

East Reading Horticultural Society

NEWSLETTER

December 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 21ST OCTOBER 2025

Our October talk saw a last-minute change and Toby Lack (Wokingham beekeepers Assoc.) stepped into the breach with 2 days to go. He gave us a fascinating talk on honeybees, their life cycle, behaviours, beekeeping and their role in pollination. Did you know a colony can have 60.000 bees!!! Also, each bee in the worker caste (the females!!) has an age-related task to perform, which begins inside the hive (house bee) and eventually moves to foraging outside the hive. Tasks change as their body parts change! (see <https://ucanr.edu/site/beekeeping-san-diego-county/bee-biology-and-behavior>). Tony showed clips of film, demonstrated bee communication via his waggle dance, brought mead to taste, wax sheets for us to make a DIY candle and honey to buy.

For more info on gardening for bees and leaflets on plants, shrubs and trees for bees Tony recommended <https://www.bbka.org.uk/gardening-for-bees>.

TUESDAY 18TH NOVEMBER 2025

Over 40 members enjoyed a fascinating talk by Debbie Lawrence on **Essential Oils and Plant-based Wellness**.

Unusually, we sat around 6 large tables with a selection of several essential oils, which we were able to try. Debbie explained how they can be used: aromatically (smelling), topically (applied to the skin) and, in some cases, internally (in water perhaps).

She described what each oil was good for. Examples are peppermint for energy, lavender for restful sleep, frankincense to boost the immune system (and anti-aging) as well as a few blends such as "deep blue" for easing joint pain. An intimate, instructive and pleasurable occasion.

TUESDAY 9TH DECEMBER 2025

The committee warmly invite members to join them at our **Christmas Social** where there will be fun, festivities and frivolity!!!

The evening will include a seasonal buffet supper with wine and soft drinks. The committee also plan to have a Christmas themed quiz, and we hope members will read out their limericks, tell appropriate jokes and stories, read out their favourite Christmas story, maybe play an instrument and we will finish off singing some carols. Carole, our show secretary, also invites members to create a **Christmas table decoration** on the theme of 'White Christmas'. These will be displayed and everyone will be invited to vote for the creation they like the best. There will be a prize for the winner. So, dig out your festive jumpers, hats, boas and any other seasonal garments and come and join us to round off 2025 at ERHS in style!!!

This event, as with talks and shows, is in St. Peter's church hall, Church Road. Come at 7:15pm for a 7:30 start.

The autumn show on Saturday 5th September

Schedules will be sent to members on the email list and put on our web site as soon as possible, hopefully before the end of January. Copies should be in the trading shed soon thereafter.

Other scheduled events 2026

Tue 20 Jan Talk "Longstock Park Water Garden"
Tue 17 Feb 84th Annual General Meeting
Tue 17 Mar Talk "Humble hedges - many benefits"
Sat 5 Sept ERHS autumn show

TRADING MATTERS



Trading shed: Plenty of stuff to tickle your fancy!

The shed is getting ready for the Winter shut down on 7th December. Many thanks to all the helpers for the stocktaking, helping in the shed and unloading during the year.

We have some daffodils and hyacinth still available. Also available are rhubarb, garlic and winter red onions.

We will be putting in a bigger order for manure etc in the New Year, and I still have some work to do on the access track for the 14-foot-tall lorries to access! Trevor Wilson

Shed closure

Please note that the trading shed will close after trading on Sunday 7th December and reopen on Saturday 10th January 2026.

Stocktaking will take place on Tuesday 9th December.

MISCELLANEA

Next Committee Meeting:

7:30 p.m. on Monday 12th January at the Crescent Resource Centre. (Warbler Drive, Earley, RG6 4HB)

Shed stewards and assistants this month.

