

East Reading Horticultural Society

NEWSLETTER

February 2026

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 20TH JANUARY 2026

The January Talk: Longstock Park Water Gardens.

Elaine Harmsworth gave us an interesting, illustrated talk about the history of the gardens, the different seasonal plants and the improvements made in the last 5 years.

The garden is part of the John Lewis Leckford estate. Previously only open to partners it is now open to the public Mon-Sat in season. Gravel extraction by River Test for a road to Longstock House in 1870 gave rise to a lake. This formed the basis of the current gardens designed by John Spedan Lewis in 1946, taking 30 workers 7 years. The 7-acre gardens have resulted in 16 small islands connected by bridges and grass causeways. Among Elaine's slides was an aerial view of the lake and islands in winter, and some spectacular vistas down the lake and of colourful spring displays of Candelabra primula, the over wintering Gunnera and a swathe of rhodo-dendrons and others. As well as the gardens there is a farm shop, cafe, plant nursery and walled garden.

You can get a taste of the gardens from a 12 year old Alan Titchmarsh video:

<https://swe01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fwatch%3Fv%3D%2Fw06htcWgKDola1alSnTnj4QPC8%3D&reserved=0>,
or a more recent short (3 min) video from a chap called Steve:

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or a more recent short (3 min) video from a chap called Steve:

My thanks to Jackie Leslie for this report. Neal Stockwell (Ed.)

TUESDAY 17TH FEBRUARY 2026

Our 84th Annual General Meeting:

The committee invites members to attend this important meeting to review the past year and learn of plans for 2026 and ask questions of the committee.

After the meeting members will be invited to share some cheese and wine refreshments.

**Join us in St. Peter's church hall, Church Road.
Please come at 7:15pm for a 7:30 start.**

The autumn show on Saturday 5th September

Schedules have been sent to members on the email list and put on our web site (Miscellaneous documents page.) If you are not on our email list, you can ask for a copy to be emailed to you; contact me, Neal Stockwell, on ERHS@hotmail.co.uk and I'll send it to you as soon as I can. Copies should now be in the trading shed.

Other scheduled events 2026

Tue 17 Mar Talk "Humble hedges - many benefits"
Sat 5 Sept ERHS autumn show

TRADING MATTERS



Trading shed.

The shed is stocked with seed potatoes and onions as well as the usual selection of composts and farmyard manure.

The Monday morning coffee is back on.

We are considering having a tool sharpening morning, let me know what kind of things you would like, and we may be able to plan something next month.

We have some tools you can borrow, scarifiers for your grass when it dries, a small rotavator, hedge trimmers etc.

Come and have a look. Trevor Wilson

MISCELLANEA

Next Committee Meeting:

7:30 p.m. on Monday 13th April at the Crescent Resource Centre. (Warbler Drive, Earley, RG6 4HB)

A Word from our Chairman

Hillside Primary School Gardening Project:

The committee are delighted to inform the membership that ERHS has embarked on a three-year project to provide funds to support a wide range of gardening initiatives at this local school.

The first project involved the chairman priming and painting 8 car tyres that have since been planted with daffodils by pupils in each year group and are situated at the front of the school.

There are two very enthusiastic teachers who will organise planting, nurturing, recording of seed sowing, potato planting, bulb growing and a host of other gardening activities.

There are some pupils who live in flats and do not have access to a garden, and the school also has a Special Educational Needs & Disabilities unit.

The committee have studied the school's detailed plan to show how our funding support will be 'woven' into the curriculum and we are excited to think that these very young pupils will experience and be involved in making plants grow.

The school will give us monthly updates of gardening news, and the chairman already has thought about a large pumpkin patch in the autumn.

Hillside School are warmly welcomed to ERHS, and we wish them every success. John Peacock

Shed Stewards and Assistants in February

Sun 1 st	Torkill Fozzard	Bob Campbell
Sat 7 th	Kay Bridges	Steve Willis
Sun 8 th	Derek Press	Viv Rimmer
Sat 14 th	Kay Bridges	Colin Green
Sun 15 th	Phil Rogers	Peter Lynch
Sat 21 st	Peter Scott	Tracy Collins
Sun 22 nd	Jeff Gardner	Cathy Harris
Sat 28 th	John Peacock	Carole Peacock

Things to do this month



- Prepare for Spring Planting: Start planning and organizing your garden for the upcoming spring. Order seeds, bulbs, and plants to ensure you have everything you need.
- Prune Fruit Trees: February is an ideal time to prune fruit trees before new growth begins. Remove dead or diseased branches and shape the tree for better air circulation.
- Start Seedlings Indoors: Begin sowing seeds indoors for plants that require an early start, such as tomatoes, peppers, and certain flowers. Use seed trays and a good quality seed compost.
- Protect Against Frost: Keep an eye on weather forecasts and be prepared to protect tender plants from late frosts. Use horticultural fleece or cloches to cover vulnerable plants overnight.
- Mulching: Apply a layer of mulch to your flower beds to suppress weeds and retain soil moisture. This will also help regulate soil temperature as temperatures fluctuate in February.
- Pruning Shrubs: Prune late-flowering shrubs such as hydrangeas and buddleia. Remove dead or weak stems and shape the plant to encourage healthy growth.
- Divide Perennials: Divide and transplant overcrowded perennials to rejuvenate them.
- Clean and Sharpen Tools: Take some time to clean and sharpen your gardening tools. Well-maintained tools make gardening tasks more efficient and help prevent the spread of diseases.
- Plan Companion Planting: Plan your garden layout with companion planting in mind. Certain plants benefit each other when grown together, such as basil and tomatoes or marigolds and beans.
- Start Composting: Begin or continue composting kitchen scraps and garden waste. Use compost to enrich the soil with nutrients and improve its structure.
- Inspect Garden Structures: Check trellises, stakes etc. for damage. Repair or replace as needed to provide support for climbing plants and maintain the overall aesthetics of the garden.
- Bird Feeding: Continue to provide food and water for birds in your garden. Consider installing bird feeders and bird baths.
- Inspect for Pests: Keep an eye out for early signs of pests and take appropriate measures to control them. This includes checking the undersides of leaves for eggs and larvae.

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 22nd February.](#)

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