

**YOU SAY TOMATO...**

With two Bank Holidays during the month of May, and the free time that that offers up, many of you may be turning your thoughts to that everlasting favourite, the good old tomato. Most people at some point, not just the committed gardener, experiment with tomatoes. Planting them in a range of containers and planting mediums, with various degrees of success. I personally saw an attempt at growing tomatoes in an old Wellington boot last year. However they are grown, there are a multitude of pests and diseases that attack our tomatoes. One of the most commonly ask questions put to me each year is "What's wrong with my tomatoes?"

In this month's column, I will quickly cover some of the common enemies of the tomato. In doing so, I hope you have some queries solved, and increased success in tomato growing.

*Root Rot*, is an all too common menace if tomatoes have poor drainage. The roots develop a cork like texture, and the leaves wilt during the dry summer weather. This is easily remedied if you grow them with good drainage with fresh compost each year.

*Greenhouse Whitefly* is also common, and is often found on the underside of a leaf in my experience. Often, a significant side effect of an infestation is that the fruits become very sticky. To cure your plants of Whitefly is almost impossible, but yellow flycatcher cards are suitably effective.

Another tomato problem is *Magnesium Deficiency*. This is diagnosed when you see the leaves turning stark yellow with the veins remaining green. Continuing to use a standard feed often worsens this condition. Using a fertilizer that contains Magnesium is a good preventative measure. But if your plants are suffering an attack already, a good foliar spray of Epsom Salts will most certainly help.

*Fruit Split* is very common if watering is inconsistent. Keep your plants moist at all times, because constant variations from dry to wet cause the skins to split when the tomatoes swell too quickly after a dry spell.

Finally, *Dry Setting* is another serious problem my clients often suffer. This problem is diagnosed when young fruit remain the size of a small pea. This problem is caused by conditions being too dry at the point of pollination. You cannot do anything if you already have this problem, but it can be avoided by lightly spraying the plant with water in the mornings, and evenings. Never ever spray them at midday though, or the sun will scorch the plants.

There are many other tomato problems, but solving these few initially will mean the benefit will be yours at harvest time when the yields increase. Enjoy!

**STUART MABBUTT**

**HAS ANYONE FOUND...**

a short gardening tool? Approx 2' yellow pole handle with triple claw end. Short, arthritic gardener would be glad to be reunited with it! Thank you.  
GG 391592

**ABINGDON BOWLING CLUB**

The new bowling season starts at the beginning of May. Abingdon Bowling Club situated in Albert Park are holding Open sessions on Friday 7th May from 5pm till 7.30pm, and on Sunday 9th May – 2pm till 7pm. Come along and try something different, all equipment provided by the club. Come and enjoy yourselves, tuition and refreshments provided free. If you require further information, ring Ray on 01235-524591.

**ABINGDON AND DISTRICT MUSICAL SOCIETY**

15 May 7.30 pm Amey Hall, Abingdon School

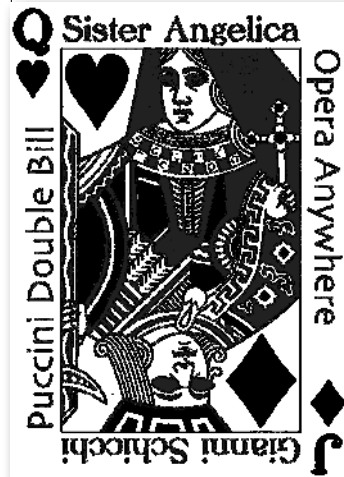
British Music Evening including:

Britten: Four Sea Interludes

Holst: Hymn of Jesus

Walton: Henry Vth Scenario (with speaker and chorus)

Tickets £8.50 (Concession £7.00, schoolchildren £1) available from Modern Music. New members always welcome, call 01865 735182 for more information.



At each venue picnics may be consumed before the performance – weather permitting!  
16 May 5pm  
Village Hall, Sunningwell  
18 June 8pm  
Unicorn Theatre, Abingdon  
19 June 8pm  
Sophos HQ, Abingdon  
20 June 8pm  
Unicorn Theatre, Abingdon  
9-10 July 8pm  
St Hilda's College, Oxford  
Tickets £15 (£12) 0870 7500659  
or www.musicatoxford.com

**LIVE JAZZ IN OXFORDSHIRE**

Last Friday of most months at the Inn on the Green, Carswell Golf and Country Club (on A420 between Faringdon and Buckland). Details and tickets from Richard Speed 01367 710593 £8/£7 Food also available 6.30–9pm but booking essential 01367 870472. Oxford Jazz Federation "Jazzfinder" for details of Oxon jazz events. OJF Membership, 1 Hardwicke Ave, Kidlington OX5 1BH. £4 p.a. but quickly "repaid" as it gives concessionary admission to numerous gigs – cheques payable to OJF.

**ANSWERS TO APRIL CROSSWORD**

- |               |             |             |               |
|---------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| <b>ACROSS</b> | 12 Iron     | 20 Stout    | 5 Talk to     |
| 1 Wine        | 13 Cottage  | 21 Hyde     | 6 Competition |
| 7 Heath       | 15 Polo     | <b>DOWN</b> | 11 Robin Hood |
| 8 Canoe       | 16 Starling | 2 Inglenook | 13 Coconut    |
| 9 Tea         | 17 Pop      | 3 Reverie   | 14 Garden     |
| 10 Best kept  | 19 Poker    | 4 Shy       | 18 Ass        |

**TALKING SCIENCE**

**AT RUTHERFORD APPLETON LABORATORY**

**Open Afternoon:** 26 May 2004, 1.30- 4.30 pm

**Instrumentation:** Detectors designed and built in this department allow scientists to image the X-ray emissions from the sun, to capture the spectrum of ultraviolet light transmitted by a protein as it unfolds and to detect the subtle pattern of neutrons diffracted from a high temperature superconductor. To reserve a free place or for more information, please contact Emma Gilgunn-Jones on 01235 445553 or email e.l.gilgunn-jones@cclrc.ac.uk.

**CHARITY SHOOT**

Macham School PTA would like to that the Marcham Gun Club for hosting a Charity Shoot in aid of the Village School. A big thanks to all who attended and all those who helped on a rather wet and windy day. The event raised over £350 for those extra little bits for the school and the pupils. A special thanks to Peter and Paul Mansbridge.

**JOHN WATERHOUSE**

*This should have been in last month – apologies, Ed*

To get your letter included please write to the editor by 20th month latest