



April 2020: Special Edition 1

Dear Members,

Although the sun is shining, many of us are confined to barracks to help stop the spread of Covid-19. So, we thought that a fortnightly Special newsletter with a couple of planting ideas, and perhaps a quiz or similar may fill a few spare moments of your day.

So welcome to Special edition 1. Ideas, contributions, comments all welcome. If you would like to send a photo of your garden or view from your window or the beans that are sprouting in pots on your windowsill, please do. Feel free to share, and hopefully we will have enough to keep the Special newsletter going for a while. Send to kateawilkinson@hotmail.co.uk

Keep well and safe.

Kate Anthony Wilkinson (Chair)



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Sadly, we have had to cancel our talk due on 31 March entitled "*Relocation and development of the Bristol University Botanic Gardens*" with Nick Wray, but we hope to hold this later in the year. At present the trip to the Botanic Garden is still on, but we will review next month. Likewise, the Plant Sale, please keep growing a few extra plants for us and

arrangements will be confirmed soon, or a plant swop arranged instead.



HOW DO I GET RID OF BLUEBELLS?

Although my favourite spring flower is the Tete-a-Tete, which despite cold winds, grey skies and often snow, still manage to show their sunny faces at the start of Spring, I also love bluebells. This is despite the fact they take over the garden for quite a few weeks. I love the way they just come up, in the lawn, randomly in the flower beds, year after year. But apparently not everyone loves them as one Daily Mail reader wrote:

Q: My front garden has been taken over by bluebells; can you offer any advice on how to get rid of them?

A: Not easily; bluebells can become invasive once they get into a border. The English bluebell is bad enough, but the more robust Spanish bluebell and hybrids of the two, are even more vigorous. The only solution is to dig out every scrap of bulb and then to remove the flower heads of any that do grow as soon as they have flowered to stop the spread of seed.

Thanks Monty Don, but I like my sea of bluebells even if they do take over somewhat.



QUIZ TIME : Tree Anagrams

Below are six mixed up trees. Rearrange the letters to find them (answers next edition).

1	we wing pill owe
2	he net cross hut
3	man l goal
4	ate nine rain bed
5	take your k
6	have free tone

DAFFODIL FACTS

All Daffodils are Narcissi, but gardeners divide them into two groups – with “Daffodils” having trumpets longer than the petals are wide and “Narcissi” having their cups shorter than the petals are wide. After flowering, the foliage should be left to die down naturally, but it pays to remove the pods. It is unnecessary to tie the tops down by knotting them in bunches but you may wish to do this when the foliage flops,. Research has shown that the foliage should be allowed to remain for a minimum of 6 weeks after the appearance of the last flowers in any particular group. Once established, Daffodils/Narcisi will reappear each year for 10-15 years before they need replacing, making them good for all gardens.

PRUNUS FACTS

The enormous family of *Rosaceae* includes the large genus PRUNUS, which in turn itself includes the fruiting almond, cherries, apricots, plums, peaches, nectarines and the ornamental plums, cherries and laurels, the most spectacular of which must be the Japanese Flowering Cherries of the Springtime. Whichever you decide to grow in your garden, consider the ultimate size before purchasing as very many of them are liable to outgrow the smaller garden

Prunus Fugenzo us a largish tree, double rose-pink flowers in May with coppery-red young foliage (picture below). *Prunus Asan* is smaller and fairly upright in habit, having dense clusters of deep pink flowers with bronzed young foliage. *Prunus Pink Shell* is small with slender spreading branches, green leaved and with pink blossoms in April. Belonging to the *Ascendens* group is *Prunus Subhirtella (Stellata)* with clear pink, star-shaped flowers from early Spring. Where lack of space is a problem, then *Prunus Amanogawa* is recommended as it is a column with erect branches, semi-double shell pink flowers, mid-to-late season. There are many more varieties in every shape, size and habit, so do check out their growth potential before planting.



Thanks to Chris Young for Daffodil and Prunus Facts. More plant facts in the next edition.



ASHTON COURT ESTATE

We are very lucky to have Ashton Court Estate on our doorstep, but how much do you know about the place? It is in fact a 16th Century house and deer park with a 19th century garden, which includes a terraced lawn, a sunken garden, a pond and a rose garden, designed by Humphry Repton – so quite a lot to see whatever the time of year.



Known for the balloon fiesta, weddings, park runs, picnics and festivals, Ashton Court Estate also has wonderful trees including Redwood trees, walks and space to escape and wander. Covering 850 acres, of woodland and grassland, the site is now owned by Bristol City Council who acquired it in 1969 following the death of Mrs Esme Smyth in and the inability of her heirs to pay the huge death duties.

Whilst owned by the Smyth family, the Estate hosted the West of England agricultural shows; in 1936 to was chosen to be the site of

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The Royal Agricultural Show which was attended by the then Duke and Duchess of York, later to become King George VI and Queen Elizabeth.



The gardens are to the south and south-east of the house. The lawn sweeps from the house down to a ha-ha and has walls on either side. Photographs from show the lawn with a series of flower beds dotted across it, with cedar trees to the south; in 1907 another photograph shows elaborate bedding and modestly sized Wellingtonias and other conifers. To the south west of the lawn is the sunken garden, previously the wilderness and a further terrace with lawn cut with rectangular beds planted with shrubs and rose bushes, bisected by an avenue of Pieris cultivars. There is an icehouse (c18-19 century) in the small wood. In the late 19th century the gardens also included an aviary, greenhouses and the Grotto - a glass covered rock fernery designed by Messrs Pulham & Sons. The greenhouses were removed in the 1970s.

In terms of the parkland, the Summerhouse Plantation to the north and the woodlands to the west of the house define a steeply sloping curved bowl around the house. In the 17th century the hillside was cut into formal terrace gardens descending towards the house, but it is now grass with earthwork remains visible. Grass rides cut between the plantations to the south, south-west, and west provided physical



and visual interconnection with the landscaped areas beyond.



North and west of Clarken Combe Lodge is Pill Grove, the east end of which is old wood pasture, containing c 200 veteran oak pollards; this was restored in 1996 as a deer park. The west end of Pill Grove is a mature plantation of beech. Winding walks through Pill Grove provide views eastwards over the deer park and south to Clarken Combe Lodge, before emerging northwards at the top of the slope onto the plateau. The area between Rownham and Summerhouse Plantations has also been converted to deer park. The whole of the parkland is planted with a wide range of trees including some very notable veteran oak and sweet chestnut pollards.



The north drive from Clifton Lodge, is the longest in the park, heading south-west between an avenue of lime trees before turning south and south-west downwards towards the deer park, meeting the drives from Clarken Combe, Church and South Lodges and then turning north to approach the house from the south.

The kitchen gardens to the house were located in Bower Ashton, in the area 400m east of the house around Park Farm, and 500m east of the house on the north side of Kennel Lodge Road. Some of this land has been built over for Bower Ashton Art College and some was converted for allotment gardens in around 2002.

Although the Estate is currently closed (due to the CV), it is a wonderful place to explore for a walk or amble. The stables café does a good cup of tea and there is always something to see. The more energetic may engage in the mountain bike trail, or hike up to the top for the pitch and putt or the ride on miniature train which still runs on Summer weekends.



Thanks to The Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historical Interest for details of trees etc.

GARDEN CENTRES

Garden Centres are currently closed, but Tickenham Garden Centre is offering delivery to Long Ashton (delivery charge). They have compost, plants etc. T: 01275 856675

Brackenwood are trialling a limited delivery service but only have 1 van; if this is extended, we will let you know!