

# Bishop's Waltham Gardening Club



### **Newsletter Spring 2018**

#### Welcome to the Gardening Club's Bumper Spring Edition.

#### **Slugs and Snails**

We are heavily promoting the 'safer' slug pellets and a useful tip concerns spreading the pellets over a wider area. If you have new plants, or slug sensitive established ones, the usual method is to surround the plants with pellets. Trouble is that, once a few slugs/snails have been clobbered, they use up part of that circle, thus leaving a clear path for others. Hence, the advice to "spread 'em around a bit". Also, try small saucers of beer (leave the saucer about 1" 'proud' of the soil so that other wildlife doesn't fall in) and don't forget that regularly disturbing the soil will deter them, watering in the morning will avoid them, and using pea gravel or similar will give them sore feet!

#### Peat free? Well, almost.

Most of us would probably use a peat-free compost, but are there any to match the standard composts that we buy at reasonable prices in the Garden Centres? A lot of criticism has been pointed at the peat-free types, from drying out too quickly to the lack of quality in the product itself – disappointing when one pays extra for the privilege! Perhaps we can give it a 'halfway-house' trial with a 50/50 mix, and seeing where we go from there.

Keith Fry makes his own compost and it is peat free. Just using Coir, Pro-Grow and Pearlite –the latter two available from our 'Shop at the Shed- he makes a very light, porous, compost. Better to water free-draining compost than a soggy peat-based one. As wise-owl Keith says, "under-watering may damage a plant- but overwatering will kill it!"

#### Coffee, cake and plants.

When we visit Garden Centres and have a wander around, our attention is often drawn to pots of bright, flowering plants —more so if they are in a display. They look so good, and one can see where they would fit in one's own garden. So, home you go with your newfound friend. Carefully, you dig the planting hole, pop some compost around, and gently firm the beautiful plant in its new home. Giving it a good water, you note that it will rain the next day, so no need to water again. Sadly, the plant seems to be failing after a while and, if they do survive, never seem to be so vigorous and may even disappear after the Winter. Why is this? My feeling is that, because the plant has been grown in optimum conditions, it is growing at its maximum 'capacity' and, when the more variable conditions in your garden occur, it cannot cope. Also, we can be to blame by not watering enough, after all, it's roots take time to spread, especially when so much energy is going into the flowers. So, what do we do? I have tried two methods, both of which are controversial. For small plants, I cut off all the flowers! This relieves the plant of the pressure to flower and make seed, and allows it to grow leaves, which, after all, are its lungs. For a larger plant with a sturdy root system, I might lop of half the flowers, still leaving a good display but, again, reducing the strain on the plant.

# **Neonicotinoids** - what are they, who uses them and should they be banned?

Neonics are insecticides - used to kill a variety of pests such as aphids (greenfly and blackfly) and root-feeding grubs. They act as a nerve poison on the insect, causing paralysis and eventual death. A very topical subject !!! They are systemic pesticides ie they are absorbed by the whole plant and transported to all its tissues (from root to flower) including the pollen and nectar. This affects bees and other pollinators, as well as worms in the soil, birds from eating the seeds, and aquatic life from the run-off into rivers and streams.

#### Don't shoot the messenger!

When you see an infestation of aphids or suchlike, it is so easy to reach for a 'bug gun' or bug killer of similar type. Whilst you want to rid your plants of these pests, do you really want to kill friends as well as foe? Please check carefully, the details on the bottle/pack as you may see something like.."...dangerous to Bees. Do not use where bees are actively foraging..... risk to nontarget insects or other arthropods.." In other words, it is going to clobber pretty well everything! As a caring gardener, is this the result you really want? I use a powerful spray of water to get rid of most aphids and similar troublemakers. Why not try it and, whilst it may catch the odd 'friend' it certainly doesn't wipe them out.

#### Will you harm your friends?

We all know that Thrushes seem to be rarer than ever, but are we guilty of accelerating this by using metaldehyde slug pellets? The Song Thrush's diet includes worms, insects, berries and snails. The latest research suggests that they eat snails only when the ground has become baked or frozen and they cannot dig out worms, etc. They smash the snail's shell against an anvil (usually a rock). Blackbirds often steal the snail after the Song Thrush has cracked it open. Song Thrushes often feed under or close to cover, unlike Mistlethrushes that often feed out in the open. **So, are we also killing Blackbirds as well?** 

#### Super potatoes.

It seems the best way may be to use potato bags. Then you can fill them with compost and not risk lumpy, clayey soil or stones. Rub out all but one or two 'eyes'. This will give larger potatoes but less of a crop. Try it for fun, and maybe win our own 'in allotment' competition and go on to enter the Annual Open Show on July 21<sup>st</sup>.

