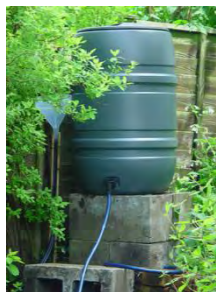


NEWSLETTER

May & June 2012



GARDENERS TO WATER WISELY THIS YEAR



From my 30 odd years of gardening, the best way to beat a drought is to talk about it, writes Chris Day. **Back in the 1990's** when I worked on *Amateur Gardening*, the popular weekly magazine, an impending drought resulted in us journalists quickly writing a 12-page Drought Special Supplement for the magazine. Suffice to say, three weeks later when the issue finally appeared **on the bookstands it began to rain and didn't stop for the rest of the year!** Oh, how we laughed! So, perhaps writing this will be a positive omen, but I think not this time around. We are all aware that the past two years have been incredibly dry, and we appear



to be following a parallel with the infamous 1976 drought.

Now I remember that drought. It was the first year on my allotment behind our house; I became a dab hand at siphoning the bath water and using other grey water. The peas, beans, potatoes and lettuce loved it; the spinach and cabbage went to seed! A massive water-saving campaign was launched and gardens suffered.

So, nearly 40 years on are we any the wiser? Well, certainly we use water far more carefully as many of us are already metered, our plant establishment knowledge is greater as we know about water-retaining granules (Broadleaf P9 and Swel Gel), how planting composts help the establishment of roots, the overriding benefits of using friendly fungi and the importance of using landscape fabrics and mulches to help reduce water loss from the soil.

So, as the hosepipe ban came into force at the beginning of April, we simply need to be **savvier with the water we use. It's not all bad news. We still can water our gardens with watering cans** (well, plenty of them and we predict a shortage!) and, if you use or invest in a micro-irrigation system (such as the Hozelock kit, pictured right), these can be used as well. However, seep hose is a no-no, which is a shame as these use water pretty efficiently.



Here are a few tips to help you this summer...

- Grey water can be used **so long as it doesn't contain bleach or detergents, soaps are generally okay.** Water harvested off roofs and stored in water butts is good; however poor rainfall means the water butts are likely to remain empty for some time.
- **As far as what to water, it's simple...** any newly-planted trees, hedges, fruit and bedding plants need moisture to fully establish their roots so these must have priority. Existing plants will survive, albeit trees may shed their leaves earlier as a form of self-**preservation.** **You'll lose the odd plant;** we just have to accept it.
- Planted containers should be mulched once they have been thoroughly watered after planting, again this will help reduce water loss from the soil.
- Most lawns and established trees and shrubs don't need watering. Concentrate what water you have on newly-planted stock.
- The best times to apply water in the garden are early morning or better still, early evening. Watering in full sun makes the water evaporate and you could damage the plants by scorching them.
- Why not plant some drought resistant flowers this summer? Opt for hardy ones and good varieties to grow include Buddleja, Lavender, Poppies and Rosemary. Generally these plants are sun-loving and they will give you a great display. Fancy some drought resistant greenery for your garden? Why not plant Abelia, Elaeagnus, Hebe, Nandina domestica and Olearia for their fine foliage.
- And finally, to save flushing the loo why not **adopt what the National Trust's Wimpole Estate do. It's a rather unusual practise allowing male members of the Estate to relieve themselves onto straw bales in a secluded part of the garden.** By answering the call of nature outside it saves both on water and energy used in flushing the lavatory. Urine will speed up the chemical process in the compost heap, making it a better fertiliser to **help grow your fruit, flowers and vegetables. So successful has been the "pee bale", over recent years, that over 20 male staff are being encouraged to use it! Now that's guaranteed to get those curtains twitching!** Remember every time you flush the loo you can use anything from four and a half to nine litres of water each time, but what many people do not realise is that this water is treated to the same standard as drinking water!



WE'RE BUZZING WITH EXCITEMENT.....

This week-end (mid-April) we should be setting up our first bee hive at the Garden Centre. We have been reading article after article about the decline in the bee population in this country and the various reasons or speculations for this. The one fact which cannot be denied is that if you have the possibility of creating a home for honey bees you should look seriously at the possibility of doing this.



