARY 2015

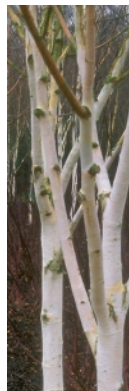
Time to prepare for the start of the new growing season and what better way than get your favourite veggie seeds purchased and your spuds chitted. Our annual Potato Weekend is the perfect opportunity to talk to the experts, who this year will include Colin Randel (pictured) from Thompson & Morgan, Jason Breed from Kings Seeds as well as members from the National Vegetable Society. As well as potato growing, all aspects of the productive garden will be covered, so if you have a question or want to know about specific seed varieties then this is the event to attend!



PLANTS OF THE MOMENT



In November ornamental trees, especially the ones suitable for smaller gardens are highlighted by *The One Show's* gardening expert Christine Walkden. Not only do we have a range of bare-root trees including crab apples, flowering cherries and decorative thorns, we can source much larger potted and bare-rooted specimen trees to special



order, including the ever popular white-stemmed Jacquemontii Birch. Do come and have a chat to the Plant Information Office team if you are looking for a specific tree. The 38th annual National Tree Week, which is run by The Tree Council, also starts this month (29th November – 7th December) and will mark the launch of the tree planting season.

In December, founder of the *Edible Bus Stop* and former Chanel model Mak Gilchrist, lends some weight to the virtues of growing the wonderfully fragrant evergreen shrub, *Sarcococca*. We stock young plants of *Sarcococca*, sometimes called Sweet or Christmas Box, as a useful evergreen low hedging plant which reaches around 2ft (60cm). You'll see larger plants and other varieties of *Sarcococca* on the Garden Centre as they make great shrubs which will thrive even in the shade.



THE BIG ORGANIC DEBATE

New study finds significant differences between organic and non-organic food. This article first appeared on the Farming Online Website www.farming.co.uk on Sunday 13 July 2014.

In the largest study of its kind, an international team of experts led by Newcastle University, UK, has shown that organic crops and crop-based foods are up to 69% higher in a number of key antioxidants than conventionally-grown crops. Analysing 343 studies into the compositional differences between organic and conventional crops, the team found that a switch to eating organic fruit, vegetable and cereals – and food made from them – would provide additional antioxidants equivalent to eating between 1-2 extra portions of fruit and vegetables a day. The study, published today in the prestigious British Journal of Nutrition, also shows significantly lower levels of toxic heavy metals in organic crops. Cadmium, which is one of only three metal contaminants along with lead and mercury for which the European Commission has set maximum permitted contamination levels in food, was found to be almost 50% lower in organic crops than conventionally-grown ones.



Newcastle University's Professor Carlo Leifert (pictured below), who led the study, says: "This study demonstrates that choosing food produced according to organic standards can lead to increased intake of nutritionally desirable antioxidants and reduced exposure to toxic heavy metals. "This constitutes an important addition to the information currently available to consumers which until now has been confusing and in many cases is conflicting."

New methods used to analyse the data

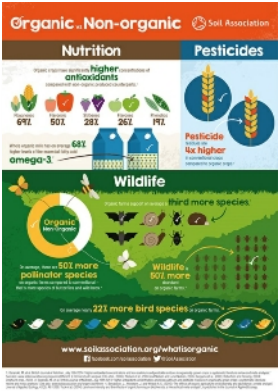
This is the most extensive analysis of the nutrient content in organic vs conventionally-produced foods ever undertaken and is the result of a groundbreaking new systematic literature review and meta-analysis by the international team. The findings contradict those of a 2009 UK Food Standards Agency (FSA) commissioned study which found there were no substantial differences or significant nutritional benefits from organic food.