#### **Friends United?**

If you want to encourage hover flies, as they and their offspring are voracious hunters of aphids, do sow some Calendula –single flowers are best- and these easy-togrow plants will repay you with a mass of colour and encourage some helpers for your garden. Grow in pots or sow direct into the soil.

In dry weather, bird lovers make sure that a bird bath is readily available, but also think of small mammals and invertebrates and put some water at ground level.

#### There be dragons in your garden!

But, if not, see <u>www.arc-trust.org</u> and see how you can garden to encourage amphibians and reptiles **Don't disturb.....** your compost heap until later in the year, except for adding to it, of course. Slow worms, snakes and lizards use the heat of the composting process as a nursery. Incidentally, Adders, Smooth Snakes, Common Lizards and Slow Worms all give birth to live young, but the Grass Snake lays her eggs in a place where warmth will encourage incubation –hence the compost heap is a good choice.

#### Spring planting.

Bright light washes out cooler colours, so blues, greens and purples are better suited to shaded areas. Experiment by positioning plants in their pots before putting them in the ground. That way you can move them around and adjust them to arrive at the best look.

#### Tips from the compost heap

Don't try to propagate your own garlic. By nature it becomes progressively more diseased when growing in the soil. It is also not advisable to plant cloves bought from a supermarket, as they may carry disease. Buy them from the 'shop at the shed'.

Very small seeds can be mixed with a bit of sand before sowing. This is not only economical, but also prevents them from being sown too thickly.

Parsley seed can be very slow to germinate. To speed things up, soak in warm water overnight before sowing. If you're starting a veg plot on very weedy ground, potatoes may help swamp weeds with their rapidly growing foliage. They are often planted to 'clean the ground' in this way. A scaffold board is a useful piece of vegetable-planting kit. You can stand on it for planting so the soil surface is never compacted, it can be used as a straight edge for marking a line for sowing seeds, and it's the perfect spacer between rows of veg.

#### S-O-S Save our sowings!

Slugs and snails (I seem to have mentioned these before!) often make a beeline for newly-planted specimens, so concentrate your efforts on protecting these, rather than every plant in your garden. Slugs hate caffeine, as it causes them to produce an excess of slime, which immediately dries them out and prevents them from moving onto, and then eating, your plants. Spent coffee grounds spread around a line of emerging seedlings or a new plant will keep the slugs off. On a similar subject, not all tea/coffee bags are suitable for the ground as the bag itself can contain chemicals not suited to plant growth. So, a bit messy, but maybe empty out the bag and just use the leaves/grounds inside.

# GardenAdvice.co.uk has a useful section for our younger gardeners.

**Cover those strawberries!** Last year I had a superb early crop of strawberries and looked forward to many more later in the year. I began to notice the lack of 'berries' and also that it seemed someone had carefully cropped the tops, leaving just stalks. I had a little security camera that was supposed to be good at night, and managed to capture this ghostly image of the culprit. He (or, more probably, 'they') was/were recorded as visiting between the hours of 1am and 4am. It took quite a while for the plants to recover, and some did not!

#### Cutting remarks.

If you are going to grow plants from cuttings, a 50/50 mix of potting compost and perlite (available from our 'Shop at the Shed) is a good medium. Too little drainage and many cuttings will die, but they do need moisture to reduce evaporation, so a plastic bag over the top –not touching the cutting- will help. Keep in a well-lit, but shaded position.

#### The 'Pest' advice you can get!

We mention slugs/snail (again!) and the damage they can cause, but there is another way to avoid killing everything in sight. Grow plants that don't attract the ravages of pests. For instance, my Lilies were clobbered by that pesky red beetle. So, next year I will grow something else! Don't also forget that killing caterpillars deprives you of butterflies!!!

If you work late, and don't see much of your garden, even in the longer summer evenings, try planting white or yellow flowers as these will show up better in the twilight, and choose some perfumed plants. Thus, with a glass of your favourite tipple, you can sit outside, relax and enjoy your garden a bit more.

#### Talking of perfumes in the garden

The Romans introduced Lavender into Britain, and used it to smother on their clothing. In the 1700/1800 years in

London, a nosegay of Lavender was used to keep out the stench from the Thames and the sewers. However, in the 1600's, it was thought to keep away bed bugs and the plague. It must work as we have lavender in our garden, and we haven't suffered from either!

