

May 2025



# Newsletter

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## Dear Members,

Welcome to our May Newsletter and to our new members Annette Scott and June Nash. We also have 3 new members to welcome to our committee: Iain McKenzie, Jane Bostock and Sharon Nelson and those of you who were at the plant sale on 10<sup>th</sup> May will have seen that they are already involved with the teamwork that makes our society such a success.

The Plant Sale went very well. Along with our Annual Show, this sale is one of the ways we raise additional funds for our society and this enables us to provide a broad programme of events for you. This year we raised £714. Thank you to everyone who supported us, both by providing plants and helping with the sale on the morning.

Aside from our monthly meetings we have a couple of other key events in our diaries:

Our trip to Bodenham Arboretum near Kidderminster and John's Garden at Ashwood Nurseries on 4<sup>th</sup> June.

Brief timings are below (more info is on our website)

9:00 am	Coach leaves the Co-op car park in Balsall Common for Bodenham Arboretum.
10:30 am	Guided Walk at Bodenham Arboretum which will last for one hour
Lunch break	Either your own picnic or in the onsite café.
2:00 pm	Guided tour John's Garden at Ashwood which will last for approximately 90 mins.
4:30 pm	Coach departs for Balsall Common
6:00 pm	Expected return time

Our Annual Show on 19<sup>th</sup> July is now just over 9 weeks away. You will find a copy of the schedule attached to the e-mail that this Newsletter is in, so you can consider which classes you might enter. If you are still adding to your garden/allotment then remember that BDHS members get a discount of 5% at Smiths Rural Supplies and 10% at Hampton Garden Centre.

As in previous years we will need your help to make this event run smoothly and be the great showcase for our society that it usually is. We will be circulating some forms at our next meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> May to ask for your assistance in setting up, clearing away, baking cakes and helping on the day.

Duncan Coombs will be at our May meeting and will be talking to us on "The Shaded Garden". We look forward to seeing you there.

Ann

## Wild Garlic

**By Sharon Nelson**

The starry white flowers are a joy to see in the spring and are commonly found in damp deciduous woodlands along-side bluebells. It spreads rapidly, developing bulbs underground and seeds above to form a lush green carpet. It is one of a number of species whose presence indicates that a woodland is ancient. Wild garlic is also known as ramsons, bear's garlic, or wood garlic, and belonging to *Allium* family, is related to onions, leeks, shallots and cultivated garlic.

Wild garlic is known to have been used as a food and a medicine by the Celts in Britain 1500 years ago. It offers a range of health benefits, similar to those of cultivated garlic:

- Antibacterial and antifungal properties
- Rich in vitamin C and antioxidants
- Supports cardiovascular health

The bulb a key ingredient in tonics for rheumatic problems and high cholesterol. It is said to combat heart disease, reduce blood pressure, clear up skin problems, heal wounds as well as supporting digestion and detoxification.

In terms of foraging wild garlic, to protect the wild populations, it is illegal to dig up the bulbs, but the leaves and flowers can be gathered. Remember to only take small amounts and from large patches so that the garlic can continue to flourish. Wild garlic is a valuable source of nectar for bees, butterflies and hoverflies.

It is important to take the time to correctly identify wild garlic as, at first glance, it does resemble other plants such as Lily of the Valley which is poisonous.

The key differences are:

- **Flowers** - Small, white, and star-like, forming clusters atop a single stalk, smelling of garlic.
- **Leaves** - Long, smooth, and soft with a pungent garlic smell when crushed.

So your nose is your best sense here!

Once gathered, make sure you give it a good wash, dry it and it will then keep in the fridge for up to 4 days.

Smaller younger leaves can be eaten raw in salads as can the flowers. Bigger leaves often have a stronger flavour and can be wilted like spinach.

Due to its seasonality, wild garlic is often preserved through freezing or oil infusions.

There are a couple of recipes for you in the next section.

