



Newsletter

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Dear Members,

Welcome to the April edition of our members' newsletter we hope you enjoy reading it.

At last it's beginning to look as though spring is out there somewhere though a cold wind persists, as is often the case at Easter, but the sunshine is very welcome.

Lovely to have such a good turnout (90 attendees) for the last meeting. Liam Beddall, a great speaker from David Austin Roses was both informative, amusing and very easy to listen to.

The annual daffodil competition was won by Helen Goodwin who took home a £10 garden gift voucher.

The BDHS supper was also a resounding success, the food was both delicious and plentiful and the quiz gave us a lot of fun. Definitely very good value at £20 per head, and we would recommend you consider it for next year.

Our trip this year on 14th June is to Shropshire to visit two stunning gardens:

The Dorothy Clive Garden - There are many areas of diverse interest within this 12 acre, hillside garden. These include a new winter garden, an edible woodland, a woodland quarry with waterfall, an alpine scree and pool, rose walk and amazing seasonal borders. Additionally the garden has several notable collections of plants including: rhododendrons, azaleas, camellias, sarcococca and hydrangeas

Hodnet Hall Gardens - described by their head gardener as kaleidoscopic in early summer, with laburnum, pieris, davidia, philadelphus and peonies in full bloom, alongside more exotic species. The herbaceous borders are heavily scented and abuzz with bees. Geranium, helenium and erigeron vie for attention with primulas, Erica, tree peonies and delphiniums.

A coach will leave the co-op car park at 8.30 in the morning and return approximately 6.30. You can have lunch at one of these venues or bring your own.

The cost is £35 per person with an optional £2.50 if you would like a tour of the Dorothy Clive garden and there are still some tickets available. If you would like to go please contact Helen Jones (number at top of newsletter) or sign up at our next meeting.

Our ever popular plant sale on 9th May is fast approaching. Please grow as many plants as possible (and labelled) and bring them to the village hall car park from 8.30am on the morning. Volunteers will be busy pricing up the plants previous to the sale commencing. The sale opens from 10.00 and runs until 11.30am. Labels will be available free of charge at the next meeting - please ask at the plant sale table if you still require some.

Please note that the Begonias and Geraniums(plug plants are also available at the meetings. These are also FOC and are for members to grow on to enter at the Annual Show in July.

Each month (at our meetings) there are plants available to purchase which have been grown and donated by members. If you are able to contribute plants please do bring along any spare cuttings/propagations for us to sell. This helps to raise funds for the society's activities.

Our 77th Annual Show will take place on 18th July 2026 . The Show Schedule/Guidance (including entry form) is now available on our website: <https://www.bdhs.club/competitions-awards> - further information will be available at meetings as the date approaches.

On a sad note we would like to inform members of the sad passing of Sheila Clarke who's funeral will be on Monday, 13th April at 1.00pm at the Robin Hood Crematorium, Streetsbrook Road, Shirley, Solihull, B90 3NL. If you are intending to go please could you inform Juanita Bolster, via email, on juanita@theacupunctureacademy.org.uk as Sheila's nephew, Martin, would like to know numbers.

If you have any pulmonaria or dandelions popping into flower please do refrain from pulling them up as these are essential early sources of nectar and pollen for our wonderful bees and other pollinators who are just waking up hungry from their winter slumber. A few other plants you might consider introducing for bees are alliums, hellebores, sedums, clover, campanulas, californian poppies, sweet rocket, foxgloves, acers, berberis, broom, malus, bay, cytisis, willow and thistles.

If you have dogs, please consider putting out any fur from grooming into the garden for the nesting birds to collect.



Sharon & Michelle

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). This monthly competition is designed to recognise the efforts of our members having grown their own plants for submission. Judging is by our guest speaker on the evening.

Prizes are awarded for the highest aggregate points at the end of the annual competition period (March to February). Multiple entries are allowed, though only one award will be made per entrant.

Pot Plants – Falconet Daffodils



1st H Goodwin
Falconet



2nd L Stockton-Swan
Falconet



3rd W Boulton
Falconet

Flower Spikes



1st V Dowling
Dicentra



2nd F Hill
Camelia



3rd V Dowling
Daffodil

The competition was judged by our guest speaker on the evening, Liam Beddall of David Austin Roses. Photos and names of the winning entries are also published on our website.

NOTICE BOARD

2026 B&DHS Meetings:

Monthly Meeting Dates (Thursdays at 8pm unless otherwise stated)

Doors open from 7:30pm with tea, coffee, cakes and biscuits free of charge. Please remember to bring a mug with you if possible, it helps the environment and the clearing up after the meeting. The meetings start promptly at 8pm

Guests are welcome - there is a small charge of £3 for entry (including refreshments).

- **April 30th** Classy Plants for Classy People – Josh Egan
- **May 28th** Vintage Garden Tools – Carol and John Matthews
- **June 25th** Sweet Peas – Phillips Cooper
- **July 30th** Summer Social Evening
- **September 24th** Plants for the Late Garden – Jack Wildgoss
- **October 29th** The Garden Chemist – Dr Alison Foster
- **November 26th** Annual General Meeting – 7.30pm start.

