

# East Reading Horticultural Society

NEWSLETTER

August 2023

Trading shed opening times: Saturday and Sunday from 09:30 to 11:00 and  
Wednesdays (in April and May only) from 18:30 to 19:30.

**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.

Shed mobile number: 0738 463 2903. Web site: [www.erhs.org.uk](http://www.erhs.org.uk)

Facebook Group: "East Reading Horticultural Society"

Editor: Tel: 07794 233361, Email: [ERHS@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:ERHS@hotmail.co.uk)

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



## 1. PROGRAMME EVENTS



**SATURDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2023**

### Autumn Show

Not many weeks now to go before the show. This year we would like this to be an extra special celebration of our gardening, cooking, baking, artistic and floral art skills, so we can all celebrate our achievements in Earley St Peter's church hall in mid-September. If you forgot to put a red ring around 16th September on your calendar last month, please do it very soon after you have read this article. Thank you. C'mon ERHS membership! You can do this! Even if you don't enter something, come and have a cup of tea and cake and see what others have produced.

Show schedules are in the trading shed and have been emailed to all members on our email list. They can also be downloaded from our website or requested by email (see the newsletter heading).

**There are still 47 days from 1<sup>st</sup> August.**

You might be amazed to know that we got in touch with the weather gods to ask them to provide better weather for you this year, and we think they have listened. Now we really hope that you will want to take part this year as your gardens and allotments will be thriving with the recent, and welcome sun and rain.

**Previous trophy winners: Please return your trophies to the trading shed, or to 9 Wychwood Close, no later than Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> September.**

*Remember, there are classes for everyone.*

### Scheduled events 2023-2024

- 19<sup>th</sup> Sep: talk "Wildlife in the UK". Tom Way is a really good speaker, with great pictures. *This is an occasion not to be missed!*
- 17<sup>th</sup> Oct: talk "National Trust Gardens and Parks"
- 21<sup>st</sup> Nov: talk "Thames Crossings"
- 5<sup>th</sup> Dec: Christmas Social
- 16<sup>th</sup> Jan: talk "First Responders"
- 20<sup>th</sup> Feb: Annual General Meeting
- 19<sup>th</sup> Mar: talk "Spring Gardening"

## 2. TRADING MATTERS



The trading shed has been very quiet this month, but we are getting stocked up ready for autumn.

If anyone has any stones or gravel that would help to fill the holes in the access road to the shed, please drop them off. Many thanks to those that have already delivered stones to us and helped to spread them along the track. Every little helps!

## 3. MISCELLANEA

### Next Committee Meeting:

7:30 p.m. - Monday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2023 at the CResCent Resource Centre. (Warbler Drive, Earley, RG6 4HB)

### The Latest Newsletter is now on the Web Site

I will try to put each newsletter on the web site as soon as possible after emailing it to people on our email list. This usually happens on the day after the input deadline: this time the 31<sup>st</sup> of August (see section 4). Paper copies may be printed somewhat later because we need to fit in with Maiden Erlegh school dates. (Ed.)

### Ashridge Nurseries discount

On the "Links" page of our web site you can see that a 10% discount is offered, to ERHS members, on plants bought from this supplier. Use our email address to get the discount code, quoting your membership card number. (Ed.)

### Shed stewards and assistants this month.

5 <sup>th</sup>	Trevor Wilson	Viv Rimmer
6 <sup>th</sup>	David Hughes	Derek Press
12 <sup>th</sup>	SHED CLOSED DUE TO LACK OF STAFF	
13 <sup>th</sup>	Neal Stockwell	Webster Stockwell
19 <sup>th</sup>	Gwen Barton	Bob Campbell
20 <sup>th</sup>	Jeff Gardner	Torkill Fozzard
26 <sup>th</sup>	John Peacock	Carole Peacock
27 <sup>th</sup>	Trevor Wilson	Bob Campbell

### Things to do this month.



**Window boxes:** Quite a few window-box flowers have a "summer slump" in their blooming period during August. This often happens in the case of older varieties of petunias and their smaller cousin, million bells (*Calibrachoa*). To stimulate re-flowering, cut them back vigorously and fertilise them regularly.

**Blue spiraea:** August is the beginning of the main flowering season for *Caryopteris*. "Heavenly Blue" is one of the most popular varieties, but *Caryopteris clandonensis*, also known as "Symphonie in Blue"® is also up and coming now. This new variety stands out thanks to its compact, bushy growth and its thicker, more robust spur shoots. Its many exquisite flowers, in beautiful and vivid shades of night blue, provide a stark contrast to the backdrop of its shiny, intensely green foliage. Plant roses, summer heathers or grasses around blue spiraea to complement its colour palette.

**Strawberries:** It's the best time of year to plant young strawberry plants.

**Garden trees and shrubs:** If the deciduous trees and shrubs and conifers in your garden have had their main growth period in July, they will reach maturity in August. This is essential for the branches to withstand winter conditions, so it's best to start using fertiliser on garden trees and shrubs at the beginning of August to ensure that the plants are more resilient during the winter period. You should still add potassium-based fertilisers, as the potassium strengthens the plant tissue, meaning that it can mature with a higher resistance to frost. Around 30 g of potassium-based fertiliser per square metre is usually sufficient.

**Stone fruit:** August is filled with the smell of ripening stone fruit, such as peaches, nectarines, damsons, plums and Mirabelle plums. However, this also means windfall fruit, a wasp's favourite food. It's best to gather the windfall fruit early in the morning, as this is when wasps are least active.

**Lawns:** In this warm summer month, it's best not to keep the lawn too short. As a rule of thumb, it's more prudent to have to mow the lawn more frequently than to cut too much off at once. The first time you mow the lawn, cut the grass by approximately one third of its length. After that, keep it to around three or four centimetres in length.

**Wanderlust:** August is a month for travelling. But who's going to look after your plants while you're away? For potted plants, it's useful to have a programmable automatic watering system. It's best to install a system like this 14 days before you go away to give you enough time to check that it is watering your plants correctly.

**Summer heathers:** August is filled with the many colours and shapes of heather plants. The hardiest species include the "bud bloomers", such as those in the "Garden Girls" series. As their buds do not open, they do not wither, meaning that these varieties of heather keep the colour of their pretty flowers right through into November/December.

**Grapevines:** The first table grapes ripen at the end of August. Garden birds such as blackbirds, thrushes and starlings are particularly fond of these berry fruits, so it's worth covering grapevines with netting to protect them. Make sure that the netting is secure enough so that the birds can't eat the grapes through the holes in the net. Check all the netting daily to ensure that no birds have become entangled.

**Courgettes:** When it comes to courgette plants, the warm and humid weather in August can often lead to severe mildew infestations. If you want to be able to save some of the fruit, it's worth removing any old fallen leaves from the outset. If the infestation continues to develop, remove all unhealthy plants to prevent the infection spreading around the garden.

#### **4. WANTED/FOR SALE/FREE**

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

*[Copy deadline for the next newsletter is Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> August.](#)*

**Free to collector:** Black circular Compost Bin with lid. Height 90cm, diam. 70cm. Please phone (0118) 969 7828.

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

Kindly  
Printed by



MAIDEN ERLEGH  
SCHOOL