A plug for plugs, but don't go mad! Many seeds need special treatment (usually controlled temperature and moisture) so that growing them can be a time consuming and, often, painful, experience. So, plugs are the answer. They usually come in three sizes with the smallest usually packed in a small box, the largest often in individual mini-pots of some sort. All but the 'garden ready' will need several weeks of care before planting out. Upon arrival soak them up to the top of the root-ball with cool water -maybe not rainwater as this can harbour virus' and bacteria that can harm tender young plants. Leave in a light, but not sunny, position for a few days to settle, with watering if necessary. With a growing 'top' they will need active roots which need moisture. Then -again with moist roots- pot them on into a good quality multi-compost. Harden off (outside during the day, inside at night) until weather and soil conditions have improved. Don't plant too early as the shock will set them back. Warm soil will see them growing away like mad so it's worth the wait, even if your neighbour planted theirs weeks before. Patience really is a virtue with planting

#### A cold winter kills pests.



It does seem to affect slugs and snails which inhabit the upper regions of the soil but, surprisingly, a mild winter can see the end of many pest such as greenfly. The moist weather sees bacteria thrive which kills the pest. So, either way, Nature does help us in the pest department But when it doesn't..... at the first sign of 'the fly' spray with water as it knocks them back and they take a while to recover. This is a much better way than 'bug spraying' which is not fussy about what it kills - friend or foe! Slugs and snails are designed to eat decaying vegetation, but -as we all know- will take a tender shoot when offered one. Give this a try, see if it works and keep us informed at www.bwgc.org.uk . Take one bulb of garlic, crush and add to 1ltr of water. Heat gently for 5 minutes, strain, bottle and keep in the fridge -but don't forget to label, unless you want to stop the kids guzzling the 'R. White's Lemonade!!! To use, mix one tablespoon to 1ltr of water and spray onto your plants. If you have any other methods - apart from a 12-bore shotgun please also let us know.

**If you garden on clay** -and most of us do- then watering is a real necessity in dry times. However, you will find

that, often, the water will just run off the hard surface. Strange as it may seem, this can be overcome by *lightly watering* the soil first and *then* giving it a good soak.

#### Tastes like Heaven, smells like Hell! Not to be sniffed at!!

The fruit of the Durian, more commonly grown in S.E. Asia. Described as a 'rich custard highly flavoured with almonds' its interior is sublime, due to its raw outward smell it is banned in Singapore and in most hotels and on public transport!!

The ever popular Pea is a type of legume and makes a welcome addition to so many dishes. As with all legumes, their sugars turn to starch shortly after they are picked, so they are best eaten or frozen soon after picking.

Sweet Peas are great plants for a vase of showy, scented flowers, but leave them on the plant and they quickly run to seed, ruining the plants vigour. By growing up a vertical support (e.g. chicken wire or netting) anchored by canes as opposed to 'pyramids' or 'wigwams', the flowers are more easily picked from both sides, and you are less likely to miss a stray bloom that would run to seed.

#### Allotment Danger!

The Club has overall responsibility regarding Health and Safety. These much scoffed at words are often used to rail against seemingly absurd rules and regulations. However, one cannot deny that many risks have been negated by sensible application and many lives and injuries saved through their use.

In this vein, we ask allotment holders to stop using ordinary glass. These will probably be for cloches and for protecting plants from frost in similar ways. Whilst you may feel that you are happy with their application, the Trustees must point out that, should members of the public wander around the allotments and 'come a cropper', there could be liability if the risk was avoidable.

With so many alternatives, we would ask that you look at these and act accordingly. You may find safer, better ways. Is now the time to change? Finally we all have a responsibility to be aware of and report and matter concerning H&S. So, use or website <u>www.bwgc.org.uk</u>, or contact one of the Trustees named on our noticeboard at Albany Road. Be alert.....after all we need as many lerts as we can get!!!!!

# An apple a day.....could keep the doctor away for over SIX YEARS.

Did you know.... that you could eat a different kind of English apple every day for more than six years without eating the same variety twice? The Peoples Trust for Endangered Species <u>www.ptes.org</u> has a new on-line database. They are helping cider makers, nurseries, orchard owners and gardeners grow their own varieties.