The FSA commissioned study based its conclusions on only 46 publications covering crops, meat and dairy, while Newcastle led meta-analysis is based on data from 343 peer-reviewed publications on composition difference between organic and conventional crops now available. "The main difference between the two studies is time," explains Professor Leifert, who is Professor of Ecological Agriculture at Newcastle University. "Research in this area has been slow to take off the ground and we have far more data available to us now than five years ago". Dr Gavin Stewart, a Lecturer in Evidence Synthesis and the meta-analysis expert in the Newcastle team, added: "The much larger evidence base available in this synthesis allowed us to use more appropriate statistical methods to draw more definitive conclusions regarding the differences between organic and conventional crops"

What the findings mean

The study, funded jointly by the European Framework 6 programme and the Trust, found that concentrations of antioxidants such as polyphenolics were between 18-69% higher in organically-grown crops. Numerous studies have linked antioxidants to a reduced risk of chronic diseases, including cardiovascular and neurodegenerative diseases and certain cancers. Substantially lower concentrations of a



range of the toxic heavy metal cadmium were also detected in organic crops (on average 48% lower).

Nitrogen concentrations were found to be significantly lower in organic crops. Concentrations of total nitrogen were 10%, nitrate 30% and nitrite 87% lower in organic compared to conventional crops. The study also found that pesticide residues were four times more likely to be found in conventional crops than organic ones.

Professor Charles Benbrook, one of the authors of the study and a leading scientist based at Washington State University, explains: "Our results are highly relevant and significant and will help both scientists and consumers sort through the often conflicting information currently available on the nutrient density of organic and conventional plant-based foods."

Professor Leifert added: "The organic vs non-organic debate has rumbled on for decades now but the evidence from this study is overwhelming – that organic food is high in antioxidants and lower in toxic metals and pesticides.

"But this study should just be a starting point. We have shown without doubt there are composition differences between organic and conventional crops, now there is an urgent need to carry out well-controlled human dietary intervention and cohort studies specifically designed to identify and quantify the health impacts of switching to organic food."

* The authors of this study welcome the continued public and scientific debate on this important subject. The entire database generated and used for this analysis is freely available on the Newcastle University website for the benefit of other experts and interested members of the public.

GLORIOUS GARDENS FROM ABOVE

So, have you been watching Christine Walkden's new series *Glorious Gardens from Above*, which takes gardening literally to new heights?

The BBC used hot air balloons and drones to film gardens from high above tree-top canopies.



This, says the Beeb, provided a unique view for viewers, allowing armchair gardeners to witness a birds-eye spectacle of fascinating and historic landscapes.

Christine, who is resident gardener on *The One Show*, told *Amateur Gardening* magazine she had "no problem with getting into hot air balloons".

She said: "We did a series on *The One Show* involving hot air balloons. I've been staggered at the scale of what you can see from above.

"It almost heightens the definition of gardens. There have been some where I have been completely blown away by the views."

Series director Gavin Ahern said *Glorious Gardens From Above* would not just be about gardens but would also focus on people's relationships with gardens.

"There will be great practical gardening advice from Christine and we'll share a wealth of knowledge from professional gardeners across the UK," he said.

Gardens featured in the series include Bodnant Gardens in Conwy, North Wales (Christine is pictured with Bodnant Gardens Gardener Fran Llewellyn who said: "The BBC team pulled off quite a technological feat to get all this wonderful film footage from the air). Also featured are Montisfont in Hampshire, Hidcote in Gloucestershire and Biddulph Grange Garden and Shugborough in Staffordshire.

You can still catch the 15-part series on the BBC iPlayer.

HO! HO! HO! TWO VERY SPECIAL CHRISTMAS OFFERS



We've plenty of great in-store offers going on throughout December, however these two certainly are well worth considering! If you are looking for a great value Christmas gift idea how about this special offer on Carbon Steel Yeoman fork (digging or border) and spade (digging or border), £11.99 each or any two for £20! This is a mix and match offer.



You can have more church candles for less with this 3 for 2 Offer on Church Candles (cheapest items free) throughout December! Check our chalkboard offers in the Foyer and on our TV monitors for the latest deals (also featured on our website and Facebook page).

