



# The Village GARDEN CLUB

of Sevenhampton & District

Vanda Miss  
Joaquim



MAR / APR 2019

## NEXT MEETINGS

Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> March

Victoria Logue - Practical Propagation

Friday 26<sup>th</sup> April

AGM & Simon Gulliver - Colour Through the Seasons

### Ponds 'R' Us

For some years I have hankered after a garden pond. Not only because sitting next to it of a summer evening (preferably with a G&T in hand) would be more than pleasant, but because of its visual impact and its attraction to wildlife. I had just the place in mind too but there was one obstacle to overcome – that of persuading my long-suffering husband that it would be a *really* good idea to have one.

Our rear garden faces more or less north and thus the area near to the back of our house is often in its own shadow; direct sunlight only reaching it in the morning or evening. For many years I struggled trying to grow roses in a flower bed here. It then became overrun with creeping celandine and later invasive Spanish bluebells started to appear - something had to be done! To my mind a pond, which benefits from partial shade, seemed to be the ideal solution and added sufficient weight to the debate “*Pond* versus *No pond*”.

Thus my husband (foolhardy hero that he is) started digging out the area – and carried on digging until a 6 cubic yard skip was filled with spoil, even then there were excess stones & soil to dispense with. The transformation didn't stop there though – building blocks shaped the pool, which was cushioned with carpet and an inner liner, a waterproof liner had to be purchased (butyl rubber is the best sort & carries a 25yr guarantee) together with a pump & filter (to help aerate the water and keep it clean). The pool was then faced with Cotswold stones (my job) and patio slabs were laid in readiness for the seating.



At least it holds water –  
but a way to go yet!

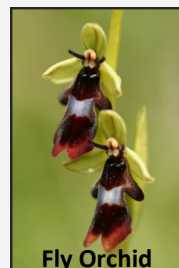
Now we are almost there and the only difficulty remaining is deciding what plants to buy. The depth of available water needs to be considered – deep water, marginal or shallow? The latter being important to allow animals, such as frogs, to leave safely. Some plants can be very invasive (Defra have banned the sale of 5 imports which have proved damaging to natural watercourses) and some plants on offer in garden centres are too delicate to withstand our winters and need to be replaced annually. The best time to plant is spring so choices have to be made fairly soon. Meanwhile, ..... where's that bottle of gin?



**ORCHID FACTFILE:** Orchidaceae, is one of the largest family of flowering plants with over 28,000 species & 100,000 varieties distributed worldwide. All orchids are monocot perennial herbs, lacking any permanent woody structure. Their flowers are often showy, have a specialised lower petal (labellum) and frequently a spur. The labellum serves to attract insects and acts as a landing platform for them prior to pollination. It can be hinged to allow movement and sometimes has fringed edges, such as those in our native fly orchid (*Ophrys insectifera*).

Commercial orchids sold in the UK are usually *Cymbidiums*, *Dendrobiums*, *Phalaenopsis* or *Vanda*. These exotic orchids, together with the majority of the world's orchids, are epiphytic & thus absorb moisture & nutrients through their aerial roots. Naturally they would be anchored to trees, shrubs or even rocks. Some orchids, like our native ones, are terrestrial and usually found in grass or woodland areas. For the Natural History Museum's guide on our native orchids (press **CTRL** & [click here.](#)) The *Vanda* hybrid, Miss Joaquim (above), was chosen as Singapore's national flower. Its vibrant colours, hardiness & resilience are said to reflect the country's spirit.

In Ancient Greece parents believed they could determine children's sex by eating orchid tubers. Exotic orchids are often scented, more apparent at night time as they're usually pollinated by moths. The orchid *Vanilla planifolia*, native to Mexico, is the primary source of vanilla flavouring in the food industry.



Fly Orchid

Due to increased, all-season availability and affordability, orchids are now very popular as gifts. Here are some tips on how to look after them:

\*Orchids need a draft-free situation with even temperatures and importantly, no direct sunlight.

\*Water them sparingly & avoid wetting their leaves (once damaged, a leaf is likely to die back completely).

EITHER plunge their roots in a bowl of water for a few minutes, allowing the water to then drain away,

OR spray their roots with water using an aerosol. Watering should be done no more than once a week. The former method allows a specialist feed to be given occasionally (every 3 weeks during flowering).