**Do you need a 'Man'**. No, we haven't turned into a dating magazine (but it's a thought!!!!) Our 'green and pleasant land' can only be so because of the regular

amounts of rain we receive. For those gardening on clay... you have my sympathy, especially when your boots are clogged up with the stuff, as it gets everywhere and can quickly rust valuable gardening tools. So, how do you best clean your boots? Get a 'Man'. This was invented by an un-named Navvy when working on England's canal system. Clean tools were vital for their work and this invention was deemed to be worth an extra 'man' on the team.

### The Gardening Club's Year Ahead. Book these in your diary

| 25 <sup>th</sup> April | 'Shrubs, the backbone of your garden' |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------|
|                        | with Geoff Hawkins                    |
| 12 <sup>th</sup> May   | Red Lion Street Plant Sale            |
| 23 <sup>rd</sup> May   | 'Soft Fruit: All aspects of growing'  |
|                        | with Peter Barwick                    |
| 27 <sup>th</sup> June  | 'Highdown – Secrets of a Chalk        |
|                        | Garden ' with Lesley Chamberlain      |
|                        |                                       |

#### **MEMBERS' ROSE & SWEET PEA SHOW**

#### ROSES

Class 1 - a specimen Rose - to be named

- Class 2 3 stems, any varieties
- Class 3 3 sprays cluster Roses
- Class 4 the biggest Rose

#### SWEET PEAS

Class 1 – 6 stems, same variety

Class 2 – 6 stems, mixed

- Class 3 6 stems, old-fashioned
- Class 4 1 stem, most highly scented

#### 21st July Open Annual Flower and Produce Show

26<sup>th</sup> Sept. 'Gardens of Japan' with John Baker

See our posters in;

Red Lion Street Priory Park Newtown Newsagent Dean Lane for more information.

All except Red Lion St. and the Annual Show will be held at The Junior School, Ridgemede. Members are admitted free and a small Guest charge of £2 is made for non-members.

# Here's a thought..... why do we have rainy days? So gardeners can get the housework done!

#### Lily Beetle, the little Red Devils

They seem to have been around for years, but 'appeared' in Scotland around 2002 and have rapidly spread. Like most 'foreign bodies', be they animal or vegetable, natural predators have yet to reach adequate proportions. They can easily be seen so one wonders why they are bright red! Probably to deter predators, such as they are, but the red colour does help the gardener. However, by the time you grab one it may well have laid loads of eggs. To keep numbers down, look for 'bird poo' on lilies, as this may well be the way the beetle disguises its eggs. Destroy them whenever seen and your lilies will be much the better for it. The adults have a habit of dropping off the leaf and then hiding under the plant if disturbed making your job even harder. They can also fly to the plants. Best to wear thin rubber gloves when disposing of the adults or eggs.

#### **Suttons Seeds**

We have an arrangement with Suttons Seeds which, over the years, has saved our Members £thousands. This continues until late Spring, and should then continue for the coming year Autumn 2018 through to late Spring 2019. **The savings are; 50% of all seeds and 15% off all other items** (excl carriage). You must use the special code which is supplied to the Club and then passed on to its members in order to get the discount – then it is automatically applied when you order online. In the past, we have ordered dozens of brochures and delivered to those interested.

We have now arranged for them to send your brochure direct to you, provided that you advise me at <u>robinbreach@btconnect.com</u> and I will forward your request to Suttons. If you are already receiving brochures etc., from Suttons you do NOT need to do anything, you will get your literature automatically but you WILL need that code.

#### Is it them, or me??

Leading on from this, I do sometimes hear gardeners says that "so and so's seeds are useless, I planted some last Spring and none came up". Yes, it is painful, but seeds are tested for germination and one cannot surely say that all the seeds were bad? Often it's weather; too hot/cold, or too wet/dry. Maybe planted too deep/shallow? We can even kill them with kindness –too much fertiliser? These are delicate little things, and can suffer through small variations. Best to throw them on the compost heap.... Then they are bound to grow!! It's also why I go for plug plants every time.

#### Don't moan if you have mown!

I am an advocate of not mowing lawns too close. This allows the grass to smother weeds, draw adequate moisture and keep the roots cool, thus avoiding the worst effects of a drought –however temporary in our climate! It has other benefits for wildlife, as birds can peck around in the grass, thus adding to their diet, especially when they are nesting which takes a huge toll of their energy and calcium.

Incidentally, lawns were originally status symbols of the aristocracy and gentry – I have a lawn!!