10 TASKS FOR LATE NOVEMBER / DECEMBER

CLEARING up the garden is something which should eventually become as accepted as an annual flu jab – just get it over with without any fuss! Tidying up is a similar occupation in early winter. Trim any overgrown hedges, particularly evergreens, divide overgrown perennials and replant healthy offshoots, clear any remaining annuals and dig over empty beds and borders. You might be able to sneak in a few Violas and winter hardy Pansies too!

LAWNS can be repaired with turf (a bit late to sow seed and expect it to germinate) and there may be the chance to cut the grass one last time before winter and we know many of you have been busily cutting into late October – crazy or what?! Before that, scarify and aerate, and repair the edges. Then clean the mower and empty its tank and put it away for winter.

CLEAN the pond (take out the pump and store it indoors for winter), scrape or hose off mould on paths, wash and disinfect dirty plant pots and containers, clean greenhouse glass. If you intend to overwinter tender plants in the greenhouse, insulate it to make sure the temperature never drops below freezing. We have bubble wrap and horticultural fleece available in the Shop if you need to replace or reinstate.

EDIBLES If you're lucky enough to have a rhubarb patch, lift and divide any clumps that are past their best. Likewise, this is a good time to establish new rhubarb crowns (pictured). Elsewhere, now is the time to plan your crop rotation, or decide what changes need to be made for the 2015 fruit and vegetable season in the garden or allotment. Refer to any notes you made through the season. Spend some time to review the varieties you grew and maybe investigate improved types by doing some catalogue research through the dark evenings, especially if diseases have blighted your crops this season.



THE BARE-ROOT season has finally begun, exceptionally late due to the mild temperatures throughout October, so there's no time to waste then to establish your new hedge, fruit trees, or ornamental trees and soft fruit which should be planted over the next few months.



Planning is essential, if you purchase your plants early, they can be easily heeled in (in a temporary trench) so you are ready to get the plants into their final planting positions when the soil and the weather is favourable. Deep trenches are not essential – a good spade's depth and 2 or 3 spades width is the ideal for hedge lines working in some planting compost or well-rooted manure into the soil as you plant. You need to boost the roots, essential for good establishment, so work in some Bonemeal into the soil as you plant your seedlings/transplants. Our normal recommendation is to apply Rootgrow too, this being especially important on those areas in the garden where hedging has already been grown in the same piece of land.

ROUTINE Keep picking the winter greens. Support Brussels sprouts and protect winter cabbage. Protect all delicate stone fruits such as Apricots, Nectarines and Peaches with horticultural fleece. The withdrawal of the popular fungicide Bordeaux Mixture back in October which aimed at controlling a number of pests and diseases (namely Powdery Mildew and Blackspot) means we'll have to be more dependent on Vitax Organic 2 in 1 Pest & Disease Control. However, worryingly there is now no fungal treatment available for both Potato and Tomato blight.

HEALTHY HOUSEPLANTS Don't overwater your indoor plants! Many plants are killed by overwatering through the winter months, so aim to keep them on the drier side, especially foliage houseplants. However, to flower well, azaleas need to be kept moist all the time, but not sitting in water. Like Cyclamen water through the bottom of the pot and allow the plant to draw up the water it requires and then remove any excess. Ensure all your plants receive as much natural daylight as possible. However, avoid moving plants too often as this can cause stress and leaf drop. Generally speaking, once a new plant is established in its new location, apart from turning it to help encourage balanced growth, it's best not moved. Popular Christmas plants such as Poinsettias, moth orchids and planted bowl displays need warmth and to be located well away from cold draughts.



BUY your fresh Christmas tree in good time – if choosing a cut tree make sure that it looks nice and green – give it a shake and avoid any that lose a lot of needles. There are many different types of tree available, however, just like last year we are stocking the low-drop Nordman Fir and Noble Fir trees. Whatever you choose cut an inch off the base of the trunk and stand your cut tree outside in a deep bucket of water for at least 24 hours before bringing it into the house. Try and find a cool spot in the house for the tree (avoid radiators!) and make sure it sits in a reservoir of water which is topped up regularly – treat the tree like a cut flower! This year will be stocking Nordman and Norway spruce Christmas trees in pots as well. Remember although these are potted, bringing

them indoors, even for a relatively short period of time will stress the plants out, so if you plan to establish the tree outdoors, keep it outdoors!
Christmas trees, both potted and freshly cut, will be available from the Garden Centre from late November onwards.

