



The Village
GARDEN CLUB
of Sevenhampton & District

JAN / FEB 2022



Viola odorata

NEXT MEETING :

A SOCIAL EVENT

to be held at

Rhodes Memorial Hall on

Thursday 20th January



ALPINE VIEWS

For some “alpine” means winter snow, skiing and ‘vin chaud’, others look to walking in the mountains during the summer months, enjoying the views. Both pastimes are quite spectacular but so too are garden alpine plants with their bright flowers and interesting growth - even though the spectacle is in miniature.

Alpine plants, originally from mountainous regions, are suited to open aspects and therefore like plenty of sun. Importantly they also need free draining soil/gravel, as in the wild they would only have rocky outcrops, gravel or sparse earth to cling on to. Garden rockeries and shallow containers are ideal for alpine plants as they can offer a limited soil depth. Dry stone walls are also useful locations for them. Having evolved in exposed environments, enduring extreme temperatures and strong winds, alpiners tend to be low-growing and very tough. Most are perennials but there are a few dwarf shrubs and bulbs. Did you know that *Galanthus* (aka snowdrops) are alpiners?

Well that brings us full circle back to snow and I’m off to the ski slopes soon, Covid measures permitting. Meanwhile if you are interested in alpiners, of which there are thousands - many with spectacular, colourful flowers - the [Alpine Garden Society](#), based in nearby Pershore, offers a wealth of information about them. Enjoy!



VIOLA FACTFILE: The *Viola* is a genus of flowering plants in the family *Violaceae*. It is the family’s largest genus & contains over 500 species. Most species are found in temperate Northern regions although some are also found in widely divergent areas such as Hawaii, Australasia, and the Andes. Some *Viola* species are perennial plants, some are annual plants, and a few are small shrubs. Many cultivars and varieties are grown for their ornamental flowers. Instead of *viola*, the name ‘**pansy**’ is normally used for the multi-coloured, large-flowered plants often used extensively in bedding with terms **viola** & **violet** normally reserved for small-flowered plants, including the wild species. Many violas readily self seed and can be a nuisance if not contained. Most wild *viola* flowers are purple, blue or white, although some are yellow (eg *Viola biflora*).

Violas can be used in a variety of ways in the kitchen. Flowers can decorate foods such as salads, deserts, cakes and used in teas. Because of their perfume, *V. odorata* flowers are often crystallised for culinary use. These are made commercially in Toulouse, France, where they are known as *Violettes de Toulouse*. Violet syrup is used to make violet scones and marshmallows in the USA and in 1946 the Derbyshire company ‘Swizzles’ used the Parma violet to flavour its new aromatic sweet of the same name.

The perfume industry uses the wild violet *V. odorata* as a source for scents.

Violet is the traditional birth flower for February.



Viola biflora



HAPPY NEW YEAR. Some good news to start the new year with -the programme for 2022 is now complete! The list of speakers, events and your enrolment form will soon be sent out providing dates for your diaries and SOMETHING TO LOOK FORWARD TO.



The Garden Club's last meeting was held towards the end of November. Ideal timing, as Pippa Shouler gave a superb demonstration of how to make a decorative Christmas wreath, using hedgerow and garden foliage. Many useful tips were given on plant selection and the best gold/silver spray to use (if desired). The evening continued in festive mode with mulled wine and seasonal biscuits on offer. There was also a raffle, the first prize being Pippa's assembled wreath (see picture), which was won by member Nicolle Arkell.

The next meeting will be a social event (with **free drinks and nibbles**) to be held on **Thursday 20th January** at Rhodes Memorial Hall, Covid restrictions permitting.

BARE ROOT PLANTS

November to March is the ideal time for planting bare-root plants. These plants have been grown in open ground, then dug up for despatch and planting during the dormant season. They are called 'bare-root' plants as they are supplied with no soil around their roots.

Planting them in the dormant season means that they should establish well – while the top growth may be brown and twiggy, the roots are establishing themselves beneath the soil's surface.

Usually bought online, or by mail order, bare-root plants tend to be cheaper than plants grown in containers. Trees, shrubs and perennials can all be bought bare-rooted & often a wider selection of varieties is offered too.

HINTS ON BARE-ROOT PLANTING:

It is essential that the roots of bare-root plants don't dry out. Be sure to soak the roots as soon as you receive your plants. If you can't plant immediately, e.g. if the soil is frozen, heel them in until the weather improves.

When planting, ensure the topmost root/root flare is at soil level or above. Many trees and shrubs are grafted onto a root stock and this graft should not be below the soil.

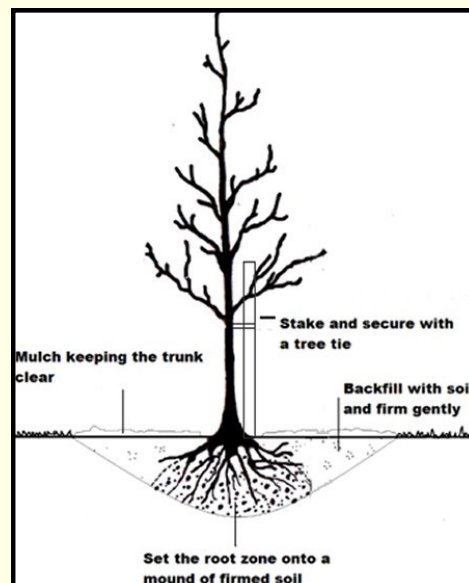
Trees & Fruit trees - You'll find the widest selection of fruit trees if you buy them bare-rooted. Be sure to mulch and stake trees when planting.

Roses - Whilst container-grown roses are available all year round, larger selections are available with bare-root plants. They will establish quickly and you should enjoy flowers the following summer.

Fruit bushes/canes - As well as being more economical, the dormant season is also the ideal time to plant fruit as it minimises a plant's stress.

Perennials - Many perennials can be planted bare-root. Peonies in particular are best planted this way.

All plants - sprinkle granules of **mycorrhizal fungi** around the roots when planting. These fungi, found naturally in soil, will help the plant to develop a stronger root system more quickly, helping it to extract nutrients & water more easily and be more robust. It only needs a single application!



SOME THINGS TO DO IN THE GARDEN THIS JANUARY

- Clean patios & decks – tackle 'slime' before it causes an accident!
- Clean greenhouse and pots
- Take care of your tools – clean, sharpen and oil.
- Prune trees and shrubs, inc. apples and pears
- Prepare seed beds & start sowing veg seeds

AND FEBRUARY

- Chit potatoes
- Start to force rhubarb
- Prune wisteria
- Plan and re-plant herbaceous borders
- Keep feeding the birds & other wildlife

Have you anything of interest that can be included in the next newsletter? If so please contact Di Cook (editor) at ditex.cook@gmail.com or Tel: 01242 603480