#### Crawlers aren't so creepy.

Caterpillars are not all bad! Yes, those dreaded 'Cabbage Whites' are exempt from this article! Often we see a caterpillar and don't know what it is. Space means I cannot give details or pictures but it is probably of no threat to your crops, as many feast on trees and shrubs which can cope with a few leaves being eaten. If you see one feeding during the day, it may have a defensive mechanism. Many eat poisonous plants, so are vile to taste and many of these will have bright colours to warn potential predators that they are poisonous. Leaf-cutter bees usually cause slices of leaves to disappear, but they are solitary foragers and, again, the plant can afford the loss. So, if you see a caterpillar, leave it in peace. Warn children that most 'hairy' ones can cause irritation and possible reactions if touched.

Allotments; Raised Beds; Childrens plots. From time-to-time these become available so please leave a message on our website if you are interested and we will be in touch. <u>www.bwgc.org.uk</u>

Look what I found on the compost heap!



This little sweetie didn't mind the cold and wet on the first day of re-opening the Shed. Will she still be a keen gardener in a few years' time, though?

#### Weed Early

If you weed early in the season,, you'll have fewer problems later in the growing season. Remove annual weeds before they reach 3 inches tall. Preferably on a sunny day, using a sharp-edged hoe, gently slice the weeds just below the soil surface to kill them. The sun will help kill the weeds so they don't re-sprout. Slicing the weeds less than 2 inches below the surface will avoid bringing more weed seeds to the surface.

#### Data Protection Act 1998.

This has now been updated but please be assured that our Treasurer Chris Curtis, and our Secretary, Sue Curtis, have been working very hard to ensure that the gardening Club adheres to the rules. Briefly, the <u>Data</u> <u>Protection Act</u> controls how your personal information is used by organisations, businesses or the government. Everyone responsible for using data has to follow strict rules called 'data protection principles'. They must make sure the information is:

- used fairly and lawfully
- used for limited, specifically stated purposes
- used in a way that is adequate, relevant and not excessive
- accurate
- kept for no longer than is absolutely necessary
- handled according to people's data protection rights
- kept safe and secure

We will be in touch just as soon as the lengthy and detailed preliminaries are completed. Notwithstanding the new rules, this Club does not, nor does it intend to, share personal information with anyone outside of the Club and, mostly, within it.

#### Junior School news.

Although we generally approve of our new 'home' for monthly meetings at the Junior School, our change coincided with building works which have severely restricted the parking. We do hope that, before long, this will all be completed and thank you all for your forbearance.

The other little problem is that those using the swimming pool are leaving just as we are arriving. One suggestion is that we start just 15 minutes later at 7.45p.m. to avoid this clash, and to make more parking immediately available. Your views, please, www.bwgc.org.uk



The picture on the left was taken in mid-January, just when one would expect some snow. The one on the right was in the third week in March. Good old British weather!

I was going to entitle the right hand picture as 'what, no customers' but Ian and Melissa Newton took pity on me and kindly made several purchases!

#### THE SHOP AT THE SHED .. Tim Gover reports;

The Shop has experienced a poor start to the year due, almost certainly, to the atrocious wet and cold weather. So in an attempt to boost our sales in the remainder of the year I thought it might be a good idea to explain to new members and remind others why we have run a shop for many years.

First of all the profit we make helps to keep our subscriptions and allotment rents as low as possible. Most of the products we sell are sourced from a local wholesaler so we aim to sell on to you at a price somewhere between the wholesale and retail price. We can only do this because nobody who helps to run the Shop gets paid. Obviously there are occasions when we cannot compete with some of the big retailers when they put on special offers but this brings me onto our second reason for existing.

We are providing a service to our members so that even if one of the retailers at Hedge End are selling 3 bags of compost for £1 less than we are is it really worth spending an hour or so travelling over there and spending money on petrol to get there?

Thirdly there is a nice social side to the activity. You will always receive a welcome if you just come into the Shed on a Saturday or Sunday morning for a chat and, maybe, a cup of coffee. Most gardeners are always happy to share knowledge which they have acquired over the years so if you are unsure about anything don't be afraid to come in and ask.

At this time of the year we sell a good range of seed potatoes, onion sets and shallots and the important thing to remember here is that these are sold loose so you only buy exactly what you need. The same applies to some of our fertilisers although we can also supply these in the original 25kg sacks. If you have an allotment then you will have the occasional battle with pigeons, deer, caterpillars or whitefly and we offer a number of plant protection materials to help you win. These are sold by the metre so again only buy the quantity you need.