KEEP cosy this winter as temperatures start to plummet. For the cold frame and mini greenhouse there's the Parasene Cold Frame Heater (£15.72) together with a couple of larger paraffin heaters, including the popular Super Warm 4 Heater which is suitable for frost protection in greenhouses up to 4m².



If you have an electricity supply, the Botanico 2kw Greenhouse Heater has a variable heat output (1kw or 2kw) and is suitable for greenhouses up to 8ft x 10ft. Handy rolls of Gardman bubble insulation 30m long by 0.75cm wide are available at £9.99. For

individual plants we also stock the fleece jacket tubes – perfect for your palms, olives and cordylines.

LOOK out for our new display of fireside accessories for the home, including coal buckets and scuttles, tongs and companion sets, hearth fenders and ash pans. We can order other items in this range, please ask at the Customer Service Desk. We carry the usual range of open fire fuels - Kiln dried logs, Premium House Coal (20kg, £7.99) and Smokeless Coal (20kg, £9.99) as well as firelighters and kindling wood (small bag, £2.99) to help get your fire going.



WHAT'S ON



EVERY SUNDAY you can buy with confidence that your fruit and vegetables will be fresh and excellent quality from the stall which will be at the Garden Centre on Sundays (10am-4pm) as experience of buying has passed through generations of the stallholder's family. Lance and his wife who run the stall are third generation, their grandfather having started in the vegetable business in Aylesbury about 50 years ago. L. W. Smith, Fruits of

Aylesbury, are now based from Aston Clinton and they run stalls in such places as Marlow, Didcot and Wallingford.

SUNDAY 7th DECEMBER Food tasting date Sunday 7th December is our food tasting day, perfectly timed as we approach Christmas. Chafor Wines from Gawcott will be joining us together with Cottage Delight and Evershed's Cider. There will be plenty of opportunities to "taste before you buy"!

FRIDAY 12th DECEMBER Dig out a Christmas themed Jumper and help Save The Children in December.

Make sure you have the date – Friday 12th December firmly fixed so we can all get involved with this year's Christmas Jumper Day!

FRIDAY 12 DECEMBER 2014



Save the Children
CHRISTMAS JUMPER DAY

Many of the staff in the Shop, Restaurant, Plants Team, Mail-Order Department, Packing Department and Amazon Office are looking forward to taking part, so if you're planning to visit us on that Friday, please feel generous and help make a difference to the charity Save The Children. Oh, better still, get involved and don yourself a Christmas woolly and join in – the more the merrier!

SATURDAY 13th & SUNDAY 14th DECEMBER We will be delighted to welcome some members of the Great Horwood Silver Band who will be playing at the Garden Centre from 10am each day. Come and lend your support as we will be fundraising on behalf of the Breast Cancer Care throughout the weekend.

MONDAY 15th – SATURDAY 20th DECEMBER
Supper with Santa Week. Please contact Customer Service Desk for full details and to book a place. See below for the timetable for the event.



Time *	Activity	
4:00pm	Meet and Greet with our Cheeky Elf Helpers	
4:30pm	Storytelling with the Christmas Fairy	
4:45pm	Santa arrives	
5:25pm	Time to wave Santa goodbye	

*All times are approximate and subject to change

ALL DECEMBER A £5 reason to recycle your Christmas tree with us in 2014!

Buy your cut real Christmas tree from us and return it for recycling in January 2015 and we'll give you a voucher worth £5* off your next £25 or more shop with us through January 2015! Simply collect your coupon when you purchase a Noble or Nordman Fir tree, keep it safe and return it back with your tree after Christmas. Conditions apply; see coupon for full details. *The £5 Gift Voucher can be redeemed throughout January 2015.



A HUGE THANKS FOR THINKING PINK!