We are fortunate to have contact with a very keen and knowledgeable conservationist, who is also an experienced bee keeper, so we have had many meetings with him to enable us to plan a safe position for a hive at the Garden Centre and a programme of maintenance. The hive has arrived and, all being well, will be erected next week-end. The area has been prepared, near where we usually have our demonstration gardens, and the hive will be a permanent feature. In the summer the bees will be able to pollinate the vegetables in the demonstration gardens, plus all the fruit trees on the Plant Area, and of course they will be gathering nectar from the many 'bee friendly' plants in the Garden Centre. We are already fortunate to have plenty of bumble bees around, as customers will be aware as there is often a wonderful buzzing around nectar rich

flowers which are open in the selling area. Later in the year these will be augmented by our own honey bees.

The bees themselves may not arrive for a few weeks as we have to await a suitable swarm, but as those who are familiar with bees know they are always **intent in their 'work' and if not interfered** with are totally harmless – they know that if they sting they die!

When our hive is active we intend to invite schools to bring along groups of children to witness the regular maintenance of the hive. Our bee-keeper is keen to talk to the children to make sure they really understand the importance of **these amazing insects. We may also arrange for illustrated 'bee talks' for adults.** Watch this space – we are really excited about this new venture and hope you will join us in taking an interest in the progress of our bees.



YOUR CHANCE TO GROW & TRY!

Many of our local customers will have met Thompson and Morgan's vegetable expert Colin Randel at our Potato Week-end and know of his infectious enthusiasm for growing as many vegetables as possible, writes Pauline Brown. **In fact, lots of you should be preparing to plant your 'Oca',** *Oxalis tuberosa*, which he persuaded over fifty of you to have a go at growing for the first time this year. (I was one of those gullible gardeners and will report back on my results in the autumn!).

Well, I was chatting to Colin recently and mentioned the article I wrote about Mooli in the January-February Newsletter and he thoroughly agreed that it was a vegetable well worth growing and not known enough to many veggie gardeners. He has, in fact, been trying to develop or find a variety which does not grow quite as large as he feels that some may be put off by the vigour of the one most commonly grown. I personally, being a lazy gardener, appreciate getting really good sized, sweet and juicy radish which do not bolt or go woody and are so good in salads or in a stir fry. **It saves time harvesting and cleaning the crop! Albeit, one needs to grow 'ordinary' radish as well for quick early crops, but I find they grow really well in spring and early summer when there is usually plenty of moisture in the soil and the dreaded flea beetles are not active, whereas in late summer Mooli is a better crop.**

Colin, like us, is keen to get this great vegetable more commonly grown so we have, with the sponsorship of Thompson and Morgan, a hundred packets of Radish Mooli 'Neptune' F1 Hybrid, worth £3.99, to give away.

100 PACKETS OF MOOLI SEEDS TO GIVE AWAY



We've teamed up with Thompson & Morgan Seeds to offer 100 of our Garden Card holders a chance to receive a FREE packet of Mooli seeds, perfect for sowing a little later in the year. Please note: Only one packet per Garden Card. The offer is based on a first-come, first-served basis. Please ask at our plant information office for your free packet of seeds.

The seeds do not need sowing until between May and early August and they prefer a well drained, rich fertile soil to reach their full potential, but they will produce a worthwhile crop even if conditions are not perfect. There are

about 100 seeds in a packet, most of which will germinate, so if you have a young family who enjoy helping why not give them a few to sow, as they germinate readily. Although they take longer to mature than 'ordinary' radish they are much sweeter in flavour than the sometimes hot flavour of 'ordinary' radish so children are more likely to enjoy eating them sliced raw, grated or if they are put in a stir fry.

So, thanks to Thompson and Morgan's generosity, you can pick up your packet, have the fun of watching them grow bigger and bigger, or if you are impatient pick them early, then enjoy crunching your way through your Mooli – and I would be very surprised if you will not be growing them every year in the future.

WINNING WAYS WITH COLOUR

Would you cringe at a red, white and blue themed garden? Be honest now, how patriotic would you have to be to fly the flag? As we are celebrating all that is British this summer, the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and London 2012, will you be bringing out the bunting and planting themed pots and baskets this year?, asks Chris Day.



So, where do we start! Well, if you happen to live in a house or business lining the route of the Olympic Torch Relay, the recommendation is to plant yellow-themed flowers such as African or French Marigolds. Apparently the Ancient Greeks believed that marigolds were a symbol of good luck! Other suggestions include positioning window boxes right down your street, alternating in red, white and blue. Grow a Union Jack with red, white and blue petunias or embrace the Olympic spirit by planting all five interlocking Olympic Rings (blue, yellow, black, green and red on a white background such as white stones). I suspect you'll need an angled site and a reasonably sized area to achieve the effect from a distance. However, an inventive Cricket Club in Fareham and Crofton (pictured) decided to celebrate the London 2012 Games with glorious

spring bulbs just a few weeks ago!

