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# **Charlbury Garden Society**

## **Spring Newsletter**



How you define the first day of winter depends on whether you are referring to the astronomical or meteorological winter.

The day in our calendar that marks the first day of winter usually refers to the astronomical seasons which are a result of the Earth's axis and orbit around the Sun.

### **Astronomical winter**

This year, astronomical winter begins on 21 December 2021 and ends on 20 March 2022.

### **Meteorological winter**

The Met Office often use a meteorological definition of the seasons. By the

meteorological calendar, the first day of winter is always 1 December; ending on 28 (or 29 during a Leap Year) February.

Either way Winter is nearly over and signs of Spring are nearly here

Spring usually arrives by mid-March and the frequent sunny days provide the opportunity for an increasing range of gardening tasks. It's time to get busy preparing seed beds, sowing seed, cutting back winter shrubs and generally tidying up around the garden.



## JOBs FOR MARCH

Taken from the RHS website along with some useful links:

**Prune bush and climbing roses if you haven't already done them**

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/roses/pruning-guide>

**Plant shallots, onion sets and early potatoes**

**Plant summer flowering bulbs**

**Lift and divide overgrown clumps of perennials**

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/types/perennials/dividing>

**Top dress containers with fresh compost**

**Protect new spring shoots from slugs**

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/biodiversity/slugs>



## Indian Masala Roast Carrots with Coconut red lentils

One of the best recipes I know for using up a surplus carrot.

As taken from Riverford <https://www.riverford.co.uk/recipes/masala-roast-carrots-with-lentils>

### INGREDIENTS

- 500g carrots, peeled and chopped into angled pieces
- 2 onions, cut into wedges
- 1 tbsp garam masala
- oil for frying and roasting
- 1 chilli, deseeded and finely chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, peeled and finely chopped
- 1 tsp black mustard seeds

- 1 tbsp curry leaves
- 2 tbsp medium curry powder
- 150g red lentils, rinsed well
- 400ml tin coconut milk
- 2 tomatoes, roughly chopped
- 4 flatbreads
- 1 bunch coriander, leaves and stalks chopped
- salt and pepper

Preheat oven to 220°C/Gas Mark 8.

Place the carrots and onions in a roasting tin, add the garam masala and 2 tablespoons of oil. Season well and roast for 25 minutes, until the carrots are tender but toothsome and coloured at the edges. Turn once or twice during cooking.

Heat 2 tablespoons of oil in the saucepan and add the halved chilli, garlic, mustard seeds and curry leaves. Fry gently for 1 minute until the mustard seeds start to pop.

Tip in the curry powder, lentils, coconut milk, tomatoes and 150ml of water. Bring the lentils to the boil, spoon off any scum that rises to the surface and leave to simmer for about 25 minutes, until the lentils have softened. Add more water if they start drying out; you want a loose, porridge-like consistency.

When the lentils have cooked, season them well to taste. Fold in half the chopped coriander. Serve with the roasted carrots and onions on top and finish with the remaining coriander. Serve with flatbread



Those of you who joined us for Tony Lloyd's Zoom talk on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> January were treated to a common sense and down to earth approach to gardening for wildlife. He assured us that small changes could be made to the way we garden and that we didn't need to turn our gardens into wastelands to help encourage wildlife. Tony kindly sent a list of the plants he mentioned in his talk. We look forward to welcoming him back, in person, in the future.

