



February 2025

Newsletter

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Dear Members,

Welcome to our February Newsletter and an especially warm welcome to our new members Chris Bennett, Lynne Davis, Ann Hart, Claire Morgan and Nicky Reynolds.

It was lovely to see some of you at our meeting on 30th January when we got the year off to a great start with 95 of our members attending. We hosted Pip Smith, who we last saw in the autumn of 2023 when he gave us an excellent talk on "Totally Tulips". This time he was inspiring us on the subject of "The Fragrant Garden." And I know that many of you now have some new ideas for your gardens. There are a couple of his slides later in this newsletter to highlight some of the tips he shared with us.

Our next meeting will be on 27th February when Alun and Jill Whitehead from Aulden Farm will be with us to talk about "Wild Shropshire – Gardens and More". Alongside developing Aulden Farm over the last 29 years, Alun and Jill act as the Collection Co-ordinators for Plant Heritage in Herefordshire and have been Hardy Plant Society members for over 20 years. Their gardens are open as part of the NGS open days and dates for 2025 are; Tues-Thurs 22-24th April, Tues-Thurs 27-29th May and Fri-Sat 15-16 Aug (all 11am-5pm).

Some other dates for your diaries:

The Annual Dinner is on **20th March** - 41 tickets have been sold to date, so there are still some left if you haven't got yours yet – friends and family are most welcome.

Our annual plant sale is on **10th May**, outside the Village Hall as usual. So when you are sowing seeds and taking cuttings over the coming weeks, please pop in a few extra so that we can add to the range of excellent plants we always have on offer. We usually sell out, so anything you can provide is a huge help and a this event is a great fundraiser for the society.

We have now finalised details for our summer Garden Trip – **4th June** (full details on the next page). The cost is £25 for members and £30 for guests.

It looks like we have another exciting year ahead for our society. Many thanks to the Committee for the energy and enthusiasm they put into organising our diary of events.

Ann

Garden Trip – 4th June

Organised by Angela Shaw

On Wednesday 4th June we will be making our annual garden trip via coach from Balsall Common. This year our trip will be to Bodenham Arboretum near Kidderminster and John's Garden at Ashwood Nurseries. The cost is £25 for members and £30 for family and friends.

Our itinerary is:

9:00 am	Coach leaves the Co-op car park in Balsall Common for Bodenham Arboretum. Please arrive before this so we can all be checked in and seated in good time.
10:00 am	Arrive at Bodenham Arboretum
10:30 am	Guided walk which will last for one hour
Lunch break	We will have lunch before leaving, either your own picnic or in the onsite café.
1:00 pm	Travel on to John's Garden at Ashwood
2:00 pm	Guided tour which will last for approximately 90 mins. Afterwards you might like to walk along the canal, visit the wild-life garden, the well-stocked nursery and the tearooms (I can recommend their cakes!)
4:30 pm	Coach departs for Balsall Common
6:00 pm	Expected return time

Both of these venues promise lots to interest all levels of gardener and to prompt ideas for our own gardens.

Bodenham Arboretum is located just north of Kidderminster and is 170 acres contain mature woodland, specimen trees and shrubs – over 3000 species in total which include important collections such as Acers, North American Oaks and Alders, and two chains of pools and lakes, integrated within a working farm.

David and Jennifer Binnian began the project in 1973. It started as a hobby, just planting a few trees each winter, until it developed into what it is today. It's now run as a family venture.

'John's Garden' at Ashwood Nurseries is a wonderful eight-acre private garden created by nursery owner and Chelsea Gold medallist John Massey . Informal borders, island beds, woodland dells and a wildlife garden are set against the beautiful backdrop of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal.

Pesky Pests

A couple of nocturnal visitors have been playing havoc in members gardens! We think you will all know what the first one is (likely to be just the one as they only meet up in the mating season), do you know what the second one is? (Answer at bottom of last page of the newsletter)



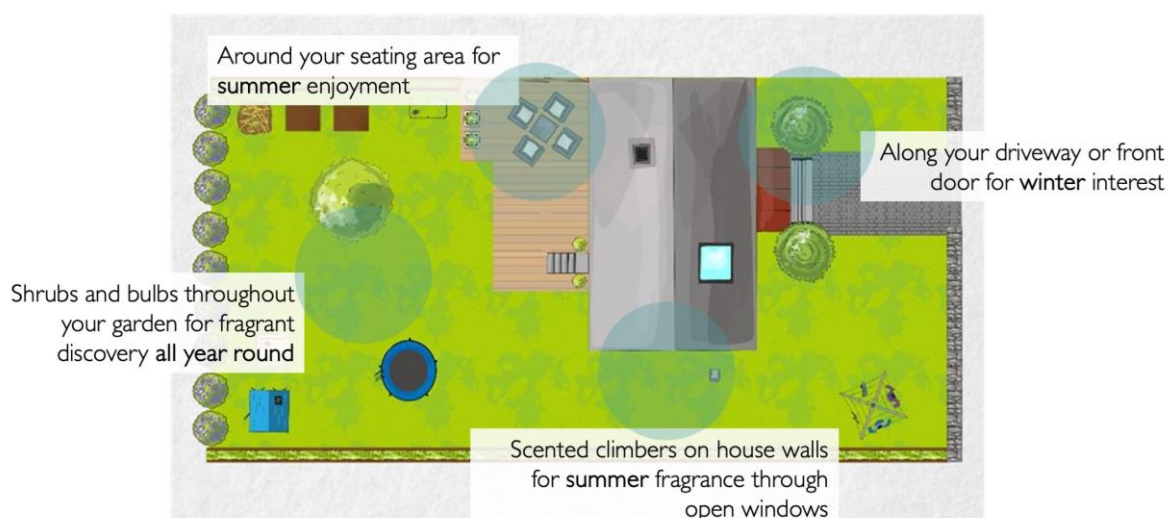
The fragrant Garden – Pip Smith

Pip's very engaging talk showed us how we can have colour and scent in our gardens from February through to October with a vast range of bulbs, plants, shrubs and small trees.

