



April 2025

# Newsletter

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## Dear Members,

Welcome to our April Newsletter. March was a busy month for us all as the weather warmed up and we began to tackle our gardening jobs in earnest.

We also had a busy month of "society" activities, starting with our annual dinner on the 20<sup>th</sup> and then our monthly meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> when we welcomed Alan Deeley from Burton Green Honey. Both events were thoroughly enjoyed by all who were able to attend. There are some photos from Alan's presentation later in the newsletter.

At the dinner, there was a great atmosphere in the room as members and their guests spent time catching up over the lovely food (provided by Sue Dalby and her team) and drinks (chosen and provided for us by Helen Jones). There was also the chance to win one of the lovely raffle prizes beautifully put together by Alison Watson and, at each of the tables, the chance to win the table decoration (made by Pet Hawley), if you had the lucky sticker under your chair. Plus, of course we had the results of the daffodil growing competition and the annual awards for the most points accumulated in the monthly potted plant and flower spike competitions were also announced. Garden vouchers for £10 were given to those in first place. Photos of the winners are on our website.

### Daffodil competition

A gorgeous display of blooms was on display, all grown from the Sailboat bulbs given out at the end of last year. Traditionally this is judged by the previous year's winner. Sheena Clark was not able to attend this year so Val Cotterrell, her sister-in-law, volunteered to step in.

1<sup>st</sup> – Edward Cotterrell, 2<sup>nd</sup> Marion Keeley, 3<sup>rd</sup> Alison Watson

### Potted plant

1<sup>st</sup> – Alison Watson, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edward Cotterrell, 3<sup>rd</sup> Celia Davis

### Flower spike

Joint 1<sup>st</sup> – Felicity Hill & Val Cotterrell, 3<sup>rd</sup> Derek Hill

The points for the potted plant and flower spike competitions have now been re-set (from our March meeting) so have a look at the March results, later on in the newsletter, to see who is in pole position so far.

Wishing you all "happy gardening" in the meantime and looking forward to seeing you at our next meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> April when we will be welcoming Lottie Allen from Hidcote.

*Ann*

## The fascinating World of Honeybees

Alan Deeley gave us a fascinating insight into the work of Honeybees and the art of Beekeeping. You will have noticed that the bees are out and about now and Alan's slides can give you an idea of what you can plant in your gardens to provide year-round forage for them.



## Annual Dinner 20<sup>th</sup> March 2025

A selection of photos of a wonderful evening for you. There are more on our website.



## Recipe of the Month

### Pet's Honey and Coconut Cake

*(Inspired by our visit from Alan Deeley of Burton Green Honey)*

#### Ingredients

For the cake:

- 125g unsalted butter
- 150g raw/soft brown sugar
- 2 eggs
- 265g self-raising flour
- 1 tsp vanilla essence
- 20g desiccated coconut
- 2 tbsp honey
- 1 tsp nutmeg
- ¼ tsp cinnamon
- ¼ tsp allspice
- 4 tbsp milk

For the icing:

- 125g cream cheese
- 80g icing sugar
- 1 tbsp honey

#### Method

##### Cake

1. Preheat oven to 180°C/160°C fan, grease and line a shallow rectangular tin (28 x 18 x 3 cm)
2. Cream sugar and butter
3. Add eggs gradually and beat
4. Add honey and vanilla and beat
5. Add coconut and mix
6. Add SR flour, milk and spices and fold in
7. Pour into tin and bake for 30 mins till cooked

##### Frosting

1. Beat cream cheese until soft
2. Add icing sugar and honey and beat
3. Spread over the top of the cake



## 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



1<sup>st</sup> Orchid  
Wendy Jenkinson



2<sup>nd</sup> Narcissi  
Marion Keeley



3<sup>rd</sup> Narcissi  
Alison Watson

### Flower Spike



1<sup>st</sup> Daphne  
Mesereum  
Val Cotterrell



2<sup>nd</sup> Flowering  
Quince  
Mary Cotterrell



3<sup>rd</sup> Flowering  
Cherry  
Alison Watson

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

Now that our gardens are full of spring colour, we are looking forward to seeing what you bring to share with us at our April meeting.

## 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.*

24 <sup>th</sup> April	Lottie Allen (Head Gardener)	Hidcote, the vision of one man
29 <sup>th</sup> May	Duncan Coombs	The shaded garden
26 <sup>th</sup> June	Nigel Briggs	Garden Photography
25 <sup>th</sup> Sept.	Val Bourne	A year at Spring Cottage
30 <sup>th</sup> October	Drew (Lincolnshire Pond Plants)	Pond Plants

#### Other BDHS dates:

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

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

#### Other Dates for your diary

From 6 <sup>th</sup> April	Temple Balsall Sunday Teas 2:30pm - 4:30pm. Recurs the 1st Sunday in the month from April – September.
From 30th March	Wren Hall Sunday teas served between 2pm and 5pm. Funds are raised for a different charity each week. Last Sunday Tea for 2025 is Sunday 26 <sup>th</sup> October.
19 <sup>th</sup> - 21 <sup>st</sup> April	The Easter Flower Festival at St Mary the Virgin Church, Haseley, 10am – 4pm daily. The church is on Firs Lane, CV35 7LS.
Sat 17th May	Hardy Plant Society Plant Sale, Bentley Heath Community Centre, Widney Road, B93 9BQ. 10am -12pm.

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

Our gardens are well and truly awake now. So, we are all making the most of the mild and sunny weather to get ahead with those jobs 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 alpine 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