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Back on Friday 24th October the staff really got involved in Wear It Pink day. We'd like to say a big thank you to all our staff who made the day very pink! And thanks to all our customers who were so kind to donate to such a worthy cause. The final total raised was £234.92. Thank you!



A FEAST OF CHRISTMAS GIFT IDEAS FOR....

... **GARDENERS** From heated propagators to the glazed pots, we've plenty of ideas, including a rather smart Gardener's Hand Tool Set from Joseph Bentley, rustic metal watering cans (indoors and out), ornate house plant misters, storage jars and tins for seeds and twine. To keep tab on the winter temperature, how about a funky thermometer from The Garden Foundry?



... **PAMPERING** Pamper your skin with the new range of Royal Horticultural branded Bronnley range featured in their Natural Gardeners Therapy range which includes Revitalising Shower Wash, Moisturizing Soap Bar and Nourishing Hand Lotion. Wonderful scents from candles certainly helps you wind down from a stressful day and we've a great range of Yankee Candles available. Look out for their special Christmas scent, which include this year Angel's Wings, Candy Cane Lane and Icicles together with Cranberry Pear, Honey & Spice and Cinnamon Stick. Our special offer on a trio of hand creams from Cath Kidson makes a welcome return in December at a special price of £3.99 (usually £4.99). Keep cosy and snug with a pair of plush Wellington socks or maybe something extra special – Wool Blend Work Socks with antibacterial heel and toe treatment, perfect to pep up your aching feet!

... **WILDLIFE LOVERS** Bird food, feeding dispensers, bird houses and feeding stations, there's plenty of scope to treat your feathered friends this winter. A new nesting box? We have traditional, multi-hole and Robin nesting boxes available. Want to get up close to your birds? Well, this is possible with a *NatureWatch* Packham style nifty nesting box complete with a camera. Good news too! There has recently been a fall in the price of commodities, including some ingredients of wild bird food. This has allowed us to reduce many price without compromising on quality. Look out for special offers and price reduction signs throughout our bird food area. Prices can rise as fast as they fall. Stock up now and be prepared for a long hard winter.



... **PLANT ENTHUSIASTS** We carry a wide range of seasonal and festive houseplants from late November onwards. Popular favourites – Poinsettia, Cyclamen, Moth Orchids, Azaleas and Christmas Cacti – are available along with planted bowl arrangements and bulbs to bring colour and fragrance indoors.

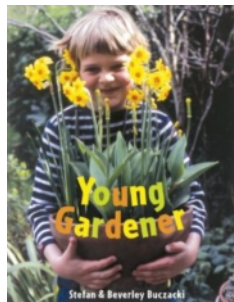


... **PERFECT GIFT** If the buying decision is too great, don't panic as we sell our own Buckingham Garden Centre Gift Vouchers and throughout December for every £10 voucher purchased you will receive a free £1 voucher to use through the month of January 2015. If you are sending to family and friends further afield, Horticultural Trade Association National Garden Vouchers are also available.

... **OUR PETS** Time to spoil our cats and dogs and we have a great range of treats, including doggie Mince Pies! We sell Christmas stockings for both, however there's no reason why you can't buy individual items and create your own canine or feline present.

A great treat for your fish would be some King British Bloodworm or why not give your goldfish a tasty Fish treat with shrimps along with various tank toys and aquatic ornaments available?

... **OUR CHILDREN** When it comes to the little ones we've a cracking range of



puzzles, games and jigsaws, all making great last minute stocking fillers. You can get the little ones into gardening with our display of kid size spades and rakes, watering cans and hand tools. There's even a children's gardeners belt in the colourful range! If you are looking for some reading material we have books galore, including activity, colouring in books as well as Christmas themed books ranging from Snowmen to Santa to Winnie-the-Pooh. One in particular we would recommend as it has some garden projects for the little ones so it is a good buy, is *The*

Young Gardener written by Stefan and Beverley Buczacki. The cost is just £3.99.

... **BAKE OFF LOVERS** Delicious Christmas fayre, jams, preserves, chutneys, honey, savoury bites, crackers, mincemeat, goose fat and all the kitchen and table accessories you could wish for makes our extended Food Hall the perfect one-stop shop this Christmas.

