

East Reading Horticultural Society

NEWSLETTER

January 2021

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.}



1. PROGRAMME EVENTS



ERHS events

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

A reminder: The 'Bee-talk' on Tuesday 19th January, has been cancelled.

2. TRADING MATTERS



Seed potatoes will be available mid-January. (Lady Christl is not available due to crop failure.) All varieties are in 2.5 kg bags.

Earlies:

Arran pilot, Foremost, Pentland Javelin.. £2.30
Homeguard, Lady Christl, Winston £2.55

2nd Earlies:

Maris peer, Wilja, British Queen £2.30
Kestrel £2.55

Salad:

Charlotte £2.30
International kidney, Pink Fir Apple, Nicola £2.55

Main crop:

Cara, Desiree, King Edward, Maris piper, Picasso £2.30
Majestic..... £2.55

Also: **Onion sets:** Red Baron, Stuttgarter, Turbo, and **Shallots:** Golden Gourmet.

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

The trading shed will reopen at 09:30 on Saturday 9th January.

3. MISCELLANEA



The Committee hopes that

- 2021 will be a lot happier than 2020!
- All authorized vaccines will be successful.
- We get to return to "normal" living.
- This all happens by the summer.
- Our talks program can resume.
- Our other regular events can take place.

To that end, the committee extends its warmest wishes to all members for a happy and safe New Year and may there be joy for us all in 2021.

Next Committee Meeting:

None, but committee members are in touch.

Shed stewards and assistants this month

9 th	Jeff Gardner	Sue Jones
10 th	Kay Bridges	Bob Campbell
16 th	Gwen Barton	t.b.a.
17 th	Kay Bridges	t.b.a.
23 rd	Chris Dodson	Trevor Wilson
24 th	Kay Bridges	Trevor Wilson
30 th	Mike Smith	Ann Leslie
31 st	Kay Bridges	Alan Waite

Suttons Seed Orders

When you are notified that your seed orders have arrived, please collect them from **Roger Howard** at 36 Fairview Avenue, Earley, RG6 1HE (i.e., not from the trading shed.)

Urgent need for a new Treasurer

Jeff Gardner has been our treasurer now for 26 years. He hoped to stand down at the 2020 AGM but, when we had no offers to take over, he agreed to continue for a limited time. We, therefore, need to find someone else to look after our finances.

We hope that a member, possibly with a financial background, might consider taking on this important role, or might know someone they could recommend to the society. So, if you can help, please call Jeff on (0118) 987 3453. He will be happy to explain what the job entails.

Special thanks are due to

our newsletter distributors for their efforts in these difficult times. You are appreciated.

Things to do this month



Refresh your Tools

At this time of year, you won't be using your equipment so much; winter is a good time to spruce up the garden shed and re-organize your gardening tools.

After you have cleaned and sharpened them, you can overwinter metal-blade tools by storing them in an old pot filled with a mixture of clean sand and vegetable oil.

In addition, rub wooden handles with linseed oil before storage and paint them with bright colours so they're easier to spot in the garden. When spring comes and the tools are ready to be used, simply wipe the metal tools and get to working on making your garden beautiful.

Pruning

Winter is one of the best times of year to prune the deciduous plants in your garden. This is because when plants are dormant, they are less likely to transmit disease or attract insects.

The best time is to wait for a mild, sunny day, get out your pruners and take advantage of the fact that bare branches make it easier to see what needs to be shaped and trimmed.

In addition, because hibiscus bloom on new growth, pruning them in winter will help encourage a more profuse show in the spring.

Keep a Plant Journal

During the winter months is a good time to take stock of what you have been growing to plan for the year ahead. Creating a diary of what grows in your garden and making a complete plant inventory, recording the location, bloom time, past performance, source, age, pest problems and solutions for each specimen will help you to plan for the future.

Check your Seed

If you happen to have seeds left over from last year's planting now is a good time to sprout a test sample before you re-order for the spring. To check your seeds, dampen a paper towel and sprinkle it with a few seeds then roll it up. Make sure to keep it moist and warm; check for germination in about a week. If it doesn't happen, you need new seed.

Think of the Birds

It isn't just you who can't enjoy your garden as much as normal, the birds suffer as well.

You can help them by putting fresh water out daily, keeping feeding stations stocked and hanging cakes of suet in trees to attract insect-loving woodpeckers. This is also a good time to make plans to plant trees, shrubs and vines that will create wild food sources and natural habitat for the birds you want to attract in the coming year. You could also set up bird houses to encourage nesting when spring comes.

Grow!

The growing doesn't have to stop either. Cold frames, for example, will help get a head start on spring.

Make sure to follow package instructions for the right time and place to sow seeds, regardless of whether you are planting indoors or out and as soon as seeds sprout, no matter where you plant, be sure to provide ample light to encourage sturdy growth.

Spring Preparation

Looking ahead, when Spring is close, branches of pussy willow, quince, crab-apple, forsythia, pear and flowering cherry can be forced indoors as soon as their buds are set.

Make sure to place cut stems in a vase of water and change the water every 4 days. You'll see blooms indoors, in about 3 weeks.

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 27th January.](#)

For Sale: Split logs at £3 per sack. Delivery can be arranged. 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.