



April 2024

# Newsletter

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**Dear Members,**

Welcome to our April Newsletter.

As I write this, the words of a particular song come to mind...

Drip, drip drop little April shower  
Beating a tune as you fall all around  
Drip, drip drop little April shower  
What can compare with your beautiful sound...

Well I'm sure we can all agree it has been a drop more than a drip!

We can all remember how wet and unsettled the weather in March was and April has followed suit. Coming off the back of a wet, if mild winter, this has left many of our gardens waterlogged and most of us longing for a run of sunny days to help the ground dry out so that we can get started in our gardens and have some warmth to help our seeds and seedlings along.

This is especially important as we have our Plant Sale coming up on 11<sup>th</sup> May, just over 3 weeks away! As usual we will be holding this at the front of the Village Hall and all plant donations are most welcome. There will be banners and posters in the village to let everyone know where to find us and we are keeping our fingers crossed that the weather will be kind to us and our "customers". This event is a major fundraiser for us and goes a long way to helping us secure the fantastic array of speakers that Alison Watson sources for us. More information on how to get your plants and seedlings to us will be shared at our next meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> April.

We are also hoping to share with you the details of our annual garden trip and are busy confirming the details with the 2 gardens we have chosen for you to visit in June.

In the meantime, fingers crossed for the lengthening of the "sunny spells" that are forecast and the opportunity to get out in our gardens and properly start the gardening year. The benefits of time in the sun and in our gardens are well known, if you want to know a little more have a read of the article on "Earthing" later in the Newsletter.

Looking forward to seeing you on 25<sup>th</sup> April for our talk on "Five centuries of women gardeners"

*Ann*

## Earthing



Sir David Attenborough once said:

*“Connect with Nature in any way you can. Contact with the natural world isn’t a luxury – it is actually a necessity for all of us. All we know about the natural world gives us pleasure, delight, expertise, continuous interest throughout the year – joy on many occasions and solace on sad ones. Knowing about the natural world and being in contact with it is the most precious inheritance that human beings can have.”*

Those of us who have been able to spend time in our gardens when we have felt stressed or sad will recognise that the connection and contact with the earth are a tonic that can seem almost magical. It may be a surprise to know that there is a field of science that has been recognised for more than a century that is called “Earthing”.

In our modern world we are no longer routinely connected to the Earth. The soles of our shoes are made of synthetic materials, our cars and bikes have rubber tyres and the foundations of our houses and buildings are made of concrete, all of which insulate us from the Earth’s energies.

Earthing (also known as grounding) works by being in physical contact with the Earth's natural electric field and balances our physiology at the deepest levels. This happens because once we are in direct contact with the earth we exchange electrons directly with it and this leads to our own electrical field coming into synch with that of our world. This “rebalancing” reduces inflammation, pain, stress and improves blood flow, energy, healing and sleep, resulting in an improved sense of wellbeing.

This can be done as easily as slipping off your shoes and standing on the lawn, or by touching something connected directly with the ground like a tree or a shrub or a plant. The ultimate would be to swim in a river or lake or the sea as you would be almost fully immersed in the earth’s energies.

Perhaps this is why gardening is so good for you. As well as keeping you physically mobile, you are usually in contact with the Earth in some form. If you have periods when you aren’t mobile or able to get into your garden then there are devices that can be used in the home, such as Earthing pads or fitted Earthing sheets for your bed. These devices are plugged in but only connect to the earthing circuit in your home and not to the electrical circuit itself, so are safe and don’t use any electricity.

You know instinctively how good it feels to walk barefoot on the grass or a sandy beach and there is a wealth of clinical research and a very strong evidence base to support the benefits of Earthing. Earthing is 100% natural and 100% free. So, kick off your shoes, pour yourself a small glass of your favourite tipple and sit in the garden with your bare feet on the lawn. What have you got to lose?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=44ddtR0XDVU>

## Recipe of the Month

### Rhubarb Fool with Toasted Oatmeal

#### Ingredients

- 500g rhubarb
- 4 tbsp caster sugar
- 3 egg whites
- 250 ml double cream
- Juice and finely grated zest of 2 oranges
- 55g toasted oatmeal
- 4 hulled strawberries
- 4 sprigs of fresh mint

#### Method

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C
2. Wash the rhubarb and cut into 5cm pieces. Place in an oven proof dish, sprinkle with the sugar and 4 tbsp water. Bake for approx. 20 mins until soft. Remove from the oven and allow to cool.
3. Whip the egg whites and cream in separate bowls to “soft peak” stage.
4. Fold the rhubarb into the cream, together with the orange juice and zest then fold in the whipped egg whites.
5. Spoon into 4 glasses and chill before topping each one with some toasted oatmeal, a strawberry and a sprig of mint.

## BDHS GQT

Do you remember- at the GQT recording at Heart of England School Marlene Jolley was chosen by the GQT Panel to ask about her magnolia, which has never flowered? They asked her what variety it was but she did not know. She has had it for years, but never seen a flower! After checking the planting position and soil conditions, they advised patience, saying it could take up to 10 years to flower. Well her patience has paid off and this year it has flowered! She would now be able to tell the Panel the variety- a **Kobushi Magnolia**



## Monthly Flower Spike and Pot Plant Competition

Points are awarded for first, second and third positions (First – 5 points, Second – 3 points and Third – 2 points).

