

GET GARDENING

For the first time in a while, I decided to pen an article which runs through some gardening tasks that you could be doing over the next few weeks. Hopefully, you will be inspired enough to run out there into your garden and find a whole range of other jobs to do too.

Firstly, the earliest dwarf *French Beans* will now be ready for picking. Gathering them whilst young and tender will avoid them becoming stringy. It's important to keep gathering them as they become ready, then the plants will keep on bearing more and more. Shallots will be ripening if they were planted early enough. The soil should be pulled away from the cloves a little a few days prior to picking, so the sun can get to them and aid ripening.

Sow moss-curl *Endive* now to produce an autumn crop. Put the seeds into a seed tray with some good compost, and grow them on, before transplanting them. When they are ready for planting out, place them 12 inches apart with another 12 inches between rows. The moss-curl type is usually preferred to the *Batavian* for autumn and early winter usage.

Summer pruning of wall fruit and other trained types can begin. Plums and sweet cherries are done first, and pears soon after. Morello cherries, peaches and nectarines are not summer pruned, except to thin some of the surplus young shoots which shade the fruit from the sun. Water layered strawberry runners when they appear, and if silver leaf disease shows on plums, peaches or cherries, it must be cut out. When cut, a brown stain will be seen in the wood, and the branch must be cut back a section at a time, until the stain has disappeared. You then know you've removed the diseased area.

As the flowers of alpine plants die down on the rock garden, they should be cut off unless, like *Dryas octopetala*, they happen to have interesting fruits. Many of the ordinary alpines are better cut back fairly hard, flowers, stems, leaves and all. This prevents straggling, induces compact growth and encourages the throwing up of new shoots, which can be used for propagation. Kinds that can be treated in this way are *Arabis albida* (both single and double flowered varieties), *Aubretia*, *Helianthemums*, *Cerastium*, *Lithospermum prostratum* "Heavenly Blue", *Thymus serpyllum* varieties, some of the more robust mossy *Saxifrages*, *Gypsophila repens*, the evergreen *Candytuft* (*Iberis sempervirens*), *Violas* and many others of the spreading type. Some *Stonecrops* (*Sedum*) have a habit of spreading too readily, and so it pays to weed them out rather drastically when they overrun their own particular pocket. Species such as *Sedums Acre*, *Spurium* and *Album* are particularly prone to do this. The trimming and control of rock plants growing in dry stone walls should also be undertaken as they cease to flower. Annuals grown on the rock garden should be thinned as they require it.

Summer mowing should now be underway – twice a week cutting will be needed when the soil is moist. If there is a long dry spell, raise the height of the cut and do not use the grass box. This time of the year summer weeding and feeding of lawns is common place. If the lawn is off-colour, use a quick acting nitrogen feed such as Bio Lawn Tonic or sulphate of ammonia. Spot treat weeds, which have survived earlier treatment. Raking before mowing is important for keeping runners of clovers under control. Trim the edges of lawns regularly.

Well, there you have it. You must be able to find a task in that little lot you can do in your own garden, though you may well find another job as well whilst your out there. Beware, it's never ending, but so rewarding, don't you think?

Happy gardening.

STUART MABBUTT



MARCHAM SOCIETY WALKS

Thursday, July 6th.

The July walk will start in Hampstead Norreys and explore an area of the Berkshire Downs along old drove roads and through woodland. We will meet at The White Hart Public House near the church in Hampstead Norreys, (Map Ref: SU531763) at 12.30pm for lunch or 1.30 for the walk of about 5½ miles.

Thursday August 10th.

The August walk will be just over 4 miles long and we will be revisiting the hilly country east of Oxford and the valley of the River Thames taking in Chippinghurst and part of Garsington. We will meet in The Bat and Ball Inn, Cuddesdon (Map Ref: SP597029), timing as for July.

As always, new walkers are very welcome. Members free, non-members £1. Ring Eric Dunford on 391439 for lifts and details.

ON THE BUSES

Something completely different for the summer holidays!

When travelling to London by train how do you continue your journey from Paddington? Do you head straight for the Underground or have you discovered the scenic delights of going by bus? London Travelcards, purchased at Didcot Parkway or Oxford, allow you to roam far and wide, by bus as well as Underground.



Buses in central London move so much more quickly now thanks to the congestion charge. Journeys to Oxford Street, Regent Street, Piccadilly, Trafalgar Square and beyond can be made by the 15 and 23 - get off at Aldwych and enjoy the views from Waterloo Bridge before a visit to the London Eye or a walk along the South Bank to the Tate Modern. Buses on the 15 go on to St Paul's and the Tower.

Park Lane, Constitution Hill and Victoria are served by 36 and 436 - no upstairs views from the 436 but the Bendybuses are fun. And the 27 will take you to Camden Lock.

The newest route from Paddington is the 205, put on when the congestion charge was introduced - wonderfully skirting its northern edge serving Baker Street (Tussauds and change to the 274 for London Zoo), Euston, King's Cross / St Pancras and the British Library, the Angel, down City Road to Liverpool Street and along Whitechapel Road. So much more interesting than the Circle Line!

If you go by coach then the Oxford Bus, X90, goes to Baker Street, and similarly on Stagecoach's Oxford Tube, you get to Marble Arch and Victoria - and lots of buses to choose from to get to your destination.

Planning your trip is easy with the Transport for London website www.tfl.gov.uk - Journey Planner.

BUS SPOTTER

MARCHAM SENIOR CITIZENS' CLUB

Our last meeting began with a minute's silence in memory of Jack Spicer. For many years he was our treasurer and chairman and put in many hours of work to help the club and its members. He still attended our meetings and we shall miss his help in the kitchen. Our thoughts are with Elsa and the family at this sad time.

Our May's meeting had a Garden Party theme and was a way of raising money to help run the club for the next few months. We had a very busy table top which is always popular, a Tombola, Doll's name and a large raffle. Afterwards to close a very busy afternoon, a tea was served and prepared by the committee which everyone enjoyed (especially Edna's home-made cakes).

An outing has been arranged for July 4th when we shall be having tea at Stoke Row, WI. Our June meeting will be 29th and July's meeting on July 27th.

J PARRY

JUNE'S CROSSWORD ANSWERS BY ALISA

ACROSS: 1 Runner 7 Sharper 8 Cockles 10 Observe 12 Art exhibition 13 Seaport 15 Involve 17 Antonio 18 Tennis

DOWN 1 Ranch 2 Neck 3 Headship 4 Horse 5 Association 6 Appraisal 9 Contrasts 11 Expounds 13 Snake 14 Beans 16 Oven