All gardeners need string from time to time and yet I am always amazed at how little we sell. At £3.00 for a huge ball it is just a snip!Similarly plant labels are £1.00 for 40. These are just a few of the things available in our Shop so why not pay us a visit in the near future? Finally, if any of you are not able to get to Albany Road or are not able to carry, for example, a bag of compost just give me a ring on 895218 and I will deliver to your door.

**The Butterfly Garden** (adjacent to the Station Roundabout, just by the crossing gate) A huge 'Thank You' to 'Kinetic Signs' as they very kindly made a new sign for the Butterfly Garden and donated it to the Club. The new sign is up and looks great!

Ann Magrath - ,who works tirelessly to keep this garden looking good- would welcome any helpers to keep this lovely little garden in order, as a couple of previous helpers have been forced to give up.

#### Calling all allotment holders....

Linda Marais has kindly sent the following. I haven't looked at the site, but I am sure it will be of interest to you. Thanks, Linda

"I saw this project written about in the latest RHS magazine and thought it may be good to advertise it to our allotment members in case anyone would like to participate: <u>https://myharvest.org.uk/2017/12/calling-all-growers/"</u>

#### News from our Secretary, Sue Curtis. 1. Red Lion Street Plant Sale, Saturday 12th May.

In the absence as yet of a Trustee or volunteer to take on the organising of this year's Plant Sale our Secretary, Sue Curtis, is currently managing it. She asks, please could you sow a few extra seeds of all your flowers and veg in order to have some nicely potted and labelled plants available for sale? Also, if you are dividing perennials please pot up, and label with species, colour and variety if known, for us, same for shrubs. Sue has also again this year ordered plug plants to grow on for sale but is in need of 5 - 8cm (2.5 - 3.0") plant pots for them. If you have any please contact her via the website contact form on <u>www.bwgc.org.uk</u> for collection or delivery. Also, if you have room in your greenhouse to look after them for us please contact – Sue does not have space for 350 pots in hers!

Red Lion Street Plant Sale is a popular event in the local community and is also our best funds raiser of the year – for each of the last few years we have made about £600. Please do your bit to make it a success again in 2018!

#### 2. <u>Member's Discount on Purchases from Ashridge</u> <u>Trees</u>.

This retailer, based in Somerset, has offered Club

members a discount of 15% on any purchases from their website <u>www.ashridgetrees.co.uk</u>. They sell fruit trees and bushes plus some ornamentals. Their website is most helpful and they also offer plenty of advice on the website on pollinators, varieties, planting and pruning. Ordering and delivery are clear and efficient. To get the discount use the code BWGC2018 on the checkout page.

#### 3. RHS Reduced Entry Tickets

We have again purchased 2 Affiliated Members tickets from the RHS. Each card allows one member of an Affiliated Society and one adult guest a reduction of 30% on the normal adult entry rate at any of the four RHS gardens in the country. The card must be produced when buying the tickets at entry. The card is not valid for special events or on a Sunday at Wisley. The four gardens are Rosemoor in Devon, Harlow Carr in Yorkshire, Hyde Hall in Essex and Wisley in Surrey. It is valid until the end of February 2019. To borrow the card contact Sue Curtis on 01489 896192. There is a £10 deposit payable, refunded on return of the card

#### Second year at Sparsholt College

As you may be aware, the Gardening Club has sponsored a student to attend Sparsholt College. We do appreciate the way she has responded and always keeps us in touch.....

This will be my final year at Sparsholt. So far it's been a great learning experience as I have been doing lots of practical things like some hard landscaping, brick laying, working in the tropical house and green houses and so much more. One of the main subjects has been on grafting and how this can benefit plants but we are doing the grafting ourselves (which is a lot harder than it looks).

Our written side has been on the sustainability of all things green and how horticulture has been a massive impact on the world. We also have been learning organics and how a more organic world can improve on our wellbeing.

This year are main focus will be on the Chelsea Flower Show as we are entering our own garden design and constructing it. We get to build, add graphics, plant and get more experience in team work which so far has been turning out great. So far we have a design laid out and planting has already occurred. I hope by the end of May when Chelsea is on we can reach for a gold.

The Bishops Waltham Gardening Club has been so much help with helping me pay for the travelling, the licences and the trips and I am so grateful you carried all the way through till my last year. Thanks again.

#### Trip Adviser

We have various interesting trips this year, thanks to Gill Stainer. Please see <u>www.bwgc.org.uk</u> for the latest news and availability.