He highlighted many garden favourites as well as some lesser-known plants, all perfect for providing a fragrant boost to your garden.

Pip has kindly shared a couple of slides from his presentation with us. The first one gives you some ideas as to where you might like to site your fragrant plants so that you get the most enjoyment from them:

WHERE TO PLANT



The second one shows you Pip's top 5 shrubs for fragrance and form in your garden - from left to right:

1. Osmanthus burkwoodii
2. Rosa 'The Generous Gardener'
3. Philadelphus coronarius 'Aureus'
4. Mahonia x intermedia 'Charity'
5. Sarcococca confuse



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 competition period (March to February). Multiple entries are allowed in the “Flower Spike” class, though only one award will be made per entrant.

Pot Plant



1st Hyacinths
Alison Watson



2nd Ctenanthe
Felicity Hill



3rd Cyclamen
Celia Davis

Flower Spike



1st Iris
Derek Hill



2nd Hellebore
Val Cotterrell



3rd Hamamelis
David Cotterrell

The competition was judged by our guest speaker, Pip Smith, who had an lovely display to choose from and was led by his nose! Thank you to everyone who entered - the photos of the winners are also on our website.

We are looking forward to seeing what you bring to share with us at our February meeting, when spring definitely be in the air.

NOTICE BOARD

BDHS Meetings:

2024/25 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. The meeting starts at 8pm

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

27 th February	Alun & Jill Whitehead (Aulden Farm)	Wild Shropshire - Gardens and more!
27 th March	Alan Deeley	Burton Green Honey
24 th April	Lottie Allen (Head Gardener)	Hidcote, the vision of one man
29 th May	Duncan Coombs	The Shaded garden
26 th June	Nigel Briggs	Garden Photography
25 th Sept.	Val Bourne	A year at Spring Cottage
30 th October	Drew (Lincolnshire Pond Plants)	Pond Plants

Other BDHS dates:

20 th March	Annual Dinner – Village Hall, Balsall Common (£27.50 per ticket)
10 th May	Plant Sale – 10am to 11:30am. Village Hall, Balsall Common
4 th June	Garden visit to Bodenham Arboretum and John's Garden at Ashwood Nurseries (£25 per ticket, £30 for guests)
19 th July	76 th Annual Show – St Peter's Hall, Balsall Common
27 th Nov	AGM & Buffet – 7:30pm. Village Hall, Balsall Common

Further events/details will be announced once they are finalised

Other Dates for your diary

8 th March	2-4pm, at The Old Hall Temple Balsall. A talk by Rachel Smith-Chopra "My Country Diary of an Edwardian Lady." Free entry though spaces are limited so you will need to book by calling Sharon Roche on 01564 772415 direct dial 213
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Some jobs for the next few weeks...

The hours of daylight may be short, but the list of jobs isn't...

- Keep feeding the birds – remember to put out water/de-ice birdbaths when frosty
- Finish the pruning on your hedges before the birds start looking for nesting sites
- Put up nesting boxes for your feathered friends
- It's time to finish the winter pruning on shrubs and fruit trees – as long as it's done before the first leaves appear, all will be well
- Hard prune Buddleia davidii, Leycesteria, Lavatera, hardy fuchsias & other summer flowering shrubs that flower on this year's growth
- Prune winter flowering shrubs, such as Mahonia, Winter Jasmine and heathers, once the flowers are finished
- Prune to near ground level large-flowering, Viticella & other clematis types, which flower on new growth
- Cut back deciduous ornamental grasses
- Bare-root fruit canes, bushes and trees can still be planted out, as long as the ground isn't frozen
- Check ties and supports on plants and shrubs – easier to do now before they put on leafage and new growth
- Apply general fertiliser to borders and containers
- Fertilize and mulch your roses
- Weed and mulch the veg plot
- Clean the greenhouse glass to maximize light and ventilate it on warm days
- Check over-wintering plants in the greenhouse for any dead, decaying or diseased parts and remove to minimize risk of fungal infections
- Tidy up the edges of ponds and remove any leaves, dead or decaying plant matter
- Keep an eye out for overwintering snails and slugs – if you get to them now they will not be around to lay their eggs later in the month
- Spread black fleece or polythene on the veg plot to help the ground warm up and get a head start with planting later in the spring
- Clean garden tools, seed trays and pots ready for planting
- Buy seed potatoes and 'chit' tubers
- Time to start the seed planting, indoors for now; sunflowers, cosmos, salvia, tomato, chilli... so many options. Get your seed packets organised and away we go, ready for another gardening year

Pesky Pests answers – Mole (Molehills are great for filling pots) and Badgers (looking for worms, slugs and grubs & caught on video)