Beers from the Concrete Cow Brewery in Milton Keynes and The Silverstone Brewery are well worth a try together with Bedford based Evershed's Foxy and Rill Cottage Cider. We have local wines from Fleur Fields (Northamptonshire) and two great wines – Bacchus and Chardonnay from Chafor Estates, based in Gawcott, just down the road from the Garden Centre. Don't forget our tasting Sunday on 7th December between 10am-4pm.

... **CHRISTMAS MENU** Our Restaurant, The Gardener's Retreat, has a delicious festive menu, including a full Homemade Christmas Menu. The Christmas Menu runs from 12.00-2:30pm Monday - Friday from 1st December. Reservations are being taken now. Don't forget we have our daily specials board. We serve a full breakfast and lunch menu as well as a wide selection of speciality teas and coffees as well as delicious homemade cakes for a special treat.





The Gardeners' Retreat

HOMEMADE

CHRISTMAS MENU

(From 1st - 24th December*)

STARTERS

TOMATO & BASIL SOUP,
served with an Artisan Roll
or CHICKEN LIVER PATE, with Toast and Chutney

MAINS

ROAST TURKEY, with Seasonal Vegetables**
and all the festive Trimmings,
or MUSHROOM, CASHEW, CHESTNUT &
PARSNIP ROAST served with Roast
Potatoes, Seasonal Vegetables** and Mushroom Gravy.

DESSERTS

CHRISTMAS PUDDING,
served with Brandy Butter or Custard,
or FESTIVE ICE CREAM

Followed by COFFEE & MINCE PIE

3 COURSES - £18.95 per head***

2 COURSES - £14.95 per head***

*Tentative Menu available
Monday-Friday, 12.00 - 2.30 from 1st December.
**Burgundy, Pinot Noir, Pinot Gris, Cabernet Sauvignon.
***Applies to pre-booked meals only.

RESERVATIONS BEING TAKEN NOW!

WE'RE GOING TO BE OUT & ABOUT IN 2015

We have a list of potential garden visits planned for 2015 at the Customer Service Desk and if you are happy to register your interest on these then we can plan for them in the New Year. We need around 25 guests for a viable visit, so please let us know which of the garden visits interests you. The list of venues includes Highclere Castle and Gardens and Exhibition, Beth Chatto Garden, Barnsdale, The Shrewsbury Flower Show, Highgrove, Steane Park Gardens, Hidcote Manor & Kiftsgate Manor, Batsford Arboretum & Mill Dean Garden, Bransford Webbs Nursery & Webbs of Wychbold Garden Centre, The Oxford Botanical Gardens / Harcourt Arboreteum, Anglesey Abbey Gardens & Scotsdale Garden Centre.

SUPPORT THE BUCKINGHAM TACHED GARDENERS

Throughout November Team Captain Chris Day has been leading The Buckingham Tached Gardeners featuring Peter Brown, Ed Beach, Mick Collins, Ollie Hayward, Ian Price and Ben Turns who have been growing our moustaches for Movember. We do hope you can support this excellent charity, which tackles men's health, namely in helping tackle prostate and testicular cancer as well as mental health. You can make a pledge through the Movember donation site, or simply make a donation in the collection box located at the Customer Service Desk, Restaurant and Plant Office.



AND FINALLY...

Back in September for a third year, the popular Horticultural Trade Association Design A Christmas Card was launched. Incredibly some 10,000 youngsters from all over the UK took part in the national competition. We contacted over 20 schools in the immediate area to try and encourage local children to participate. We were delighted to hear that in the Schools category, Emily (Wright), age 10, who entered via Buckingham Garden Centre, from St James and St John Church of England Primary School, Buckingham, has won the main prize - £1,000 National Garden Gift Vouchers for her school. Emily will also get to see her festive design printed and used (pictured right).



We'll have more on this in our next newsletter...

Buckingham Nurseries & 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: 10:00am-4:00pm