



WHALEY BRIDGE Allotment & Gardeners' Society



MARCH 2021

SPRING INTO ACTION

Spring officially begins on the 20th of March and the clocks spring forward on the 28th March at the start of Holy Week. Like myself, many of you will have had at least one shot of vaccine by now and will be starting to make tentative plans for the future.

On these bright sunny days it is very tempting to start cutting back and clearing up but as we well know, the nights are still frosty and the weather often has a few more surprises in store for us in this part of the world.

However there is still plenty to occupy us planting and transplanting our seeds from the seed scheme. Roger Wood is busy diving perennials from his garden and has locally grown, Whaley hardy plants for sale. Contact him on WB732112 or e-mail roger.wood@haddonpaper.com

David Osborn will be opening the **Elnor Lane store** on Sundays (not Weds) from 18th April to 27th June this year, between 10am and noon. See attached price list. Please **phone** him on WB733659 or mobile phone 07815021904 to book a suitable appointment. COVID rules make it unlikely the annual plant swap will go ahead this year.

We welcome a new member, Mrs Jennifer Hallam to our group and look forward to meeting her soon at events.

The committee will be meeting as soon as allowed to plan a programme for this year and full details will follow in the next newsletter.

A walk around my garden shows many signs of new growth and early colour from heathers, pulmonaria, hellebores, snowdrops, crocus and primroses.

I particularly like these early purple crocus which always come in February and have happily spread in the 40 plus years since I planted them.



I hear that Rosemary may be planning a return trip to Ashwoods nursery which specialises in hellebores and these hardy plants now come in a range of colours including some

that hold up their heads rather than hiding their beautiful markings.



Other specialities include hardy cyclamen, hepaticas, lewisia and primula auricular so there should be something for everyone including a tea shop!

I don't think anyone now disputes the health benefits of being outdoors, gardening and connecting with nature. I am watching blackbird standoffs in the garden whilst typing this as a dominant male, who has eaten his fill of mealworms, is acting as dog in a manger with the rest. One little robin is my constant companion when outside and is now happy to be handfed. There has been a massive and ongoing decline of pollinators - bees, wasps, moths and beetles are all important in the pollination of our flowers and crops. As gardeners we can help to reverse

this trend by growing a diversity of different shapes and sizes of flowers to suit different pollinators. Even the smallest garden can have a mini meadow with a mix of cornfield annuals such as poppies, marigolds and cornflowers which can be sown from seed directly into a pot.



I now plant annual nectar bars and, being easily amused, am happy to sit watching humming bird moths drinking their fill.



Out and About.

The National Garden Scheme are again opening gardens but at the moment we still have to stay local. They have a number of bookable talks online and 190 virtual garden visits full of handy tips and advice from the owners. RHS Tatton is planned to go ahead from 21st to 25th July but there is no date for the Chatsworth Show. National Trust gardens are open to visitors holding a pre booked ticket and

places like the winter garden at Dunham Massey are well worth a visit at this time of year depending on your interpretation of “stay local”.

There are also some plant hunter fairs planned – Arley Hall on Saturday 17th April, Sugnall Walled Garden, Eccleshall on Sunday 18th April, Adlington Hall on Sunday 9th May and Carsington Water on Monday 31st May.

Plant fairs offer an opportunity to meet knowledgeable specialist growers and buy more unusual varieties than the limited range available at garden centres.



Buying UK grown plants also helps bio security as the range of imported pests and diseases grows ever longer.

For those of you who want to find spring inspiration closer to home there are some fabulous virtual tours of the Keukenhof gardens online filmed during 2020 when no one was allowed to visit in person.

Allotment news.

Our chair, Roy reports from the allotments where he has long been a plot holder. In order to prevent winter flooding the provision of raised beds has been going on apace. In winter the water table is very high on a number of plots and it is hoped

that by using raised beds it will enable plot holders to work above the water level in preparation for spring planting.



One of the pleasing aspects of life on the allotments has been the increasing number of children helping out as potential future allotmenters. This shed is one of their colourful contributions.



Situation vacant.

I have now been producing the WBAGS newsletter for 10 years and would welcome an apprentice. I produce the copy in Word format and email it to Bob who handles distribution.

Bee happy and stay safe.