Prizes are awarded for the highest aggregate points at the end of the year. Multiple entries are allowed in the “Flower Spike” class, though only one award will be made per entrant.

### Pot Plant

- 1<sup>st</sup> Succulent – Joan Russell
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Narcissus “Pipit” – David Cotterrell
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Auricula – Edward Cotterrell



1<sup>st</sup> Succulent  
Joan Russell



2<sup>nd</sup> “Pipit”  
David Cotterrell



3<sup>rd</sup> Auricula  
Edward Cotterrell

### Flower Spike

- 1<sup>st</sup> Fritillary – Val Cotterrell
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Exochorda – David Cotterrell
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Narcissus “Petticoat” – Edward Cotterrell



1<sup>st</sup> Fritillary  
Val Cotterrell



2<sup>nd</sup> Exochorda  
David Cotterrell



3<sup>rd</sup> “Petticoat”  
Edward Cotterrell

The competition was judged by our guest speaker, Roger Umpleby, who had a great selection to choose from. Thank you to everyone who entered - the photos of the winners are also on our website.

As our gardens are now breaking out in colour please consider entering your plants and flowers for our next meeting on April 25<sup>th</sup>, it's really great to be able to see what we are all growing.

## NOTICE BOARD

### BDHS Meetings:

#### 2024 Monthly Meeting Dates

*7:30pm Tea & Coffee. Please remember to bring a mug with you if possible, it helps the environment and the clearing up after the meeting. Speaker starts at 8pm*

*Guests are welcome - there is a small charge of £3 for entry which includes refreshments.*

25 <sup>th</sup> April	Richard Rallings (Mynd Hardy Plants)	Five centuries of women gardeners
30 <sup>th</sup> May	Mike King	My obsession with Sarracenias
27 <sup>th</sup> June	Josh Egan (Pershore College)	Classic plants for classy people
26 <sup>th</sup> September	Catrina Fenton (Garden Organic – Ryton)	Seed saving & The Heritage Seed Library
31 <sup>st</sup> October	Nigel Hopes (Hopes Garden Plants)	A year in the life of John's garden

#### Other BDHS dates:

11 <sup>th</sup> May	Plant Sale – 10am to 11:30am. Village Hall, Balsall Common
20 <sup>th</sup> July	Annual Show - St Peters Hall, Balsall Common
25 <sup>th</sup> July	Social Evening - 6:30pm (Venue tbc)
28 <sup>th</sup> Nov 2024	AGM & Buffet – 7:30pm. Village Hall, Balsall Common
20 <sup>th</sup> March 2025	Annual Dinner – Village Hall, Balsall Common

*Further events/details will be announced once they are finalised*

#### Other Dates for your diary

20 <sup>th</sup> April	Alpine Garden Society. 11:30am to 3:30pm at Woodrush High School, B47 5JW. Details on the website: <a href="http://www.alpinegardensociety.net/shows">www.alpinegardensociety.net/shows</a> )
14 <sup>th</sup> July	Scones in the Garden at Sue Dalby's Garden*
28 <sup>th</sup> July	Garden Party (to raise funds for the Christmas Lights) at Sue Dalby's Garden*

*\* Times and address to be confirmed*

## Some jobs for the next few weeks...

Our gardens are well and truly awake now. So, once the weather allows, there's plenty to do in the garden...

- Keep feeding the birds as they are busy raising their chicks
- Deadhead spring bulbs as they finish flowering, leaving the leaves in place for at least 8 weeks or until they die down naturally
- Lawns can be mown lightly when dry, spike & feed if required, tidy up lawn edges. Grass seed may be sown, bald patches repaired & turf laid
- Apply a balanced fertiliser to trees and shrubs and a general-purpose fertiliser to beds and borders
- Feed fruit trees and bushes and start to feed citrus plants
- Mulch roses and shrubs to keep the moisture in and the weeds at bay
- Plant out second early potatoes in the first half of the month and late crop potatoes in the second half of the month
- Once the soil warms up, sow vegetables outside such as beetroot, carrot, parsnip, lettuce, radish, peas, mangetout
- April is the last chance to sow tomatoes and chillies if you want a good crop as they need a long growing season
- Prick out any seedlings you are growing as soon as they show their first set of true leaves
- Start harvesting asparagus
- Hardy annuals can be sown outdoors, but half-hardy annuals should be sown/kept under glass to protect from frost
- Tidy up alpines as they start to flower, removing dead foliage, then mulch with grit to keep the foliage off the damp soil
- Finish dividing and replanting herbaceous perennials
- Plant lilies and other summer-flowering bulbs in pots and borders
- Prune early flowering shrubs after flowering
- Tie in rambling roses and other climbers such as honeysuckle and clematis
- Prune fig trees, divide bamboos and waterlilies
- Spring-clean the pond, leave the algae and pondweed you pull out by the side of the pond for a while to give the pondlife time to return to the water. Put in a bag of barley straw to keep the water clear