



# The Village GARDEN CLUB

of Sevenhampton & District



(\*See factfile below)

JAN / FEB 2017

## NEXT MEETINGS

Friday 27th January - **SOCIAL EVENING** Supper with drinks (inc. wine) and quiz

Wednesday 15th February - "Private Gardens in S.Africa & plants you can grow" Victoria Logue

### ON THE CUSP OF SPRING

The changing seasons are a constant reminder of the rhythm of life and so each season brings its own level of joy. For me, Springtime is my favourite and, as the days of Winter start to lengthen, I eagerly scan the garden looking for the first signs of new life. Early each year there is a moment when that first hint of glorious sunshine yellow,



nestling under shrubs near the front of one of my borders, is visible — the blossom of winter aconites are heralding the start of my gardening year. These little plants are significant for me and, knowing very little about them, thought I'd find out more.....

The most common variety of winter aconite is *Eranthis hyemalis*. They are from the deciduous woodlands of the Balkans, Italy and southern France. These buttercup yellow flowers, fringed with green ruffs, open in the winter sunshine, before closing up again at dusk. They grow, flower and seed while sunlight penetrates the bare branches of the trees above them and then later die back as the canopy starts to cast its shade, their active growth complete.

The other variety most widely seen is *E. cillicica*, originating from Turkey, Kurdistan, Iran and Afghanistan. Its flowers are larger and the leaves finer than *E. hyemalis*; it needs more sun and doesn't multiply as well. Some special cultivars such as bronze-leaved *E. tubergenii* Guinea Gold, the rare 'Orange Glow' or double flowered 'Flore Pleno', need a safe spot in the rockery or shady border to flourish.

Aconites share an ecological niche with snowdrops and the two grow and flower well together. They are vigorous and likely to swamp crocuses and other slow growing corms, bulbs and tubers. They work well alongside robust herbaceous plants such as hardy geraniums and asters. Aconite tubers hate drying out and like snowdrops (which are more tolerant), they need to be planted or transplanted 'in the green' - that is after the flowers have died but while the foliage still has active growth. They flourish in any reasonably fertile soil, do particularly well in chalky soil and good drainage is essential.

Aconites are generally found scattered at the base of trees but in Paris in the 19th C. they were popular as pot plants. This trend never caught on here but it may look rather cheering on a January day!

**Wishing you all a very happy gardening year!**

**\*Snowdrops were named *Galanthus* (meaning milk flower) in 1753. Other names include Candlemas bells, Mary's taper, Snow piercer, February fair-maids and Dingle-dangle. They are bulbous perennials of the family [Amaryllidaceae](#). When propagating snowdrops, split and re-plant them 'in the green' (i.e. after flowering).**

**Below are a few places in the county to see spectacular displays of this harbinger of Spring.**

**NGS** Home Farm, Huntley, Nr. Newent. GL19 3HQ (Tel: 01452 830210) Open: Sundays 29th January / 12th February  
Trench Hill, Sheepscombe. GL6 6TZ (Tel: 01452 814306) Open: Sundays 12th & 19th February  
The Old Rectory, Avening. GL8 8NF. Open: Sunday 19th February

**Batsford Arboretum**, open every week. Tel: 01386 701441 ([www.batsarb.co.uk](http://www.batsarb.co.uk))

**Cerney House Gardens**, open from 28th Jan. Tel: 01285 831300 ([www.cerneygardens.com](http://www.cerneygardens.com))

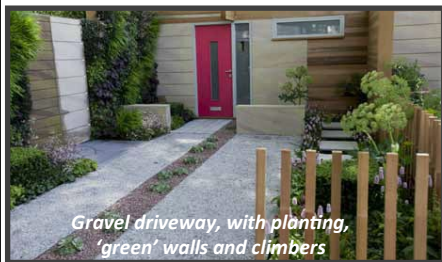
**Colesbourne Park**, open weekends from 4th Feb. Tel: 01242 870264 ([www.colesbournegardens.org.uk](http://www.colesbournegardens.org.uk))

**Cotswold Farm**, Duntisbourne Abbots, GL7 7JS (01285 821857) Open: 11-13, 20, 27th Feb ([www.cotswoldfarmgardens.org.uk](http://www.cotswoldfarmgardens.org.uk))

**Painswick Rococo Gardens**, open from 10th January. Tel: 01452 813204 ([www.rococogarden.org.uk](http://www.rococogarden.org.uk))

In 2016's Apr/May newsletter it was reported that over 8000 schools would grow seeds that had spent six months on board the International Space Station (ISS), alongside similar but 'earth bound' seeds. Results varied but overall the seeds that went into space grew less well. This is likely to be because the 'space' seeds were exposed to highly energetic cosmic radiation, which can damage a seed's structure. This project undoubtedly encouraged children's interest in gardening but reminds us all to store seeds carefully: in cool conditions & away from direct sunlight.

