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Charlton & Blackheath
Amateur Horticultural Society
Founded 1950

www.cabahs.wordpress.com

NEWSLETTER MARCH 2021

Grow Friends, Grow Fit ... Grow a Garden!

This month, we welcome Dr. David Marsh, garden historian and key member of the Gardens' Trust, who will talk to us about 'Elephants in the Garden'! There have been elephants in gardens since 1255 and this talk considers how menageries of one sort or another became "must have" garden features! I recently read that when the Columbian drug lord Pablo Escobar was shot dead in 1993, in addition to his multibillion dollar cocaine empire, he left behind a zoo stocked with wild animals. Many of the exotic species were relocated to new homes, but the hippos remained and have thrived in the lakes dotted around the area, making them the world's largest invasive animal and a significant tourist attraction! It beats having a tortoise!

Christopher Lloyd was born on 2 March 100 years ago this year and Great Dixter is celebrating his legacy with a series of talks from Fergus Garrett. Gardening magazines are also noting Lloyd's contribution to horticulture, with *Gardens Illustrated* for example, interviewing several gardeners who trained with him and have now gone on to amazing careers of their own. 2021 looks like a good year to visit Great Dixter and see the gardens again! I have to admit that Fergus Garrett's book, *Great Dixter: Then and Now*, has found its way onto my list of things to buy!

Does everyone get seduced by images of beautiful gardens at this time of year?



Pots at Perch Hill.



The Long Border at Great Dixter

Plant catalogues pile up temptingly!

To celebrate International Women's Day, we were delighted to see that our very own Kathy Aitken was nominated as one of the inspirational women in the borough of Greenwich for her work in organising the Old Pond Garden project and providing ways for people to socialise safely during the pandemic. Well done, Kathy!

Gardening notes

- **The Garden Masterclass** website offers a range of lectures on topics such as a history of naturalistic planting (15th March) to a discussion of specific plants such as epimediums (21st April). These cost between £20 and £24 each, so not cheap.
- **Great Comp** is opening on March 28th as part of the NGS 10.00 - 5.00. Tickets must be pre-booked.
- The **London Gardens Trust** also continues with some fascinating lecture series, ranging from garden history, to the development of specific gardens to topics such as 'What is wild?' Check the website for details.
- If anyone is looking to buy a rose, perhaps consider The Generous Gardener (pictured below) which was named to mark the 75th anniversary of the National Gardens Scheme in 2002



- Perhaps because of the increased focus on the outdoors, gardens and the landscape continue to receive a lot of attention, from the forthcoming David Hockney exhibition at the Royal

Academy 'The Arrival of Spring' (23 May - 26 September) to The Wallace Collection which is exhibiting two of Rubens' most famous landscapes (21 April-13 August). Sue Stuart-Smith also continues to be given prominence for her book 'The Well Gardened Mind'.

Do check out our website for further activities to get involved in.

Pat's 10 jobs for March:

1. Prune stems of shrubby Cornus and Salix back to a few inches above the ground to provide bright coloured stems for winter colour.
2. Deadhead daffodils as soon as they finish flowering so that all the energy goes back into the bulb and avoid making seed.
3. Top dress the top few inches of soil in containers by removing the old compost with a fork and replacing with fresh and add some plant food in the form of a little blood fish and bone or pelleted chicken manure.
4. Sow hardy annuals, such as nigella and poppies, outside in prepared drills and harden off hardy annuals that you have sown under glass by leaving out during the day and bringing under cover at night.
5. Finish dividing and splitting summer flowering perennials to either give to friends or to provide plants for our plant sale which we hope we can do at the end of May. Please don't forget to label.
6. Cut down the remaining old stems of summer flowerers making sure not to damage the emerging new shoots.
7. Plant shallots and onion sets now just deep enough so that bulb tips are visible above the soil. Alternatively, plant in modules to root and then plant out in April.
8. Harvest purple sprouting broccoli shoots taking care to leave a few side shoots to go on growing.
9. Sow various varieties of tomatoes, cucumber and peppers and chillies indoor in a heated propagator if possible. I sow towards the end of the month, as I grow most of mine outside.
10. Prune and repot overwintered pelargoniums which tend to become really leggy during winter. You can always use the prunings as cuttings, though it may be a little early for them to root.

Old Pond Garden volunteers have put out a call for pelargonium **Attar of Roses** - if anyone has rooted cuttings or small plants of this variety which they are prepared to donate, please let Kathy know.

Next month's meeting on April 19th will be a talk from Adam Pasco on how to create a garden for all seasons.

Happy gardening all and take care!

Contact us on: cabahshortisoc@gmail.com