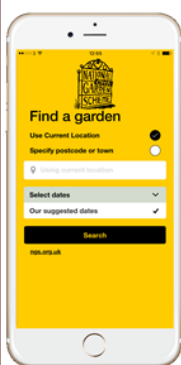
\*Once the flower stems start to lose their blooms, trim the stem just above the node where the first flower grew.

This will encourage further blooms to grow. If the stem has already been treated in this way, cut an inch above the base of the stem to allow the plant's energy to be used for strong leaf growth.

\*Re-pot every 2 years as the bark medium will break down and start to prevent air getting to the roots. The plant may not need a larger pot. Never use contemporary potting compost.

The **Cheltenham & District Orchid Society** are holding their annual show at Churchdown Community Centre on Sat. 2nd March 10.30 to 4 pm. Displays, sales, expert advice and repotting are all on offer.

Use the these links to get [an information poster](#) and [£1 discount voucher](#) off the entry fee of £2.50.

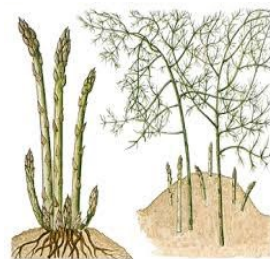


### National Garden Scheme (NGS) - Find a Garden

Those modern young-minded members amongst us may be interested in a free app that the NGS now have available for smartphones.

Really helpful when searching for a garden to visit when travelling or on holiday, this app will find NGS gardens in your current location or by entering a postcode or town.

**St George's Day**, April 23rd, sees the official start of the asparagus growing season. It also heralds the start of the British Asparagus Festival, which centres around the Vale of Evesham and in particular, [The Fleece Inn at Bretforton](#), a C17<sup>th</sup> pub owned by the National Trust.



**Asparagus** can grow on most soils as long as they're well drained but kept moist; raised beds are ideal. Whilst plants are hardy, frost pockets and exposed sites are to be avoided. Dormant crowns of asparagus are best planted in March & allowed to grow for 2 seasons before harvesting them. Foliage should be cut down to 1 inch above the soil in the Autumn. Beds should be kept well fed and weed free.

### IN THE BEGINNING ....

The 'Garden Club of Sevenhampton & District', to give it its full name, was formed in 2002. The idea for a Club which concerned itself with the cultivation of plants rather than the displaying of them, as with the Produce Show, was first mooted by local resident Liz Francis. She organised a public meeting, which John Benson was volunteered to Chair by his wife, Wendy! A constitution was written up, a budget organised by Victoria, and the club was launched. It quickly achieved a strong following with current members Megan, Victoria, Carol and John being on the original committee.

A good proportion of today's members have also been with the Club since its inauguration, which, together with many new faces, has had the effect of making it a very sociable and friendly club.

Now the last remaining original committee member will be stepping down in April. John, as Chairman, has certainly 'earned his stripes' and well deserves taking a back seat. He will continue to be a member of the club, although a house move in the near future will eventually curtail this.

**MANY THANKS JOHN FOR ALL YOUR SUPPORT, HARD WORK & COMMITMENT TO THE VILLAGE GARDEN CLUB OVER THE YEARS**

### MEMBERSHIP FORM

This year's membership form is attached for your attention. It includes information about this year's trips and, as usual, places are limited, so early booking is recommended.

*Don't forget that our members get discounts at various Garden Centres.*

### EXHIBITIONS AT KEW [\(SEE LINK\)](#)

**International Garden Photographer of the Year** exhibition, which runs until 10th March.

**13th April - 27th October** sees **Exotica** an exhibition of artistic studies of the world's most beautiful and unusual exotic plants.

Also **A Carnival of Orchids** - hundreds of these exotic flowers on display until 10th March

Snowdrops (*Galanthus*), which are in their element at the moment, are easily propagated. Whilst they do produce seed, it is easier to split clumps of the bulbs and replant them to produce more clusters of the pretty white flowers next year. This should be done when the plants are 'in the green' once the flowers have died back. Plant in a semi shady position in soil not prone to drying out.

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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  
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