## Recipes of the Month

### **Wild Garlic and Cheese Scones** *From Pet Hawley*

#### **Ingredients**

- 225g SR Flour
- ½ tsp salt
- 1/s tsp mustard powder
- ¼ tsp cayenne pepper
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 25g butter
- 150g grated mature cheddar cheese
- 1 large egg
- A little milk
- Bunch of wild garlic leaves, washed and chopped (how big a bunch is a matter of personal taste)

#### **Method**

Preheat oven to 220°C (200°C fan) and lightly grease a baking sheet

1. Add all of the dry ingredients (except the cheese) to a large bowl.
2. Add the butter and “rub in”
3. Stir in the chopped garlic leaves and 100g of the cheese
4. Break the egg into a measuring jug and make up to 150ml with milk
5. Stir into the mix to form a soft but not sticky dough
6. Turn out onto a lightly floured surface and knead lightly
7. Roll out to a 15cm circle, transfer to the baking sheet and mark into 6 wedges
8. Brush with a little milk and sprinkle with the remaining cheese
9. Bake for approx. 15 minutes or until golden brown and firm to the touch
10. Slide onto a wire rack to cool and eat while fresh

### **Wild Garlic Pesto** *From Sharon Nelson*

#### **Ingredients**

- 30g washed wild garlic leaves
- 100g nuts such as pinenuts, almonds, hazelnuts
- 3 tbsps extra virgin olive oil
- 50g hard cheese such as Parmesan, pecorino or cheddar
- Juice and finely grated zest of half a lemon

#### **Method**

In a food processor or pestle and mortar, grind up the leaves, then add nuts, olive oil, lemon finally grated cheese. Continue to mix until you get desired consistency. You can either freeze in an ice cube tray or keep in the fridge and use within 2 weeks. Great on grilled meat or fish, a salad or stirred through pasta

## 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> Albucca Spiralis  
Barbara Haynes



2<sup>nd</sup> Auricula  
Edward Cotterrell



3<sup>rd</sup> Auricula  
Helen Jones

### Flower Spike



1<sup>st</sup> Camassia  
Felicity Hill



2<sup>nd</sup> Tulip  
Edward Cotterrell



3<sup>rd</sup> Camelia  
Derek Hill

The competition was judged by our guest speaker, Lottie Allen , who had a fantastic 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 blooming in the spring sunshine, we are looking forward to seeing what you bring to share with us at our May 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.*

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	Dawn Fisher (Lincolnshire Pond Plants)	Pond Plants

#### Other BDHS dates:

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.
31 <sup>st</sup> May	Kenilworth Show. From 9am to 5:30pm. More info and tickets available at <a href="http://www.kenilworthshow.co.uk">www.kenilworthshow.co.uk</a>
31 <sup>st</sup> May and 1 <sup>st</sup> June	Wellesbourne Open Gardens. 1.00pm to 5.00pm. Approx 11 gardens open. Pick up tickets (price £5) from Wellesbourne Methodist Church or Chedham's Yard in Wellesbourne. Parking to get your entrance tickets in Wellesbourne is best next to the Village Hall, Gardens around Wellesbourne are spread out and you will need to move your car to get to all gardens in the time available.

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

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

- Prune spring shrubs, such as forsythia and chaenomeles, after flowering to keep them compact
- Tie in the new shoots of climbing plants, including clematis, wisteria and honeysuckle, to their supports
- Apply liquid feed to tulips, daffodils and other spring bulbs to encourage a good display next year. Lift and divide any overcrowded clumps before you feed them
- Plant out dahlia tubers, cannas and summer bedding at the end of the month but watch out for late frosts and protect tender plants
- Continue sowing annuals, such as California poppies, into gaps in borders for colour from August into autumn
- Plant out summer bedding at the end of the month
- Plant up hanging baskets and patio pots, but keep in a greenhouse or porch for a few weeks to establish, before putting outside
- Harden off tender plants raised indoors, but bring them back in at night to protect from late frosts
- Pinch out the shoot tips of bedding plants and young annuals, such as fuchsias, to encourage bushier growth
- Watch out for viburnum beetle and lily beetle grubs, check carefully on the underside of leaves and pick them off by hand if you find any
- Earth up potatoes, to protect the shoots from frosts and to prevent the sunlight turning the developing tubers green (which makes them poisonous)
- Sow sweetcorn in deep pots, so the young plants are ready to transplant into the garden in June
- Thin out seedlings, such as carrots, from earlier sowings to ensure you get healthy, strong-growing plants
- Transplant the seedlings of broad beans sown in pots and plant in their final positions. Cover with fleece if cold weather is forecast
- Remove all strawberry runners, so plants put their full energy into fruiting. Pot these up to replenish older plants as they lose their vigour after 5 years or so
- Collect water – make the most of any rainy days by collecting the rainwater which is better for your plants than tap water
- Scoop out pondweed, blanketweed and algae from ponds and water features
- Add interest to shady borders by planting a selection of hostas and ferns
- Keep the hoe moving in your garden and allotment beds – the weeds love the warmer weather and grow much faster than our seedlings!