

# East Reading Horticultural Society

NEWSLETTER

February 2024

Trading shed opening times: Saturday and Sunday from 09:30 to 11:00 and  
Wednesdays (in April and May only) from 18:30 to 19:30.

**Note:** Shed helpers are not all young, big, and strong so, if you need to get heavy items,  
please try to bring someone with you to help with the lifting.

Shed mobile number: 0738 463 2903. Web site: [www.erhs.org.uk](http://www.erhs.org.uk)

Facebook Group: "East Reading Horticultural Society"

Editor: Tel: 07794 233361, Email: [ERHS@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:ERHS@hotmail.co.uk)

{Get your newsletter early (and in colour): ask to be added to the ERHS email list.}



## 1. PROGRAMME EVENTS



### TUESDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2024

We were delighted that over 30 members attended the excellent presentation on "First Responders", by Matt & Will who gave us an accurate and graphic insight into what happens when we dial 999.

We would like to thank Margaret for her raffle and Ann for her lovely cake.

### TUESDAY 20<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY, 2024

The committee would like to invite members to attend our 82<sup>nd</sup> Annual General Meeting in St Peter's church hall at 8pm.

The AGM is important to let members review our finances and trading news and to ask any relevant questions of the committee.

After the formal part of the evening, you are warmly invited to share some cheese and wine.

### SATURDAY 14<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2024

Please note the date, in your new diaries, of the 2024 Autumn show.

The show schedule has been emailed to those on our email list, and we hope to get paper copies into the trading shed in early February.

### Scheduled events 2024-2025

Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> April: talk "Spring Gardening"

**NOTE: We have had to reschedule this talk from 19<sup>th</sup> March.**

## 2. TRADING MATTERS

Onion sets, stable manure and seed potatoes are now in the trading shed. In the case of the last of these, Desiree potatoes have already sold out, so hurry to avoid disappointment.

Thanks to all those who help in manning the shed and those who take part in unloading and distributing deliveries.

## 3. MISCELLANEA

### Next Committee Meeting:

7:30 p.m. - Monday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2024 at the CResCent Resource Centre. (Warbler Drive, Earley, RG6 4HB)

### Shed stewards and assistants this month.

3 <sup>rd</sup>	John Peacock	Carole Peacock
4 <sup>th</sup>	Trevor Wilson	Peter Scott
10 <sup>th</sup>	Kay Bridges	Bob Campbell
11 <sup>th</sup>	Jackie Lesley	Rowena Hughes
17 <sup>th</sup>	Kay Bridges	Bob Campbell
18 <sup>th</sup>	Neal Stockwell	Phil Horsburgh
24 <sup>th</sup>	Trudy Rehman	Viv Rimmer
25 <sup>th</sup>	Malcolm Iosson	Torkill Fozzard

### A note from Dave Croton

Sitting in my garden over the last few weeks, I noticed we have a lasting visitation from six green parakeets which have taken up residence in a neighbour's tree. Although they are a delight to watch with their almost fluorescent lime green colour and noisy raucous screech, I fear that in the summer they could become a nuisance for anyone who grows fruit as they will strip a plant in minutes. They are prolific breeders and seem to feel at home in this country. There has been a colony of them in Old Windsor, by the river, for years now, but it seems they have now spread to sunny Earley. I suggest members ensure their fruit beds and smaller trees are netted or protected.

### Woodley Repair Cafe

Another repair café has been started in Woodley. It runs from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. on the first Sunday of the month in the hall at Christ Church on the Crockhamwell Road, Woodley, Reading, RG5 3LA.

Further information is available from Carol Jewell

[carolannjewell@gmail.com](mailto:carolannjewell@gmail.com)

or

[www.woodleyrepaircafe.co.uk](http://www.woodleyrepaircafe.co.uk)

*A recent press release gives some idea of what to expect:*

People visiting the Repair Café will bring along their broken items from home. Toasters, lamps, hair dryers, clothes, bikes, toys ... anything that is broken is welcome. Tea and coffee will be available. By promoting repairs, the Woodley Repair Café wants to help reduce mountains of waste.

