

East Reading Horticultural Society

NEWSLETTER

July 2025

The trading shed opens: Sat and Sun 09:30 to 11:00 (but only Sat in July & August),
and Wednesdays in April and May 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

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,
but please include your membership card number.}



PROGRAMME EVENTS



TUESDAY 24TH JUNE 2025

Our trip to National Trust Mottisfont Abbey:
52 members and their friends enjoyed a very pleasant day out in the beautiful gardens and grounds of Mottisfont Abbey. Truthfully, quite a lot of their wonderful rose collection was past its best, but the mixed border planting was a bonus, and we all returned home better for the experience. Also, the new pick-up point opposite Sutton's bowling club made parking easy. John Peacock

Summer Show Saturday 19th July

The show schedule has been emailed to all members on our email list. It is also downloadable from our website or can be requested by email (see the newsletter heading).

There are a few in the trading shed as well.

19 growing days from 1st July.

Carole, the show secretary, is really hoping that many members this year will have collected or read the show schedule and will be planning what classes they are going to enter. Please see if there is a class that you can enter and don't be shy. It's a lovely day in the hall and a celebration of what we can grow, make, arrange and bake.

Go on. Have a go. You might surprise yourself.

NGS Garden Open for Charity - (contact Pat)

68 Church Road, Earley, Reading, RG6 1HU.
Open by arrangement July and August for groups of 5 to 25. Tea, coffee & cake. Dogs welcome.
07809 613850 or patsi777@virginmedia.com
More information at ngs.org.uk

Other scheduled events 2025-2026

- Tue 16 Sept Talk "British hardy orchids"
- Tue 21 Oct Talk "Why we need pollinators"
- Tue 18 Nov Talk "Essential oils and plant-based wellness"
- Tue 9 Dec Christmas social
- Tue 20 Jan Talk "Longstock Park Water Garden"
- Tue 17 Feb 84th Annual General Meeting
- Tue 17 Mar Talk "Humble hedges - many benefits"

TRADING MATTERS

Trevor Wilson (good) News

Regular visitors to the trading shed will be shocked to learn that Trevor had a heart attack on the evening of Sunday 15th June, and had a stent fitted later that night. On Friday 22nd June, he had a successful triple bypass operation at St Barts and has now returned home to begin his very slow and gentle recovery. It is unlikely that we will see him at the shed for quite some time. I know your thoughts will be with Trevor, Ann and the family... John Peacock

MISCELLANEA

Next Committee Meeting:

7:30 p.m. on Monday 8th September at the Crescent Resource Centre. (Warbler Drive, Earley, RG6 4HB)

Shed stewards and assistants this month.

5 th	Don Maclean	Peter Lynch
12 th	Chris Dodson	Alan Waite
19 th	Trudy Rehman	Steven Willis
26 th	Mike Fewtrell	Peter Scott

Our Survey - Preliminary Thoughts

These are taken from the creator of the survey, Jackie Leslie, her collecting of responses and summarization, and my own thoughts resulting from her work. (Ed.)

Members' background:

Roughly 2/3 are over 70 and have been members for more than 10 years.

This is our most pressing problem. To survive, we absolutely **MUST** find more and younger members; otherwise, the slow attenuation will continue until we finally cease to be!

Trading shed usage:

I expect the actual proportion of members who never come to the shed exceeds 50%.

This is not really a problem, but we might think about ways we could entice more to have a look.

Our opening times are pretty much acceptable.

Suggestions:

The suggestion for selling smaller quantities of items has already been introduced by Trevor. Potatoes, though, would be tricky; they arrive prepacked and would be difficult to divide further. I used to produce a stock list with prices each year using the stocktaking results. I'll see if I can find a way to streamline that process.

We used to have a list of bulk suppliers in the shed; I don't know if we still do but will check.

We can think about plant and seed swaps but when we tried seed swaps at our evening talks a few years ago, the take-up was minuscule.

Visits:

Clearly about half of our members have no interest in excursions, but we know there is a core of people who frequently want to go. This core is dwindling, though, and it is getting harder to fill a large enough coach to keep the individual cost down.

The problem of people getting to and from the pick-up point can be solved by offering free transportation to those concerned. I would be happy to do this, whether I was going on the trip or not, and I am sure we could find more volunteers.

We already go to many of the suggested venues, from time to time, but the list is worth keeping in mind. I am surprised how many would be willing to pay £50 for a trip. Inflation, eh?

Talks:

Of those who attended talks the majority (60%) would continue to come to the hall, while 15% would watch it on Zoom. Of those who don't attend the talks, 14% said they might watch it on Zoom. This needs more research. Quite a few suggestions for future talks were made and will be kept in mind.

Newsletter:

I'll think about the responses but am pleased there is not much adverse criticism. I like the idea of introducing committee members. To be discussed.

Any other comments:

A lot of these are worth consideration...

We had decided not to tout for members at the Green Fair, but maybe we need the exposure, even if the returns are abysmal.

ERHS picnic - not as suggested but perhaps there is the core of an idea for a summer social gathering to complement the Christmas get-together. We would need to identify a suitable venue and would have to allow for how the weather might have an influence.

Overall:

Despite the rather sparse response, the survey has given us a lot to think about, and we hope to provide a more considered summary later this year.

Things to do this month



- Get a head-start on next spring's flowers by sowing biennials like wallflowers, foxgloves and honesty now.
- Sow lettuce rocket and radish seeds regularly for summer salads. Lettuce tends to go to seed quickly in hot weather, so sow it where it will get some shade in the hottest part of the day.
- If you sowed winter cabbages and leeks earlier in the year, transplant the seedlings now to their final positions.
- Water vegetables regularly. It's crucial to give tomatoes a consistent amount of water, if possible, as the fruits will split if they get a sudden heavy watering after a dry period.
- Feed tomatoes, courgettes, peppers and cucumbers fortnightly with a high potash liquid feed to promote flowers and fruit. Container-grown blueberries and gooseberries will also appreciate a fortnightly high-potash feed (tomato feed is ideal).
- Pinch out sideshoots on cordon tomatoes (these are the little leafy shoots that appear where the leaf stems join the main stem).
- Watch out for blossom end rot on tomatoes. This appears as sunken brown patches at the lower end of the fruit and means the plant isn't getting enough calcium. Regular watering will usually solve the problem, although you will have to discard badly affected fruits.
- Pinch out the growing tips of broad beans once the first pods appear. This will reduce aphid attacks and gives you bushy plants that produce more beans.
- Earth up maincrop potatoes to stop the light getting to them and turning them green and toxic. Harvest early potatoes in July but dig up one or two first to check that they are big enough to harvest.
- Pick courgettes and beans regularly to keep the plants producing more.
- Deadhead roses and sweet peas or cut the flowers for the house to encourage the plants to keep flowering.
- Cut back faded perennials like geraniums for a second flush of flowers.
- Give wisteria its summer prune, cutting back all this year's long whippy shoots back to five or six leaves from the main stem.
- Mow lawns regularly, but raise your mower's blades during hot, dry periods to reduce stress on the grass. Try not to water your lawn in dry periods - it may go a bit brown, but it will bounce back as soon as the next rain arrives.

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: Sunday 20th July.](#)

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.

Kindly
Printed by



MAIDEN ERLEGH
SCHOOL