

East Reading Horticultural Society

NEWSLETTER

January 2023

Trading shed: Sat, Sun, Mon (Tue if Mon is a bank holiday) 09:30 to 11:00.

Wed evenings - April and May only - 18:30 to 19:30. Mobile number: 0738 463 2903.

Note: Shed helpers are not all young, big, and strong so, if you need to get heavy items, please try to bring someone with you to help with the lifting.

Web site: www.erhs.org.uk

Facebook Group: "East Reading Horticultural Society"

Editor: Tel: 07794 233361, Email: ERHS@hotmail.co.uk

{Get your newsletter early (and in colour): ask to be added to the ERHS email list.}



1. PROGRAMME EVENTS



TUESDAY 6TH DECEMBER 2022

Christmas Show and Social Event

The committee were delighted that well over 40 members took part and attended the Christmas social. Fun and frivolity were predicted, and we are confident that everyone who came enjoyed the refreshments, the singing, the quizzes, the voting, and, naturally, the fun and frivolity. Thanks must be offered to Carole, the show secretary, Neal the whizzy IT man and Brenda for organising the prize money envelopes so well that the show section of the evening went so well.

The committee would also like to recognise the enthusiasm and commitment of members for submitting entries for the show.

I would also like to thank all the committee members who helped make the evening go so well.

John Peacock.

TUESDAY 17TH JANUARY 2023

Our first talk of the new year was originally intended for 20th September 2022 by Ailsa Claybourn, who had to postpone due to Covid.

The talk is about "Birds of Berkshire". Ailsa says she has been mad about birds since she was knee-high to a House Sparrow! Her dad was a keen naturalist who shared his interest with her sisters and her. After reading English at university, she worked for the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust and the RSPB before becoming a teacher. For several years, she has been a regular volunteer for the British Trust for Ornithology and the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Berkshire Wildlife Trust, conducting bird surveys for both and running courses for BBOWT.

When she retired from teaching, she set up Ailsa's Walks and Talks to share her passion for nature, and to raise awareness and understanding of the wonders and vulnerability of the natural world around us.

We are hoping for a good turnout for this fascinating event. As always, there will be refreshments and a raffle.

Scheduled 2023

21st Feb: 81st AGM

21st Mar*: talk "Gardening for well-being"

18th Apr*: talk "Fuchsias"

*Note: Dates marked with * are incorrect on your membership cards.*

2. TRADING MATTERS



The trading shed will reopen at 0930 on Saturday 14th January 2023.

(Use of a face covering is optional.

Shed stewards: Please still open the double doors at the far end, to keep a through flow of air.)

Note: The Suttons Seeds catalogues are now in the trading shed.

Potatoes should be available in the trading shed from the date the shed reopens.

We are always looking for help to man the shed on any Saturday and Sunday - please leave your name and contact details at the shed if you can help.

We are now looking for reindeer manure!

Many thanks to the volunteers for stocktaking.

Trevor Wilson.

Geoff Ruffles' Tools

The committee would like to invite members to make an early visit to the trading shed, in January, where you will find gardening items from Geoff's garden shed. His family are very keen and hopeful that Geoff's tools and equipment will have an extended life in other gardeners' sheds, allotments and gardens. So, we are all invited to view and maybe pay for something. Any donation members wish to give will be sent to the RNLI.

Card reader for the shed - update

It was triumphantly announced at the Christmas social that we had a card reader in the shed and our thanks were directed to Brenda Hayes, our treasurer, for organising the arrival of the device. When the chairman was first to use it on the 10th of December, the device failed! Apparently, these devices do not like extreme weather and -3°C overnight had certainly upset the machine. Brenda has ordered a new one and where it lives between shed opening times will be discussed at the January committee meeting.

3. MISCELLANEA

Next Committee Meeting:

7:30 p.m. - Monday 9th January 2023 at the CResCent Resource Centre. (Warbler Drive, Earley, RG6 4HB)

Shed stewards and assistants this month.

14th t.b.a

15th t.b.a

21st t.b.a

22nd t.b.a

28th t.b.a

29th t.b.a

Volunteer Newsletter Distributors

On behalf of the Committee, I would like to offer a big vote of thanks to those members who responded to the appeal, in the December Newsletter, for Newsletter Distributors. Their help is much appreciated. Malcolm Iosson.

Stocktaking Volunteers

I would like to thank all members who volunteered to help Trevor Wilson and me to compile stocktaking data, whether or not we needed you to join us in the trading shed this week.

Those who came on Tuesday were so enthusiastic and efficient, we didn't need to call people in for a second day. The small amount of work remaining was quickly done by Trevor and me the next day.

Thanks again to Trudi Rehman, Penny Lowndes, Peter Scott, John Peacock, David Quinnell, Mike Fewtrell and Ian Hayward. Neal Stockwell.

Planned Visits in 2023

The committee is planning a coach visit to Exbury Gardens, Hampshire in late April or early May. This is the time for their wonderful azaleas and rhododendrons and hopefully the railway might be operating too. Details of this proposed visit will be in the February newsletter.

Things to do this month



1. Tidy up the borders

The first job in the garden involves a bit of tidying up. When you cut back your borders, make sure to remove any dead and unsightly plants as these can harbour diseases.

Cutting back may leave you with some empty spaces, especially if you lost many plants in the summer heatwave. Why not replant with some pansies, wallflowers and hellebores. Or there are some great shrubs that will continue to give you winter interest year after year like daphne, dogwood, sarcococca and witch hazel. Clematis cirrhosa, with its freckled flowers, is a good choice if you'd like a winter flowering climber.

Cut back herbaceous perennials at the front of borders or in view of the house to keep things looking neat, but do leave some that are tucked away as they make good winter habitats for wildlife, and you can cut those back in the spring.

2. Tackle the lawn

The next area to work on is the lawn. If you have not already done so this is the last good opportunity to rake out any dead thatch and moss. If the soil is compacted where you regularly walk, push in a fork and wiggle it around a bit to let in some air. If your soil is heavy or gets waterlogged, brush in some sand to help drainage. Lastly, trim the edges. If there is one job above all others that improves the look of the garden, this is it!

3. Plant your spring bulbs

November is a great time to plant tulips - there are so many delightful colours and forms available these days - just remember to plant them deep. A favourite is the purple flowered 'Queen of Night' which you can plant in pots. As with all pots they benefit from pot feet for good drainage.

4. Tend to the pond

Clean up ponds, water features and bird baths before adding a ball or plastic bottle with a few stones in it. This is to help ensure that the surface doesn't completely freeze over, essential if you have fish, but it also alleviates pressure on the sides which can get damaged when the water freezes.

5. A little TLC

One job many of us forget, is sorting out the garden furniture. For wooden tables and chairs that are left out this means a quick wash down and then applying an appropriate treatment. Use teak oil for hardwood furniture as it conditions the wood and helps waterproof it. On metal just brush off any algae to stop it building up. On plastic use white vinegar or baking soda before covering, stacking or tying up chairs to stop them blowing around.

4. WANTED/FOR SALE/FREE

Members' advertisements are free of charge. Just telephone or email the editor (see newsletter heading.)

[Copy deadline for next newsletter: Wednesday 25th January 2023.](#)

Nothing received this month.

Unless otherwise stated, where items are free, a donation to the Air Ambulance (when you next visit the trading shed) would be appreciated.