"We throw away piles of stuff; even things which practically have nothing wrong with them. The Woodley Repair Café wants to change all that; many items could easily be used again after a simple repair. Repair Café organiser Carol Jewell explained. The Café is also meant to put neighbours in touch with each other in a new way, discovering that a lot of know-how and practical skills can be found close to home. People will be able to bring their broken items and, together with the fixers, they may start making repairs in an ongoing learning process. If people have nothing to repair, they can still enjoy a cup of tea or coffee or lend a hand. (Tool sharpening also available)

### Asian Hornet Invasive Species

The following message was received recently. Members may be interested to know how the hornets can be identified. The attachment mentioned can be supplied by requesting it through our email address [erhs@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:erhs@hotmail.co.uk).

At my local gardening club we recently had a talk from the Beekeepers' Association which included a reference to the problems with Asian hornets. You may well be aware that this is an aggressive and invading species, Personally I was not aware of the extent that this invader can cause problems to British wildlife and agriculture. Also I was not aware of the official need to report any sightings so that the authorities can identify and remove nests before the species spreads. The hornet preys on a wide range of insects including honeybees (*Apis mellifera*) and disrupts the ecological role they provide. It has also altered the biodiversity in regions of France where it is present and can be an important health risk to people who have allergies to hornet or wasp stings. We need to try and avoid the same damage to the UK environment.

If you don't have the information from the Beekeepers Assn and the Dept of Agriculture, I have attached some official info that you might find useful to publish to your members. Apparently, the Asian hornet has already been sighted in the UK dozens of times and as far north as York, so it is a serious problem as it seeks to attack and destroy our native wasps and bees.

### Things to do this month.



#### **1. Plan for an early vegetable crop**

Gardeners with greenhouses or polytunnels can begin planting early carrot, broad bean and beet varieties in border soil, containers or growbags that will crop well ahead of those grown outdoors. At the end of the month

those fortunate gardeners in the warmer and drier parts of the UK with well-drained, sheltered and sunny outdoor locations can at least begin to contemplate sowing early pea varieties or broad beans if weather conditions allow and if the soil is warm enough.

#### **2. Net fruit and veg to keep birds away**

Wildlife has been struggling through the harshest season of the year, and it's only natural for individuals to cash in on the gardener's labours for an easy meal. The woodpigeon is by far the worst offender and these large birds - whose numbers are swollen by winter migrants from Scandinavia and other cold regions - can strip cabbage and pea foliage, soiling what they don't destroy.

#### **3. Protect fruit trees from frost**

Our fruit trees and bushes, which are virtually dormant over winter, are generally resilient in the worst of weather. However, during the month, very early apricots, nectarines, peaches, pears and plums can become vulnerable to frost as their buds and flowers open and shoots develop. Large trees and bushes must take their chances, but dwarf or wall-trained fruit can be protected.

#### **4. Divide snowdrop bulbs**

Snowdrops are typically the first blooms of the new year. To improve the show for the following year, canny gardeners can divide snowdrop bulbs once the plants have finished flowering and before the plants go back underground for the summer in late spring.

#### **5. Prune hardy evergreen hedges**

Straggling deciduous hedges can be rejuvenated with considered renewal pruning during January and February, before bird nesting begins from March. Vigorous new growth will follow any cutting, so the plan should be to rejuvenate an old hedge over successive winters by taking out a few of the oldest and poorest-performing branches. Staggering the pruning will pay dividends in the long run.

#### **4. WANTED/FOR SALE/FREE**

*Members' advertisements are free of charge. Just telephone or email the editor (see newsletter heading.)*

*[Copy deadline for the next newsletter is Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> February.](#)*

**For Sale:** Atco lawn mower in excellent condition with a Honda engine. It is self-propelled and does stripes. £200 o.n.o. If interested, please call Ian on 07483 235537.

**Unless otherwise stated, where items are free, a donation to the Air Ambulance (when you next visit the trading shed) would be appreciated.**

Kindly  
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MAIDEN ERLEGH  
SCHOOL