Another recent project is the RHS *Greening Grey Britain*. More than a quarter of front gardens have been paved over and cumulatively this contributes to flooding, water run off (therefore less available water in the soil for plants) and local temperature increases. People



Gravel driveway, with planting, 'green' walls and climbers

are being asked to make such 'grey areas' green again or, if wanting to develop vehicle hard standing, use appropriate surfaces such as matrix blocks, gravel or brick paving (on an aggregate base). The RHS has a very useful booklet giving suggestions of ways to 'green up' existing areas together with examples of good plants to use. To access this booklet (report) and find out more click on:

[www.rhs.org.uk/science/gardening-in-a-changing-world/greening-grey-britain](http://www.rhs.org.uk/science/gardening-in-a-changing-world/greening-grey-britain)



Grass in matrix paving blocks

This year's **National Gardening Week** will take place on 10<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> April.

Consider hosting an event to get your friends, family, colleagues, customers, or even community gardening. If you want to participate and for further advice see [www.nationalgardeningweek.org.uk](http://www.nationalgardeningweek.org.uk)



**National Garden Week** hopes to encourage new gardeners and we need to encourage new **Garden Club** members. If you know anyone who may be interested, please introduce them to our meetings - where, as you know, there is a wealth of motivational speakers, welcoming people and more!

#### SOME JOBS FOR THE COMING MONTHS:

**Christmas trees**— after use place outside and decorate with fatballs, nuts and apples for the birds OR chip OR recycle as garden waste.

**Water** — lag any outdoor pipes & taps, drain outdoor watering systems

**Structures**—mend sheds, walls, and catch up on general repair work

**Ponds**— remove all fallen leaves. If icy, use pond heaters or place floats to help prevent freezing over. If it does freeze over, make a hole with a saucepan of hot water on the surface until melted through. Do not crack the ice, as this is harmful to fish.

**Sweet Peas, Broad Beans, Peas**— can be planted in pots for an early start

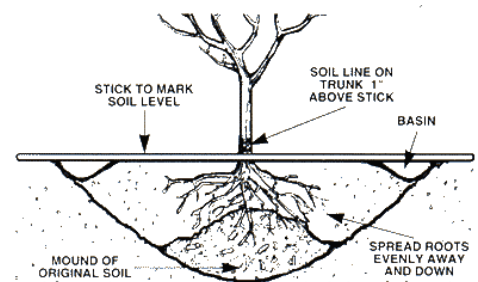
**Tomatoes**—sow seeds for greenhouse tomato plants in February

**Potatoes**—Chit tubers (egg boxes are very useful for this)

#### FREE TREES

Early in March the Tree Council will give over 100 bare-rooted trees away locally. This will help counteract the inevitable affect that ash-dieback will have on our landscape. The trees include English Oak, Beech, Hornbeam, Lime, Silver and Downy Birch, Rowan, Alder, Wild Cherry & Guelder Rose.

If anyone would like to receive one or more trees please contact Tex Cook (01242 821018): first come, first served!



*How to plant a bare-root tree. Use spiral (not solid) guards if necessary.*

**A RECORD BREAKING** 40cm long earthworm (*Lumbricus terrestris*) weighing 26 grams was found in Cheshire last Autumn, it was promptly named 'Dave'. Earthworms are essential for gardens - improving soil fertility by mixing in dead plant material; their burrows (which can be vertical or horizontal depending on the worm type) change the soil structure and increase the amount of air and water that can enter. There are about 16 species in the UK and Charles Darwin referred to them as 'Nature's Plough'. Find out more & participate in [Earthworm Watch](http://Earthworm Watch) research with The Natural History Museum. The study, aimed at identifying soil health, is easily done in the garden & may even help to encourage budding young gardeners!

#### POTATO WEEKEND 2017 —

**Sat & Sun 21st & 22nd January 2017**

With over 100 varieties of potatoes to choose from Dundry Nurseries are back again with their potato weekend. Garden Club membership discount applies. See [www.dundrynurseries.co.uk](http://www.dundrynurseries.co.uk) for more info

#### THANK YOU CAROL

It is with many thanks that we say 'goodbye' to Trips Secretary **Carol Cann** who is leaving the committee after many years of serving the Garden Club. Carol hopes to continue as a general club member so it's really more of an 'au revoir'!

Would anyone be interested in joining the committee and help contribute to the success of our thriving club? If so, please contact one of the committee members (all contact details in May/Jun 2016 issue).

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 \* Have you anything of interest that can be included in the next newsletter? If so please contact Di Cook (editor) at \*  
 \* ditex.cook@btinternet.com or Tel: 01242 821018 \*  
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