As for the Queen's Jubilee Weekend which falls in early June, seize the opportunity by planting patriotic Petunias, Verbena and Lobelia to create a fitting display. With the dreaded mildew affecting impatiens (Busy Lizzies) I'd be tempted to opt for red and white Begonia semperflorens instead, perhaps combining say Ageratum or Lobelia to provide the useful blue component to the display.

However, simply selecting your own coloured themed flowers and pick and mixing them to effect is much more fun. Remember the plants don't necessarily need to be bedding plants; you can use perennials (herbaceous plants) as well, as many of them provide a long flowering season.

Here are a few others for your consideration...

RED: Antirrhinum, Begonia, Cosmos 'Sonata', Dahlia, Fuchsia, Lobelia, Marigold, Pansy, Pelargonium, Petunia, Salvia, Sweet Peas, Verbena and Viola.

WHITE: Alyssum, Antirrhinum, Bacopa, Begonia, Cosmos 'Sonata', Fuchsia, Lobelia, Nicotiana, Pansy, Pelargonium, Stocks, Verbena and Viola.

BLUE: Ageratum, Aster, Campanula, Lobelia, Nigella, Pansy, Petunia, Phlox, Salvia, Sweet Peas and Violas.

Finally, what are you planning to do this summer with patriotic flowers? Do share your photos with us for inclusion in a later newsletter.



TASTY NEW GARDEN CENTRE FEATURE BEGINS TO GROW

By the end of the year we shall have, all being well, a really good FOOD HALL, up and running, which will be situated on the right hand side of the entrance with the wonderful display of Stow Green, Cotswold Range's wooden and other kitchen goods already in stock – bread bins, spoons and spatulas, mug racks, cheese stores, chopping boards, oil jars, knife and spice racks and the very popular maple wood nail brushes! Come and have a browse when you are in next.

The idea of the food hall is to stock it with really good quality local products, organically produced where possible, plus a range of ready-made meals produced from our popular 'Gardeners' Retreat Restaurant'. However, whilst getting refrigerators organised and suppliers of goods which need these cooled facilities, we have begun to introduce some goods which are happy with ambient temperatures. Here are some already in stock:

Teapigs Tea Bags – Teapigs have been on a mission to get the nation drinking real tea again. 165 million cups of tea are drunk in the UK every day, versus only 70 million cups of coffee, yet tea usually gets less attention. Co-founder of Teapigs, Louise, has been a tea taster for 9 years and has travelled the world sourcing and drinking all kinds of teas. The result is a range of the best whole leaf tea and infusions you'll find as they contain only the best quality whole leaf teas, whole herbs, whole berries and whole flowers – no dusty stuff in sight! The tea comes in 'tea temples' – a 100% biodegradable mesh bag that give the whole leaves all the room they need to infuse properly. These



were in stock for just over a week and we had to put in a new order as people who already know the quality of the Teapigs were delighted to be able to buy this product locally!

Cotswold Gold Rapeseed Oil - This extra virgin cold pressed rapeseed oil is produced at East Lodge Farm in Broadway in the Cotswolds. The oil is rich in Omega 3, 6 and 9, high in Vitamin E, has only 0.1% cholesterol, half the saturated fat of Olive Oil, has a high burning point, is 100% British and is GM free. Also, of course, to get to our shop there are very low food miles involved. It is ideal for frying, dressings, roasting and marinating. Apart from the pure oil, there is also a range of infused oils – basil, chilli, cumin, dill, garlic, lemon, rosemary and smoked – these are delicious and make excellent dressings. Cotswold Gold is proud to have recently won a gold star with the Great Taste Awards.



Cotswold Flour – Matthews, The Cotswold Flour Mills for 100 years, are situated on the edge of the beautiful Cotswold Hills in the village of Shipton under Wychwood. They mill locally grown English wheats, as well as wheats from the rest of the World. Good flour makes good food! We have selected six different varieties to stock including traditional varieties and flours for bread making. Rollright Plain and Rollright Self-raising and Bakers' White (Windrush) are all 100% UK wheat. For brown flours there is Cotswold Farmhouse, a premium grade, 100% extraction wholemeal flour with an exceptionally high protein level, Cotswold Crunch, a connoisseurs blend of strong white flour, malt flour, malted wheat flakes and rye flour, and Cotswold Eight Grain, a special blend of strong white flour, flakes and seeds for full flavour and high fibre product. The last two have both won the 'Great Taste Gold Award'.

