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Charlton & Blackheath
Amateur Horticultural Society
Founded 1950



www.cabahs.wordpress.com

NEWSLETTER April 2023

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

Our next meeting will be on Monday 17 April at 7.30pm at St Thomas Church Hall with our **Annual Spring Show**. Details of all classes can be found here: <https://cabahs.com/calendar/>. The show provides an opportunity to engage with other gardeners and for us all to see what is growing well round and about - so please do bring along something from your garden! There will also be our usual raffle and refreshments (please bring a mug).

Important News from your Chair, Vija

“Dear CABAHS member, this is a personal message from myself to you all. As a result of a constellation of events, I am stepping down as Chair of CABAHS. I have been lucky enough to watch the Society grow from strength to strength over the past few years and this has been achieved in no small measure through the support of you all. There has been much to enjoy in the role and I hope that the next incumbent derives as much pleasure as I have done. In the meantime, I leave you in the hands of a very capable committee who will, I am confident, serve you well. Vija “

The Committee will meet in May to decide next steps, in the meantime it is business as usual!

Dates for Your Diary

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| Sunday April 23 | Outing to Petersham House. Anna is organising our first trip of the year, to Petersham House, NGS Open Garden in Richmond. The adjoining famous Petersham Nurseries will be open. Admission £7, 11am to 4pm. Anna proposes to meet at Cannon Street Station at 9.45am and all travel by underground to Richmond. You can still sign up on Monday. |
| Sunday May 21 | Plant Sale & Community Day at Charlton House. All plants welcome! If space is a problem, bring them along to a volunteer session at the Old Pond Garden (Tues 2pm-4pm, Thurs 10am-12 noon). |

A successful joint CABAHS/Royal Greenwich Heritage Trust at Charlton House on 2 April: Bunnies in the Beds

Easter bunnies arrived early this year at Charlton House. On the Sunday before Easter Day, ten vegetable loving bunnies hid themselves along with their favourite vegetables in the flower beds of the House and were ready to be found by young visitors to this joint CABAHS/RGHT event.

Thankfully the weather was kind: dry with even a spell or two of sunshine during the afternoon. By 3 o'clock, around 180 trails had been completed with donations earning a sizeable sum for Charlton House. Our Plant Sale also proved an attractive draw and took over £200. The event depended on a 'dream team' of volunteers led, as ever by Kathy. Although it was undoubtedly hard work, as the lovely pictures show it was a very enjoyable, sociable day. In fact I think it's fair to say that a good time was had by all!

Thanks to all helpers!

Read more and see some lovely pictures of the day on the CABAHS website:
<https://cabahs.com/2023/04/06/bunnies-in-the-beds-2023/>

April Plant of the Month: Clematis Amandi 'Snowdrift' from Anna

The intoxicating fragrance in the air whilst strolling through St Luke's Gardens, SW3 on a warm, still day recently, stopped me in my tracks. Alongside a pathway and covering the side of a low brick 'shed' was a profusion of starry, pure-white clusters of flowers, standing out against a contrasting backdrop 'hedge' of handsome, evergreen, glossy foliage.

This is an extremely popular clematis and I loved having this climber in my previous garden where there was more room. It soaked up the sun on the rear, west-facing fence, with some shoots eventually clambering their way into the branches of my neighbour's oak, which provided some shade and shelter from cold winds.

The clematis in the photo shows that it has been carefully controlled, probably supported by wires, with shoots trained sideways to cover the brickwork, thus allowing the plant to produce flowers on the



previous year's growth and therefore viewed at eye-level and below. Whereas, fewer flower buds would have been produced at this height if the long shoots had been allowed to rampage up onto the roof, where most of the flowers would have occurred.

Father Amand David, a French missionary and botanist was responsible for discovering this handsome specimen in China during the 19th century and approximately 100 additional species were brought back to France by this keen plant hunter.

Wear gloves when handling this species as it can be a skin irritant. Toxic to cats and dogs. However, if you don't have pets and do have an unsightly wall/shed to cover, then this climber would be perfect.

Out and About...

- If Anna's description of the beautiful Amand David clematis has whetted your appetite for these beautiful plants, you might be interested in RHS Wisley's Iris and Clematis Show Saturday and Sunday, April 22 and 23. Free to RHS members; normal garden admission to non-members. There will be talks, displays and plant sales. More information online.

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/gardens/wisley/>

- The Aga Khan Centre, located near the V&A Museum in South Kensington is offering public tours of its beautiful Islamic Gardens. The tours last an hour and are free of charge. During April there are tours on Saturday 22nd at 11am, Thursday 27th at 5pm and Saturday 29th at 11am. Booking essential. <https://www.agakhancentre.org.uk/tours/>
- Chevening House, near Sevenoaks, Kent is opening its stunning gardens as part of the National Garden Scheme on Sunday, June 18, 2pm- 5pm, £8 adults, £1 child. More information and booking: <https://findagarden.ngs.org.uk/garden/918/chevening>

Pat's 10 jobs for April

1. Prune mophead hydrangeas to encourage flowering and prevent them from becoming leggy. Remove the old flowers and prune to a 1st or 2nd bud.
2. If Agapanthus have stopped flowering split them and replant into John Innes No 2 with extra grit. Easier said than done as I've been trying for two days to get mine out of the pot but take care not to overpot or again they may not flower.
3. Hand weed perennial and annual weeds before they set seed and leave some on the surface of the soil to retain the moisture.
4. Prune Cotinus hard back to encourage fresh and darker coloured foliage as left to its own devices it will become a tall leggy tree with dull foliage.
5. Feed containers after mulching with a seaweed feed or make a nettle or comfrey feed.
6. Deadhead narcissus as soon as they finish flowering and before they set seed but allow their foliage to die down naturally so that energy will feed the bulbs for next year.
7. Plant summer flowering bulbs such as Eucomis, lilies and nerines either in the ground or in pots.
8. Plant 'softneck' garlic up until the end of April. This is quicker to mature than 'hardneck' although the cloves may be smaller and not quite as strong. Picardy Wight is a reliable variety.
9. Sow chard carrots and beetroot into modules in a cool greenhouse ready for planting out later. My tomatoes have been very slow to germinate I think because the nights are so cold.
10. Remember that birds will be nesting this time of year so take care around shrubs and trees and especially when trimming hedges.

And finally, let's hope for some warmer days soon!

Find more news and information on the CABHAS website....

(If clicking through is a problem, copy the url into your browser search bar)

- Read about Lynda's experience with the Royal Horticultural Society's Members Seed Scheme <https://cabahs.com/category/garden-news-views/>
- Lastly, Pippa from RGHT Charlton House has written a lovely piece on the walled gardens and volunteers, on the Trust's website, see it here: <https://www.greenwichheritage.org/news/international-plant-appreciation-day-peek-into-our-prep-garden/>

Happy gardening all! Contact us on: cabahshortisoc@gmail.com