Other BDHS dates:

Saturday 9th May – Plant Sale – Balsall Common Village Hall (outside)

- Our very successful annual plant sale – please drop plants on the morning of the sale – labelled. Please pot up your plants for the sale and drop off (labelled) at 8:30am on the morning.

Tuesday 19th -23rd May 2026, 8am-8pm

- RHS Chelsea Flower Show

Thu 7th May – 10th May

- RHS Malvern Spring Festival - Three Counties Showground, Malvern, Worcester WR13 6NW

Sunday 14th June - Annual Garden Trip - Dorothy Clive Garden and Hodnet Hall Garden, Shropshire.

- Tickets are £35.00 per person and limited to coach capacity. Departure at 8.30am from Co-Op car park Balsall Common. Additional £2.50 pp charge for guided tour at Dorothy Clive Garden only.

Saturday 18th July from 8.30am MEMBERS' FLOWER SHOW - St Peter's Church Hall, Balsall Common

- More details will follow over the next months. We need as many entrants as possible to ensure a successful show and future of our Society.

Other Dates for your diary:

Sunday 7th June Styvechale Open Gardens - Styvechale Gardens, Baginton Road, Coventry, West Midlands, CV3 5DE from 12:00 to 18:00 [Find a Garden | National Garden Scheme](#). For full details visit: <https://ngs.org.uk/>

Saturday 2nd-4th May Morton Hall Tulip Festival – opening times 10.00am – 5.00pm. Tickets £15.00 per person to support the RSC



Jobs in the Garden for April

April is a busy month in the garden, ideal for sowing, planting, pruning, lawn care, and preparing for a vibrant spring and summer.

Planting and Sowing

Vegetables: Sow hardy vegetables such as carrots, peas, spinach, and radishes directly into prepared soil. Start half-hardy vegetables like tomatoes, courgettes, and beans in a greenhouse or on a sunny windowsill, transplanting them outdoors after frost risk passes.

Herbs: Plant hardy herbs like parsley, chives, and tarragon in borders or containers.

Flowers: Sow hardy annuals directly in borders and start perennials like delphiniums, verbena, and linaria in seed trays with peat-free compost. Plant wildflower plug plants in lawns to attract pollinators.

Lawn Care

Mowing: Begin regular mowing as grass growth resumes, starting with a higher blade setting and gradually lowering it.

Aeration and Scarifying: Aerate the lawn to improve root growth and scarify to remove debris and encourage a thicker sward.

Weeding: Remove emerging weeds by hand or hoe in dry weather to prevent them from establishing.

Pruning and Maintenance

Borders and Herbaceous Plants: Cut back dead remains of last year's plants and support herbaceous perennials.

Ornamental Grasses: Divide and replant clumps of ornamental grasses to propagate new plants

Fruit Trees and Bushes: Prune early-flowering shrubs after flowering and check for pests or diseases.

Greenhouse and Indoor Plant Care

Watering: Increase watering frequency as temperatures rise, and clean leaves of houseplants prone to dust.

Preparation: Attach guttering, install water butts, and check soil moisture before watering.

General Garden Tasks

Composting: Add grass clippings and garden waste to compost heaps, mixing with soil or compost accelerators.

Patio and Furniture: Clean patios and garden furniture, treating wooden furniture with oil or stain if needed.

Pest Control and Fertilising: Apply appropriate fertilisers to spring bulbs and monitor for pests.

By following these tasks, your garden will be well-prepared for a flourishing spring and summer, with healthy plants, vibrant flowers, and productive vegetable beds.

Members monthly prize Quiz

To win a copy of the RHS magazine please submit your answers to the quiz below to Sharon Nelson, Editor - sharonmarie1406@btinternet.com First submission received with the most correct answers will win a copy of the RHS Magazine and will be announced in the next edition of our newsletter.

The winner of last month's competition was Wendy Jenkinson with 12 correct answers. A copy of the RHS magazine will be forwarded to Wendy. Thank you to all members who submitted entries.

The answers to last month's Quiz were:

1 Aster, 2 Stinking Billy/Sweet William, 3 Giant Hogweed, 4 Weeping Willow, 5 Iris, 6 Australia, 7 True, 8 Percy Thrower, 9 Madagascar, 10 Hidcote, 11 True, 12 Nebuchadnezzar II

Quiz Questions – April 2026

1. Who is the patron saint of gardeners, horticulture, florists, brides and brewers?
2. Which fruit has main varieties - slicing, burpless, and pickling?
3. What is pomology the study of?
4. What fruit comes in varieties Oro Blanco, Ruby Red, Thompson and Pink?
5. Which famous 30 acre sculpture garden, created by Charles Jencks, is near Dumfries in Scotland?
6. What is the national fruit of India, Pakistan, and the Philippines?
7. Apples, pears, plums, apricots, and peaches are members of what family of flowering plants?
8. What were brought to Britian from Germany by Sir Charles Isham in 1847?
9. True or false. Daffodil bulbs can be used in place of onions in many recipes?
10. Which flowers were once known as gillyflowers?

If any members would like to make contributions to the monthly newsletter please get in touch with the editors as we would love to hear from you. Please email to either sharonmarie1406@btinternet.com or michelle@sutreyfit.co.uk before the end of the month previous to publication.