Jams and Chutneys – Already proving very popular is the Mrs. Bridges' range of Chutneys, Preserves and Marmalades. So many interesting and different flavours to choose from in the individual jars, or for the perfect gift, a jute bag collection.

Traditional Sweets – Mrs. Bridges' traditional sweets, which, unlike most sweets, contain no artificial colours, are in attractive jars, which when the sweets are gone, make really useful containers for the kitchen!

The range of foods will be increasing month by month, so every time you call come and see what we have added!

THE 'INS' AND 'OUTS' TO OUR ENTRANCE CHANGES

As many of you will have seen, significant changes to the approach and exit of the Garden Centre are in progress. The work, hopefully not too disruptive, includes a dedicated Goods Inward/Exit for our delivery vehicles, essential highway updates as well as a change to our current entrance. All in all, it should mean a much improved access and allow our customers easier entrance and exit of our premises.

Our expanded car park is certainly helping with the increased traffic after our re-development and this included a number of disabled spaces as well as a loading bay, again for ease of access for bulkier items. The original car park will be eventually updated once the changes to the entrance/exit have been completed. We do thank you for your patience whilst all this work is being carried out. It is due for completion early July.

TASTY CROPS TO 'GROW YOUR OWN'

There's never been a better time to grow your own crops and we are at full capacity with our new 6-plant pack vegetables, which are now in stock and were requested by you, our customers, last year! Each 6-pack costs £2.99 or any two for £5.00 (pictured here with Patrick who looks after our Grow Your Own Range). This gives you the opportunity to 'pick and mix' with the extensive range, which includes tasty baby leaf types. We are still carrying the 12-pack range too, at £3.49 for those customers requiring greater numbers of specific varieties.

Other in-house promotions include 3 for £10 on the 1-litre shrubs. 1-litre perennials, £2.99 each or any 3 for £8. Suttons Grafted Vegetables: 3 for £10. Look out for more promotions on your next visit.



ROSY SHOW WINNERS



Wollerton Old Hall

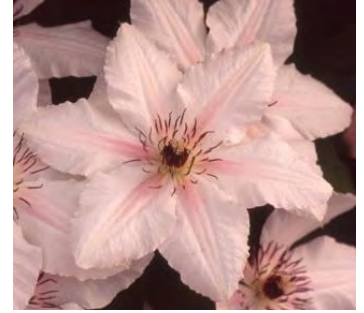
As the flower show curtain raiser starts with RHS Chelsea in late May, the catwalk for all the new plants begins in earnest. We'll have some new roses from David Austin Roses. Interestingly the new varieties they launch at the show take around 12 months to filter through to Garden Centres. So the new ones including Rose 'William and Catherine', 'Lady Salisbury', 'Wollerton Old Hall' and 'Queen Anne' were actually given their



William & Catherine

first public airing last year!

My two favourites from this blossoming batch were 'William and Catherine' and 'Wollerton Old Hall'. As we all know, David Austin Roses are famed for their fragrance and unfortunately no number of words could ever describe this. 'William and Catherine' starts as a soft creamy apricot and then fades to cream then pure white with the fragrance of myrrh. Similarly 'Wollerton Old Hall' undergoes colour changes as the flower fades from rich buttery yellow to a softer creamy colour. Its distinctive strong scent is of myrrh, so position this one where it can be appreciated. We'll have new stocks of David Austin Roses coming in throughout the spring and summer.



The top clematis grower and breeder from Guernsey, Raymond Evison, never disappoints at Chelsea. He's picked up a staggering 23 RHS Gold Medals over the years. Do look out for his new introductions, including Clematis 'Alaina', 'The Countess Of Wessex' (pictured right) and 'Zara'. These will be available shortly.

UNWANTED WEE-LKIES!



Do you love your dog, but hate the unsightly brown spots on the lawn where he or she has urinated? Bitches are usually more of a problem in this respect than male dogs, says Peter Mason. Paradoxically, urine contains urea, which is a good nitrogenous fertiliser, but it is too strong. Urine also contains salt, which kills the existing grass and prevents replacement grass from establishing. If possible, the best approach is to find somewhere that the dog can "go" without causing a problem, and to train him or her to use it. If you see an accident happen on the lawn, water the spot copiously to dilute the urine. The grass will not be seriously damaged then.

