

# East Reading Horticultural Society

NEWSLETTER

December 2019

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 you with the lifting.

Web: [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



### (a) TUESDAY 19<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2019

The uplifting talk given by Ron Davis on the work of the charity, **Thrive**, gave members an insight into how social and therapeutic horticulture can help change people's lives. It gave us all a lot to think about.

### (b) WEDNESDAY 11<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2019

The committee extends a very warm invitation to all our members to join us at our annual **Christmas Show and Social** (7:15 to 10pm) where you can enjoy some festive refreshments, enjoy fun and frivolity with your friends and be part of the show too.

The committee and particularly the Show Secretary are hoping that lots of members will take part in some or all of the show schedule categories, which are floral arrangements, handicrafts, vegetables, fruit, flowers and home cookery.

Staging of exhibits will take place between 7:15 and 7:45.

Please put the date and time on your calendar, as soon as you read this, and we really look forward to seeing you on the 11th December.

*Copies of the show schedule are available in the trading shed, can be emailed to members by request to [erhs@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:erhs@hotmail.co.uk), or may be downloaded from our website [www.erhs.org.uk](http://www.erhs.org.uk).*

### Planned Talks & Events

21<sup>st</sup> January: Growing for the Kitchen Garden.

17<sup>th</sup> March: Meticulous Auriculas.

21<sup>st</sup> April: Fragrance in the Garden.

## 2. TRADING MATTERS



We now have on sale the following:

Bulb fibre (10 litre size)..... £2.15 each

**Hyacinth:** (5 colours).....50p each

**Narcissi:** Jet Fire..... 10 for £2.20

Tete-a-tete, Garden..... 10 for £1.60

Border ..... 10 for £1.75

**Crocus:** Species..... 10 for 70p

**Tulips:** Gregi, Kaufmannia ..... 10 for £1.60

Darwin Hybrid, Select ..... 10 for £1.80

Species ..... 10 for £1.30

**Anemone** ..... 10 for £1.00

**Rhubarb:** Timperley ..... £1.40 each

**Shallots:** Eschalote Grise..... £1.40 for 100g

Our Range of **Seed Potatoes** will be on sale in January:

**First Early:** Arran Pilot, Foremost,

Home Guard, Lady Christl,

Pentland Javelin, Winston

**Salad:** Charlotte, Nicola, Pink Fir Apple,

International Kidney

**Second Early:** British Queen, Kestrel,

Maris Peer, Wilja

**Main Crop:** Cara, Desiree, King Edwards,

Majestic, Maris Piper, Picasso

*Note: The **seed catalogues** are now in the shed. Orders must be in when the shed closes for the Christmas Break on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> December. It's well worth buying your seeds through our bulk order; we usually get a 50% discount on seeds (as well as reductions on other catalogue items.) We re-open on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2020.*

### 3. MISCELLANEA

#### (a) Next Committee Meeting:

7:30 p.m. - Monday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2020, at the CResCent Resource Centre.

#### (b) Shed stewards and assistants for December

1 <sup>st</sup>	Malcolm Iosson	Trevor Wilson
7 <sup>th</sup>	John Peacock	Carole Peacock
8 <sup>th</sup>	Mike Fewtrell	Ann Leslie

#### (c) Treasurer needed

Next February, at our AGM, Jeff Gardner, our treasurer will stand down. He has been our loyal, dedicated and excellent treasurer for 25 years and rightly feels that it is time to hang up his balance sheets and pencils.

We are now in urgent need to recruit a new treasurer.

If you have accountancy skills, or know a friend who has, and who might consider finding out about the management of our finances, please contact John Peacock on (0118) 986 7303 for more details

#### (d) Things to do in this month



##### **Fruit Trees**

- After you have pruned your fruit trees, try to shred any prunings as useful additions to your compost heap, or leave them in a pile for a year after which time they can be used as a mulch around the bottom of the tree to keep weeds at bay and to put back into the soil all the nutrients they took out.
- Once the leaves have all fallen, any frost-free day between now and February is an ideal time to prune the fruit trees with pips, (not stones), i.e. apples, pears, figs etc. but *not* cherries and plums.
- Use a winter wash, based on plant oils, to destroy overwintering eggs of many pests. These washes can damage foliage, so it is worth checking that all the leaves on your trees have fallen and to protect any surrounding grasses or plants with polythene.

##### **Garden trees**

- Order your Christmas tree! Non-drop trees will guarantee you the least hassled Christmas tree buying experience with beautiful symmetrical trees whose needles stay put over the festive season.
- Deciduous trees are most easily pruned when there is no foliage on them so that you can really see how the branches relate to each other and you can easily spot any damaged or diseased growth.

Re-shape trees and remove crossing branches to maximise healthy growth for next year.

- Snow can weigh down and damage young, small branches or large evergreen ones so brush off any heavy blankets of snow should they ever occur.
- With Christmas coming you might want to protect some of the berries on your holly bushes from birds so that you can decorate your home with your very own holly sprigs. Use a net or some fleece to keep the hungry birds away and salve your conscience by planting some bird friendly trees or just filling up the bird feeder more often!

##### **Roses**

- Until the heavy frosts arrive, it is still not too late to plant bare root roses.
- Check that any climbing roses are still tied-in to their support structures.
- Prune bush roses to reduce their height so that they cannot be blown around by the wind to cause wind rock.

##### **Soft Fruit**

- December is probably the best time to prune any grape vines so if you have not done so already, you should prune hard now by cutting the laterals back to 2-3 buds. Vines will “bleed” sap, weakening the plant if you cut it during the growing season.
- If you have not pruned your black, red and white currants you should do so now.

##### **Bulbs**

- Remember all those hyacinths, paper whites and amaryllis bulbs that you prepared earlier in the autumn? Now is the time to bring them inside to the warm so that you can force them to flower ready for Christmas.

##### **Olive and Bay**

- Keep an eye on the thermometer and, if it begins to plummet, move your pots with bay trees to a frost-free place or wrap them well with horticultural fleece.

##### **Other**

- At this time of year ponds, birdbaths and water features may all freeze over at night so try to keep an eye out for this so that thirsty birds have a source of water. Moving water is less like to freeze so keep water features switched on at night if it looks like it might freeze. Frozen ponds can crack liners and will kill fish. Some people swear by putting a ball in the pond so that in the morning you can remove it releasing the pressure on the ponds sides and keeping the pond oxygenated. Otherwise invest in a pond heater. If your pond freezes over completely and there are fish in it, do not break the ice with a hammer. The vibrations will kill the fish!

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

*Members' advertisements are free of charge. Just telephone or email the editor (see newsletter heading.) The copy deadline for the next newsletter is Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> November.*

For sale: **Split logs** £3.00 per sack. Please phone (0118) 966 7964.

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