



NEWSLETTER 53 FEBRUARY 2022

EDITOR'S THOUGHTS It was such a mild autumn and the period up to January unseasonably warm. The typical November winds didn't batter down the tall grasses or blow the leaves into the hedges, unfortunately, they were left to be manually collected. The lawn was still requiring a little trim till early December and has grown since then. It will be interesting this Spring to see whether this has been a blessing for nature or whether the usual weather cleanses the earth and our environment by its bitter chill. Will the plants that go dormant due to the cold be more or less vigorous as a result of the shorter winter weather? Will the plant diseases and pests that go down in numbers in cold weather have survived and cause havoc? Let's hope not !!

Hopefully, as we are now in February, it is only a handful of weeks until we will be immersed in full Spring with twigs which bulge with the promise of fresh greenery and the wisely nodding daffodil heads. The pussy willow and bluebell covered woods will be here imminently.

At this time of year, the keener horticulturists have already cleaned their tools, now they are perhaps potting up freshly bought seeds to nurture in new compost and warm greenhouses, harvesting the last of the winter vegetables, checking on their dahlia tubers and adding mulch or manure to the soil to promote growth and deter weeds. Whereas others will consider ordering seed potatoes, perusing the plug plant retailers and browsing magazines for planting inspiration. Still more are not yet invigorated by the emerging promise of fresh life and await the cessation of frost and the imperative to cut the lawn before even thinking about gardening activity in their outside space. Each and every one of us eagerly await the longer, warmer days and that reduced Saturday night's sleep when the clocks move forwards.

So, whichever type of cultivator you are, enjoy the purple spikes of *Iris reticulata*, look out for the first tulip and don't forget to listen out for the Spring song of the monogamous cuckoo who, unlike many birds, is not singing to formally request a new and improved 2022 breeding partner !

Patricia Boddington (Editor)

PTO for club updates

CLUB NOTES FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Welcome to our new club year everyone. As promised we have been working hard over the winter to get the club ready for another season of excellent talks and shows. The website has been updated, the membership list checked and a new payment method introduced. We have six events planned for the year: Enjoy a chat with friends beforehand over a glass of wine or soft drink. Full details of these can be found in your schedule and on the website: witleygardening.org

The first of these is on the 1st March when John Anderson, Keeper of the Gardens, the Crown Estate, will give a talk on The Gardens of Windsor Great Park

You will see that there has been quite a change in the committee, which is inevitable when so many have previously worked so hard for the club for so many years. I am very excited that we have managed to build another strong group of people. Do try and make a promise to yourself to put one entry into at least one of our shows this year. They are a great opportunity to gather with friends over our delicious home made teas and a bit of motivation to share your horticultural achievements. (and maybe find out what went wrong!) Here's hoping for an uninterrupted year for Witley gardening association !

Christine Cox Chairman and Secretary

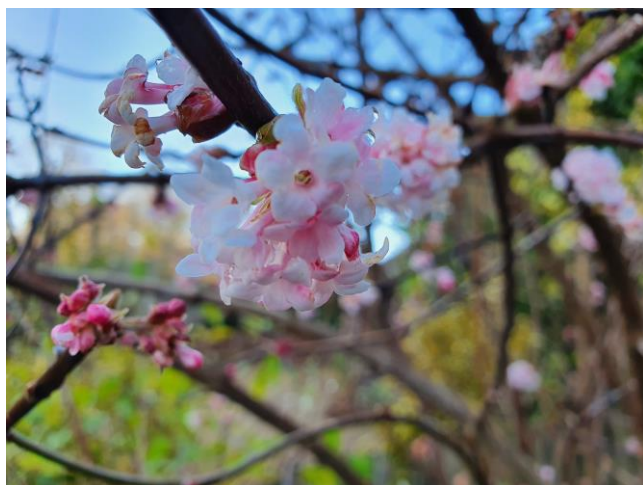


DAPHNE BOLHUA

TOPICAL TIPS

You can start to sow some seeds now. Chillies and Leeks benefit from early sowing. You will need heat to germinate them and a frost free place to grow them on. (I move them onto a heated mat in the potting shed, which takes 5 trays) I love my heated propagator, which takes 2 seed trays. Its simple, without a thermostat, but seems to do the job and is less expensive to buy.

Check out Daphne Bolhua. Mine has the most wonderful perfume right now. My Viburnum Bodnantense has also flowered with a beautiful perfume all through January. Both great shrubs for near the front door.



VIBURNUM BODNANTENSE