If, despite this, you have spots to repair, at last, there is an easy solution. Scotts have introduced Patch Magic Dog Spot Repair. Like the original Patch Magic, it contains grass seed and coir, which is a super absorbent growing material that provides the perfect environment for new seeds to grow. The difference is that it also contains gypsum to help rebalance the soil nutrient levels, and the grass seed used is highly salt tolerant.

A 1293g jug treats up to 130 spots of 16cm diameter for £12.99.

AQUATICS UPDATE: TANK SPRUCE-UP TIME!



It's a busy time in the Aquatics Department at the moment, writes Danielle Homewood. We have the new Biorb (Reef One) Product range in and these are well worth a look. We are now stocking the Biorb Flow Aquarium together with the range of Biorb ornaments, accessories and décor. These have just arrived and are now presented on a lovely new merchandising stand.

Reef One have also designed 'Expression' Cards. These are available for customers to pick up as and when they would like help to design the interior décor of their aquarium. This is a fantastic idea for customers to get creative with their tanks and create the 'look' they would like. The cards offer suggestions using various ornaments and décor products and show customers where to put the particular décor products and ornaments to create the same look. We have at least 10

cards available with different style suggestions on each and we are also stocking the relevant products that the cards are recommending for you to try. We think this is a really great idea. If you would like to read more about these two new products, then



the link, below, will be useful; <http://www.biorb.co.uk>

Elsewhere in the Aquatics Department the full pond plant range is neatly displayed on purpose-built benches, and we are well stocked with marginals, such as Iris, Caltha, pre-planted 7-litre Contour baskets, deep water oxygenators and miniature lilies (Pygmies Lilies) in 1-litre Baskets. A full range of deep water lilies in 3-litre baskets as well as a full range of deep water plants are available. Also, now in stock is a good selection of Ramshorn Snails, Trapdoor Snails and Mussels, plus many more for establishing in ponds now. Please do ask for advice on these if you are unsure.

The late spring frosts did delay the delivery of floating pond plants including Water Hyacinth, Water Soldiers, Water Lettuce, Water Butterfly Wings and others, but they are now available

We now have new point of sale boards which provide customers with extensive



information about which plants they should be selecting to suit their pond, the correct depth they should be placed and general information on the seasonal plants we will have available. We hope you find this additional information helpful when it comes to selecting the right plants for your new or existing pond.

GARDEN VISITS & TALKS – UPDATES

Don't forget our visit to Great Dixter Garden & House (pictured) on Wednesday 15th August 2012. The £40 cost includes return coach travel to Great Dixter and admission to the garden and the House Tour.

We still have a few spaces available for our second Highgrove Gardens visit this year on Tuesday 25th September 2012. The cost is £48 and this includes transport, entrance and guided tour of the private gardens of HRH The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall.

For further details and to book, please contact our Customer Service Desk or call us on (01280) 822133.

Our monthly Garden Talks have moved to 4:30pm on Wednesday afternoons due to the ongoing sound issues in our Talks Room.

Our Speaker on Wednesday 9th May will be **Léonie Thorgood** and she will be talking about "The Making of the Hill House Garden & Some of What Went Before". Léonie will discuss the plants, the planting and the ethos surrounding her third of an acre town garden on the old castle walls in Buckingham. **Léonie's wonderful garden will be open in aid of The National Garden Scheme later in May – see below.**

Our Wednesday 13th June talk sees **BGC's Chris Day** returning with his updated and popular talk, **The A-Z of Fool-Proof Gardening**. This talk covers absolutely everything you need to know about gardening at this time of the year and as ever new plants, ideas and the latest gardening trends make for an entertaining talk.

Locally, two Buckingham Gardens (Hill House & Walnut Yard) will be open in aid of the National Gardens Scheme on Saturday 19th and Sunday 20th May, 1pm-6pm. Admission: £4 adults, Children Free. Plants for sale and cream teas too. Sadly, due to the recent death of Paul Burns, 10 Well Street will not be open as part of the Buckingham Garden Group, as published in The Yellow Book 2012.

10 TASKS FOR MAY/JUNE

MAY and June sees exuberant growth on many plants, so the need to stake has to be the first priority, especially with many perennials. Ones to lend a helping hand to include Poppies, Delphiniums and Lupins, but many will take care of themselves. A framework of **twiggy hazel or pea sticks is ideal, or one of the "Grow Thru Frame" systems** which will make the task easier in the long term.