6 th	John Peacock	Carole Peacock
7 th	Mike Fewtrell	Bob Campbell

Wanted - Replacement Distributor / Collector

I have been informed that the Distributor / collector for a small round in Lower Earley has given up. The round currently consists of 8 members in the "Herbs and Spices" area of Lower Earley [Bay Close, Chive Road, Cinnamon Close, Fennel Close, Hilmanton, Parsley Close and Thyme Close]. There are only 2 paper deliveries [Parsley Close and Thyme Close]; the rest receive their newsletter by e-mail, so the major part of the duty is to collect renewal subscriptions in April. I currently have a "stand-in" for the paper deliveries but have been told that will only be until the end of March.

If you would like to undertake this on behalf of ERHS, please contact me either by e-mail [malcolm@iosson.net] or by letter to 56, Beech Lane. Many thanks. Malcolm Iosson

Things to do this month



Traditionally December is a quiet month in the garden, but there can be plenty to do which will really help you and your garden come springtime.

- Dig over empty borders and prepare your soil for next year's planting.
- Group potted plants together in a sheltered spot in the garden to protect them from the harshest winter weather.
- Get pruning! Wisteria, some fruit trees, roses and Japanese maples are just some of the plants that benefit from a winter prune.

In the flower garden:

- Prune climbing roses now, removing diseased or damaged growth and tying in any new shoots to their support. You can also prune older flowered side shoots back by two thirds of their length.
- Plant climbing honeysuckle now but make sure to avoid any frozen or waterlogged ground as this will damage the plant and growth next year may not be what you'd expect.
- YOU MUST LEAVE the faded flower heads on your hydrangeas until spring, as they provide frost protection to the swelling buds further down the stems.

- If any of your rose bushes suffered from blackspot or rust during the summer, gather up and remove any fallen leaves still on the ground to reduce the chance of spreading the infection next year.

Move containers of shrubs or bedding planters to sheltered spots; clustering them together helps protect the root systems from frost damage.

- Check climbers and climbing shrubs are securely attached to their supports with ties.

In the vegetable garden:

- Remove yellowing leaves from your winter brassicas — they're no use to the plant and may harbour pests and diseases.

- Dig over empty borders and pile well-rotted manure on top - let the worms and frosts break up the clods of soil.

- Dig a trench for next year's beans, fill it with compostable kitchen waste (not cooked food) and recover with soil. This will rot down and dramatically improve the growing conditions.

- Cover winter brassicas with netting to protect them from the birds.

- Protect any remaining celery plants left in the soil by covering with straw or fleece.

While many parts of the garden and allotment are cleared, use this opportunity to install a permanent network of hard-wearing paths. Wintertime can really be utilised to get some of those jobs done that always get pushed to one side during the busier time of year.

In the greenhouse:

- Keep your greenhouse snow free during December.
- If you haven't already done so, clean out the greenhouse thoroughly. Wash the glass, the floor and the staging with horticultural disinfectant to kill any overwintering pests and diseases.

- Brush heavy snow off the tops of greenhouses and cold frames to prevent the glass getting damaged.

- Ventilate the greenhouse on warmer days to reduce humidity and the risk of disease.

- Work in some manure to greenhouse borders to prepare them for next spring. Leave enough space to add compost later.

From the comfort of your own home:

- Carefully plan your vegetable garden's crop rotation for next year to avoid a build-up of pests and diseases.

- Order your flower seeds and vegetable seeds for next year - reflect on what worked well and what didn't, and don't be afraid to try new ideas.

- Take a list of tools and equipment that you need for next year. Add them to your Christmas list!

- Order apple trees now for planting in early spring. If space is limited, try growing dwarf fruit trees.

- Order yourself a compost bin and don't forget to keep adding to it even over winter! You will be surprised how well it will break down when it starts to warm up next year.

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 14th December.

For Sale: Outdoor multicoloured lanterns, 40 lamps mains powered £30 ono. Also:

Ladies Dunlop Wellington boots size 3 £10 ono,

Ladies rubber slip-on gardening shoes size 5 £10 ono,

Gecko 5l plastic long reach watering can £8 ono,

Hozelock adjustable hand-held spray gun £8 ono,

Hozelock tap adapter £1, Tripod folding stool £8 ono.

Pls. call Chris on {0118} 966 3406 or email kent975@outlook.com

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 ERLEIGH
SCHOOL