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Charlton & Blackheath
Amateur Horticultural Society
Founded 1950

www.cabahs.wordpress.com

NEWSLETTER 2023

Grow Friends, Grow Fit ... Grow a Garden!

Our first meeting of 2023 takes place on Monday 16 January at a new venue! We are very grateful to St Thomas Church in Woodlands Terrace, SE7 8EN, for letting us use their Hall while Charlton House is closed for the winter. Anne and Jack Barnard of Rose Cottage Plants, will be returning to tell us about Perennials. They will be bringing bulbs for sale, including some as raffle prizes. Promises to be a wonderful evening. Don't forget to bring a plant, some flowers or some foliage for the show table!

January Plant of the Month: Daphne odora 'Aureomarginata' (Winter Daphne) from Anna.

It's a wonderfully sunny, January day - blue sky, mild, with a slight breeze - perfect for garden exploring and rediscovering exciting finds such as snowdrops and flowering shrubs that are the stars in the garden at this time of the year. Mine is my Daphne, shining brightly amongst winter's debris and foliage in my front garden.

This treasured Daphne was a gift and without any tampering on my part it is surviving happily in clay soil and looking extremely healthy. Usually flowering in spring, this species may, during a mild winter, start flowering in December: mine was in bud at that time so this January has been the earliest it has ever flowered.

The Winter Daphne is the most well-known of this species and one can see why: a neat, compact, variegated specimen, with striking, gold-edged leaves which fade to shades of cream over the year and deliciously jasmine- perfumed pink-purplish flower clusters that are held aloft to great effect.

If you do decide to plant this species, I suggest you place twigs around it to mark it out as it's so, so easy to step backwards in a border and CRUNCH - you've TROD on it - like I did with a precious white-flowering Daphne. That was the end of that choice plant!

Please use gloves when handling Daphne as the sap is an irritant to skin and most importantly of all, plant your Daphne near your paths or doors to receive a waft of perfume as you pass by. Don't make my mistake: they dislike being moved so I have no option but to step onto the front border, placing my heavy boots between my other precious plants, and manoeuvre myself into an awkward position without falling over, to detect its perfume!!! Happy New Year!"



Out and About

- Reminder: The exhibition of Lucien Freud's paintings of plants at the Garden Museum continues until 5 March. Stunning images of gardens and potted plants, marking the 100th anniversary of the artist's birth <https://gardenmuseum.org.uk/exhibitions/lucian-freud-plant-portraits/>
- Chelsea Physic Garden re-opens on 22 January, 2023 with a full programme of events celebrating snowdrops and the wonderful re-awakening which begins in late winter. <https://www.chelseaphysicgarden.co.uk/visit/whats-on/>
- The exhibition "From little acorns: art inspired by Sissinghurst" opens in the Gazebo at Sissinghurst on 21 January and is free! <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/kent/sissinghurst-castle-garden/from-little-acorns-exhibition>
- In these podcasts Adam Frost discusses how gardening can help our mental health. Definitely worth a listen: <https://www.gardenersworld.com/podcast/adam-frosts-gardening-for-health/>

Mrs Joyce Snipp, Vice President has passed away

We are sad to hear that CABAHS Vice President Mrs Joyce Snipp passed away peacefully on January 4th, having reached the grand age of 96. Joyce was one of the longest-serving members of the Society.



Here she is hosting members of the GQT team in her garden (Pippa Greenwood, Roy Lancaster and Nigel Colborn) when they visited Greenwich to record a programme in 1999.

Joyce promoted and ran the Show Table cup for many years, after winning it herself several times. Our condolences to Ian and her family, she will be missed.

Pat's 10 jobs for January

1. This is difficult at the moment as our gardens are so wet but if you do get a dry spell cut off old leaves on hellebores to avoid spreading fungal leafspot and don't add them to the compost bin. This also gives the flowers pride of place.
2. Prune back Wisteria this month and next to ensure good flowers by taking off all whippy growths back to three buds from the main branches. You will need to do this again in the summer to ensure air circulation and keep the plant in check.

3. Cut back the foliage on *Iris unguicularis* to show off the flowers which tend to get swamped by the foliage.
4. Start to cut back spent stems on herbaceous perennials but avoid cutting back hollow stems where ladybirds and other insects may be hibernating.
5. Avoid digging or walking on the soil while it is so wet as it can be damaging to its structure and let's hope that the weather starts to dry up soon. My own garden is a sodden brown mess at the moment!
6. Move scented shrubs in pots such as Viburnum, Sarcococca and Daphne near front and back doors to catch the scent.
7. Now is an ideal time to take hardwood cuttings from healthy shoots at least 6 inches long making a sloping cut at the top so water runs off and a straight cut at the bottom and insert into the soil about 3 or 4 inches and firm in. Then forget about them for a long as you can before potting up individually when good roots have formed. This is especially ideal for fruit bushes such as red currants and blackcurrants and I've propagated mine this way for years.
8. In the veg patch, plant broad beans in double rows but try to cover with netting as birds love to pull out the seedlings and mice eat the seeds. Plant seeds on their side so they don't rot. Alternatively plant in pots of compost and plant out when strong growth has been made.
9. Cover the veg patch with sheets of cardboard which will keep down the weeds and warm up the soil for planting later on and try not to leave the ground completely bare as the rain will wash out any nutrients in the soil.
10. Don't forget the birds in winter who need fresh clean water and food as it's harder for them to find it in the winter.

Object of the Month: A 'vintage' wheelbarrow



The humble wheelbarrow - where would we be without it? This vintage one is such a help in the Old Pond Garden, thanks to member Judy for donating it. Not much change in shape/design since it was invented in 321 AD, although the materials used nowadays are lighter and more durable (unless you buy one from B&Q...).

Happy gardening all!
Contact us on: cabahshortisoc@gmail.com