SOW seeds of biennials to flower in spring 2013 now. Most, like Wallflowers, Bellis daisies, Foxgloves, Honesty, Poppies, Primroses, **Polyanthus and Violas can be sown straight into a nursery border. Do this and you'll save £££s** next year.

ROSE CARE: Complete last-minute pruning and tidying of climbers and ramblers, especially if die-back is evident. Likewise, if you are planting new roses, add Rootgrow to the planting hole. Roses are gross feeders so get them off to a good start by working in plenty of organic matter as well. Our Tree, Shrub & Rose Planting Compost will do the **trick together with a dusting of Bonemeal. It's also time** to think about spraying roses to control the main problems affecting them, namely aphids, mildew, rust and black spot. The best option is Roseclear Ultra, an excellent combined insecticide and fungicide. The 1-litre ready to use gun is £4.99 and the 200ml concentrate is £7.99. Prevention is often better than cure when it comes to diseases, especially mildew, so spray climbing honeysuckles too as the deciduous named varieties can be susceptible to this. Westland Plant Rescue Control concentrate (Difenoconazole) can be used on ornamentals, apples, pears and fruiting quince as well as grape vines.

HEDGING Boost newly-planted hedging stock with a feed of Vitax Q4 or a slow-release fertiliser such as Osmocote. Unlike other years when winter rains would have normally leached out valuable plant foods, this year it is not the case, but we still have to keep plants stress-free if your plants are to grow healthily this season. When applying any feed, do make sure the soil in the immediate root zone is well watered. Evergreens such as Box, Laurel, Leylandii and Yew can be trimmed from June until late summer. Deciduous hedges can also be cut, but often it is best to do them from July onwards as you may not want to cut back any flowers at the expense of losing valuable berry colour later on and of course nesting birds will have flown their nests by then.

TIME to perform the Chelsea Chop! So-called because it is usually carried out at the end of May, to coincide with the Chelsea Flower Show! Basically it is a pruning method by which you limit the size and control the flowering of many herbaceous plants. It works especially well on Anthemis tinctoria, Echinacea purpurea, Helenium, Phlox paniculata, Sedum (mainly the tall growing varieties like 'Autumn Joy') and Solidago. Plants are simply cut back by a half or one-third (depending on the vigour) with shears or secateurs with the aim to keep the plants shorter and



more compact, yet delaying flowering until later in the summer. This is useful if you have clumps of the same plant and want to help stagger the flowering times.

SOW salads (Beetroot, Lettuce, Spring Onions and Radish etc) in short rows to ensure continuity of crops. Early May is the latest to get your maincrop potatoes in the ground. Keep earthing up your potatoes as they appear through the soil to avoid any late frosts damaging the delicate shoots. As soon as the last frosts pass, consider planting out your tender vegetable plants – Aubergines, Cucumbers, Marrows, Melons, Peppers and Tomatoes. Under glass establish them in some new compost and outdoors find a warm and sunny border or patio, preferably South or West facing, for them to be positioned. We have a fantastic range of tomatoes again this season, including the new Turbo Grafted Tomatoes from Suttons.

CLIMBERS Do make sure newly planted climbers are coaxed into position as they send their vigorous shoots in all directions. They may need a helping hand with a simple tie of raffia, whilst others with a twining habit might need simple guidance. Prune winter and spring-flowering Clematis such as 'Winter Beauty' and Clematis armandii now if they're out-growing their support. The popular Clematis montana can be pruned back directly after flowering in early June.

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.



KEEP any new fruit trees well watered in hot weather. Remove any blossom or fruits during the first year to focus the plant's energy on developing roots and forming stem framework. Elsewhere, make sure developing fruits, especially Raspberries and Strawberries are netted to keep the birds away.

HARDEN off your half-hardy bedding plants by leaving them outside for the day and bringing them under cover at night. Do this for 7-10 days before planting out into beds, containers and hanging baskets. It is always worth having some horticultural fleece to hand for covering plants just in case Jack Frost makes an untimely appearance.

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SUMMER OPENING HOURS: Mon.-Sat: 8:30am-6.00pm, Sun: 10am-4pm

GARDENERS' RETREAT RESTAURANT: New extended hours from Mon. 30th April:

Mon.-Sat: 9:30am-5.00pm, Sun: 10am-4pm

