

East Reading Horticultural Society

NEWSLETTER

April 2020

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

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.}



Coronavirus situation

The President, Chairman and all the committee hope that the membership is keeping safe and well in these unprecedented and worrying times and they send their very good wishes to every member of the society. We must all look forward to better, safer and happier times, hopefully, sometime later in the year.

Events accelerated from early March with the postponement of the talk on auriculas and the decision to close the trading shed.

Renewal of your membership will not take place until government restrictions are lifted and we return to some form of normal day to day living.

We also announce the postponement of the April talk and the cancellation of the visit to Hidcote Manor in early June.

Re: payment already made for this visit. John Peacock would like to shred everyone's cheque on Monday 6th April. Should you wish him to retain your cheque for return at a safer time please inform him on (0118) 986 7303 by Sunday 5th April. Any member who paid for the trip with cash should phone John to arrange safe collection.

One bright piece of news concerns the daily exercise of one member of the society, Trevor Wilson, who offered to take our trading shed stock of seed potatoes round the allotment holders and, at a safe distance, ask if anyone wanted to buy them. Radio Berkshire was so interested in this story that he was invited to take part in the Andrew Peach show last Saturday morning. Unfortunately, Trevor did not get the opportunity to talk about his seed potato initiative or our Great Potato Weigh in competition that we are running with some local primary schools and had to comment about bird seed instead!!! He may be asked to appear again next Saturday. Do tune in between 7am and 8am.

Jeff Gardner has collected all our begonia stock and will grow these corms on with a view to offering them to the membership later. Details of how this can be done safely have to be worked out yet and details will appear in the May newsletter. As we are all uncertain about the future, we can only follow government guidelines and stay safe.

Our very good wishes to you all

Don Palmer, John Peacock and all the committee.

1. PROGRAMME EVENTS



TUESDAY 17TH MARCH 2020

TUESDAY 21ST APRIL 2020

SATURDAY 6TH JUNE 2020

The last two talks, before our break until the autumn, and the Hidcote Manor trip have been cancelled. We intend to rearrange the talks once things return to normality!

SATURDAY 12TH SEPTEMBER 2020

ERHS Autumn Show

165 days to go from 1st April.

Of course, we can't be sure that the September show will be able to take place.

However, it can't do any harm to keep growing, cooking, photographing, etc. in hope!

The show schedule is available now in the shed, or you can email ERHS@hotmail.co.uk to request a copy.

It is also on our web site to download.

2. TRADING MATTERS



**The trading shed is closed
until further notice.**

3. MISCELLANEA

The Committee Meeting: that was due to take place on Monday 6th April 2020, has been cancelled. Committee members will be in touch via email and telephone.

New Membership Cards

Due to the restrictions imposed by the Government and NHS to control the Coronavirus outbreak, it has been necessary to delay the issue of new membership cards/ subscription collections until further notice. The cards have been printed, but at present are being retained by the printer awaiting collection.

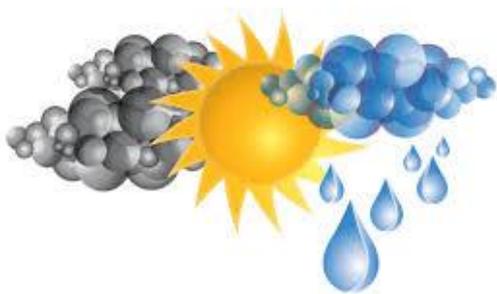
Once the situation returns to "normal", the cards will be collected and supplied to local Distributors for issue in the normal way: if you normally renew your membership via a local Distributor, please have your money (£3) ready. There will be an announcement in a future Newsletter to say we are "back in business", so be prepared for your Distributor to call once that message has been received. Please allow up to a month for this to happen, unless you need to buy anything at the Trading Shed [where you will be asked to show your current membership card.]

For those who renew at the Trading Shed, cards will be available once the Shed reopens for business - there you will need to show your existing [2019/20] card when you renew.

Unable to distribute printed newsletters

They are printed in a local school, which is now closed, but I will put this newsletter on our web site. If you know of anyone who would normally have a copy distributed, please tell them. Also, any member can ask me to email them a copy. (Ed.)

Things to do in this month



Outdoor plants

Plant hardy herbs like parsley, chives, lemon balm, sage and thyme for a supply of fresh herbs during late spring and summer. If you have large, established clumps, now is an ideal time to lift and divide them.

Remove the dead flower heads from daffodils and tulips, apply a balanced fertilizer or liquid feed such as liquid seaweed, then let the foliage die

back naturally. Daffodils that are overcrowded can be lifted, divided and replanted.

Plant new pot grown trees, shrubs, perennials and roses. Always plant in well-prepared sites, add some slow release fertilizer, and keep them well-watered during hot, dry weather.

Tie in stems of climbing and rambling roses as near horizontal as possible - this will restrict sap flow, stimulating more side shoots, so more flowers will be produced. Feed with a rose food or general-purpose fertilizer.

Now is an ideal time to plant new evergreen shrubs and conifers in the ground or patio pots. Evergreens need to be kept well-watered in dry spells - if you skimp on this, the plant can go brown, and some never recover.

Prune early spring-flowering shrubs like forsythia, flowering currants and Japanese quince as soon as flowering is over. Pruning at this point will help to keep the plant neater and encourage a lot more flowers next year.

Fruit & vegetables

For a summer supply of new potatoes, early potatoes are best as they are usually harvested before potato blight or drought becomes a problem. Plant chitted seed potatoes now, either in the garden or large pots on the patio - keep them well-watered and fed, and they should be ready for harvesting in 13 weeks.

Wall-trained fruit trees in flower, such as apricots, pears, peaches etc, should be protected from severe frosts with horticultural fleece. Cover only when frost is present and uncover when the weather allows, giving bees access to the flowers.

Plant out autumn sown sweet peas in well prepared soil. Prepare a wigwam support of canes for them to climb, using a light garden twine to guide them. You can also directly sow the seed at this time.

Sow salad crops such as radish, lettuce and beetroot. Small sowings at three-week intervals will give you a good succession of crops throughout the summer.

House plants

Check if any houseplants require repotting, including orchids, and replant using appropriate potting compost. Increase watering and feeding as daylight and temperature increases.

Misc.

Watch out for any signs of slug damage on newly emerging seedlings and plants - organic slug pellets, slug traps and nematodes are available to help you control them.

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 28th April.](#)

For Sale: Mountfield RV40 petrol 150cc lawnmower. 10 years old but not used for over 5. £10. Buyer to collect. Please call 07813 154466.

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