

# East Reading Horticultural Society

NEWSLETTER

November 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](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



### ERHS events

**Cancelled:** All talks this year, the Christmas show and Social event and the Kew Gardens visit to see the Christmas lights.

We will continue to issue the monthly newsletter, however, and will use it to tell you when we feel it is safe to resume events.

## 2. TRADING MATTERS



**Suttons seeds catalogues are now available in the trading shed.**

### Now on sale

Onion sets: Red winter, Senshyu yellow ..... 60p for 200g  
Shallot Jermor ..... £2.00 for 200g  
French garlic ..... £1.70 each  
Rhubarb Champagne ..... £1.55 each  
Amaryllis..... £6.40 each

Our range of **seed potato** should be on sale in JANUARY. The varieties are:

### Earlies

Arran pilot, Foremost, Homeguard, Lady Christl, Pentland Javelin, Winston.

### 2nd Earlies

Kestrel, Maris Peer, Wilja, British Queen.

### Salad

Charlotte, International Kidney, Pink Fir Apple, Nicola.

### Main crop

Cara, Desiree, King Edward, Majestic, Maris Piper, Picasso.

**Note: Masks must be worn when in the shed.**

## 3. MISCELLANEA

### Next Committee Meeting:

None, but committee members are in touch.

### Shed stewards and assistants for November

1 <sup>st</sup>	Mike Smith	Trevor Wilson
7 <sup>th</sup>	Gwen Barton	Alan Waite
8 <sup>th</sup>	Phil Rogers	Trevor Wilson
14 <sup>th</sup>	John Peacock	Carole Peacock
15 <sup>th</sup>	Jeff Gardner	Viv Rimmer
21 <sup>st</sup>	Don Maclean	Ann Leslie
22 <sup>nd</sup>	Malcolm Iosson	David Hughes
28 <sup>th</sup>	Chris Dodson	Bob Campbell
29 <sup>th</sup>	Neal & Webster	Stockwell Sarah Rose

### Seed Orders **Deadline**

Please make sure your seed orders are delivered to the trading shed as soon as possible but, at the latest, before it is closed for our usual winter break on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> December at 11 a.m.

The president, chairman and the committee send good wishes to every member to stay safe and we all look forward to happier times.

### Things to do this month



### Fruit Trees

- Make sure that stakes are sound and firm in the ground and that tree ties are not too tight. If they are, they will strangle the tree as its trunk swells in the spring. Replace any ties that are worn or perishing.
- If there is evidence of scab on your fruit trees, rake up all leaves around them and burn them or bin them so that they do not harbour the overwintering spores. Do not compost them.
- Once the leaves have 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 or plums.

- Plant new fruit trees between now and the end of winter.

### Roses

- November is the start of the bareroot rose planting season. The ground is usually neither waterlogged nor frozen and so is easy to dig. This means that rose roots have a great basis to establish over the winter. Remember that if you are planting a new rose in a site that contained roses before you must change the soil otherwise your new rose is likely to develop 'rose sickness'. Dig out the soil, as if you were going to plant the rose, then double the size of the hole and use that soil somewhere else. Replace it with well-rotted compost and topsoil mixed together. Hard work, but it is not worth risking your new rose dying on you.
- Check that any climbing roses are still tied in to their support structures.
- If you did not do so last month then cut the bigger bush roses back by about a third. You are not pruning them, just reducing their windage to stop them rocking and damaging their roots.

### Soft Fruit

- Rhubarb crowns that have become overcrowded can be lifted and divided in November and December. Plant new ones before the end of January.
- If you are planting blackcurrants, place them so that the crown of the plant is about 10 cm beneath soil level and then cut the stems to about 10 cm above the ground to encourage strong shoots for future fruits. Established plants will need a third of their old shoots removed right at the base of the plant to stimulate new growth there. (The new shoots are much lighter than the old wood so you can tell them apart.) Blackcurrants grow on the previous year's (and older) wood so you don't want to remove too much of it, but equally you need to encourage new shoots, hence the pruning. At the same time cut out any diseased or damaged growth as near to the base as you can.
- Redcurrants and whitecurrants also need pruning but they differ in that they fruit on the current year's growth. You are aiming for five to seven main branches per plant, each with plenty of fruiting spurs, to grow into an open framework. In their first winter after planting, the leaders should be cut back by a third to a half to an outward facing bud. This is because inward buds grow inwards and cross with other branches which crowds the centre of the plant, prevents air circulating and makes damage from rubbing more likely so that fungal attack and other diseases are more likely. Choose some well-placed shoots to act as the main branches and cut these back by a third to a half as well, again to an outward facing bud. All other side-shoots should be cut to about 10 cm or to 2 to 3 buds. On older bushes, the leaders need to be pruned by a half to an outward facing bud and any laterals hard pruned to about 5 cm.

### Bulbs

- Ideally most of your spring bulbs should be in by now, but tulips will still flower if you plant in November and some of the older gardening books will recommend November as the best time to plant them.
- Thinking ahead to Christmas, you could pot up some Amaryllis bulbs ready to flower for the festive season. Put them on a radiator or in the airing cupboard to start them off but do not forget to keep checking on them! They grow like lightening and their compost needs to be kept just moist.

### Olive and Bay

- If you keep the compost, your olive trees are in, relatively dry (just damp) they will be fine in temperatures down to about -10 degrees Centigrade. However, until Bay has been outside for a couple of winters it should be protected from really cold winds and sharp frosts with fleece or by being moved into a sheltered spot if it is in a pot.
- Raise containers and pots by placing wood, tiles or bricks underneath. This ensures they do not become waterlogged in wet weather.

### Miscellaneous

- Pots that are not frost proof should be protected by wrapping them in hessian, fleece, bubble wrap, something, anything, and even if the plant in the pot is hardy, its roots may not be, so it is worth taking the trouble to do this.
- Check any tubers like dahlias or bulbs (corms) like gladioli that you lifted earlier to make sure that none are beginning to rot and infect the others. Keep them dry and frost free.
- Try not to walk over frosted grass in your lawn as you crush it. Choose a dry day to rake off any leaves. And now is a really good time to get your lawn mower serviced because everyone else will put it off until spring!
- Finally, the most boring job of all must be washing and disinfecting the seed trays, pots, canes and other paraphernalia of gardening with something like Jeyes fluid. Greenhouse and cold frame glass will need cleaning and if you are over-wintering tender plants in your greenhouse, check that the heater is working and/or insulate the greenhouse with bubble wrap.

### 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 Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> November.](#)*

**Free to collector: Composting bin** (no longer needed.) Please call (0118) 986 0297.

**Wanted: Double or single edged Billhook**, for hedge laying, please. Many thanks. Contact John, (0118) 327 5386 / [jenkswk@uwclub.net](mailto:jenkswk@uwclub.net)

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