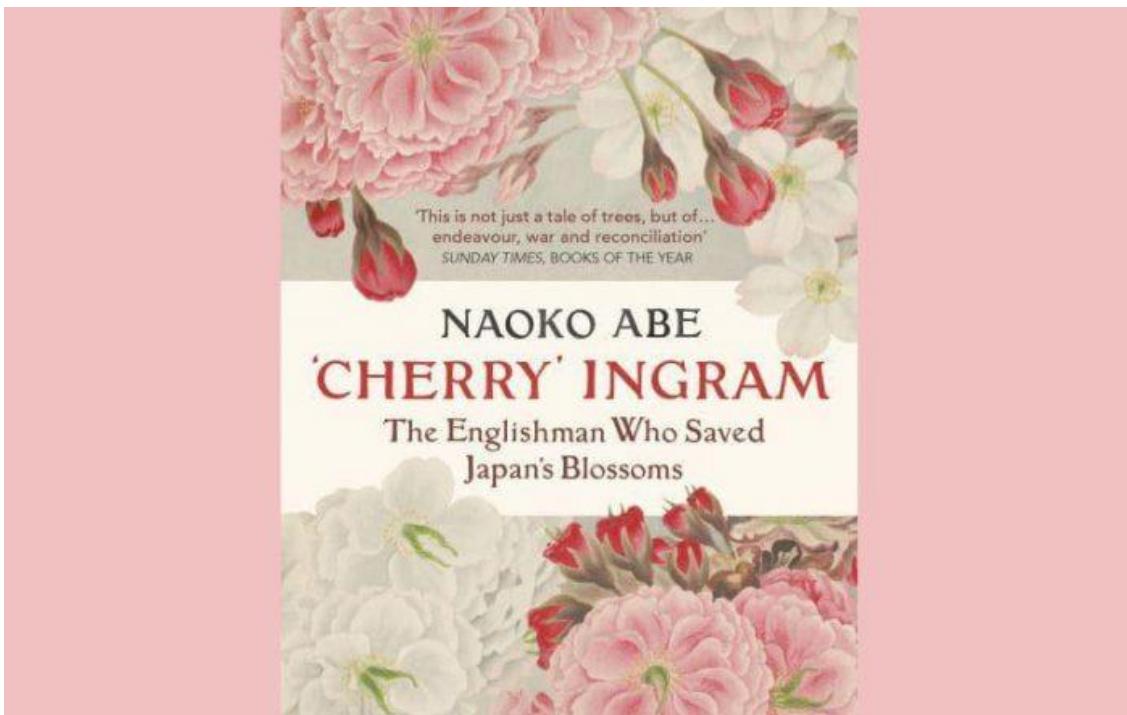
### **Some useful plants for a wildlife garden**

<b>English name</b>	<b>Latin name</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Buddleia	<i>Buddleja davidii</i>	Butterfly bush, familiar to most people. The normal pale variety seems to be more attractive to butterflies than either the white or the dark ones. Also good for bumblebees.

Red valerian	<i>Centranthus ruber</i>	Attractive to butterflies, moths (especially the very impressive hummingbird hawkmoth) and bees. Drought resistant, with a long flowering season (especially if you clip off the old flowers as soon as they have finished). Does best in a sunny location, away from competing plants.
Ice plant	<i>Sedum spectabile</i>	Drought resistant. Flowers in late summer, when many plants have already gone over. Very attractive to bees. Does best in a sunny location.
Marjoram	<i>Origanum vulgare</i>	Native. Does well on dry soil, either in a border or in a summer meadow patch, and is very good at filling gaps between other plants. Good for bees, butterflies and cooking.
Honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>	A native species (though cultivated species are available). The flowers attract large moths, particularly hawkmoths, and the berries are food for birds.
Snowdrops	<i>Galanthus nivalis</i>	Flowers in February, providing the first meal of the year for honeybees coming out of hibernation.
Blackthorn	<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	Native. The flowers, in early spring, are good for honeybees; the leaves are food for a number of moth caterpillars; the sloes are eaten by birds and woodmice (and can also be used to flavour gin or chocolate). If planted in a hedge and kept clipped it will form dense thorny cover for nesting birds.
Fogloves	<i>Digitalis purpurea</i>	Native biennial best grown from seed, producing leaves in its first year and flowers in its second. Useless for butterflies, good for bumblebees.

Common comfrey	<i>Symphytum officinale</i>	Native. Very good for bumblebees. Likes wet ground. Can spread quickly, so perhaps best to plant it in a large pot to contain its roots.
Biting stonecrop	<i>Sedum acre</i>	Native. Other name is 'Welcome-home-dear-husband-though-never-so-drunk'. Extremely drought-resistant and does best on very poor, dry soil where few competitors can survive. Can be grown in large pots or planters or on rockeries. Good for bees.
Guelder rose	<i>Viburnum opulus</i>	Native. The plates of creamy white flowers attract hover flies and the shiny red berries are eaten by birds, including thrushes.
Cowslips	<i>Primula veris</i>	Does well in a sunny location in a spring meadow. Native and good for bumblebees.
Greater knapweed	<i>Centaurea scabiosa</i>	Native. Likes well-drained soils and does well on chalk soils. The flowers attract butterflies, moths, bees and hoverflies.
Bird's-foot trefoil	<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>	Native. Can be grown in a summer meadow plot or on a lawn if not mown too low. The leaves are the main food for the common blue butterfly and the flowers attract bees.
Selfheal	<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	Native. Can be grown in a summer meadow plot or on a lawn if not mown too low. Has a long flowering season and is good for bees.
Corncockle	<i>Agrostemma githago</i>	Thought to have arrived in Britain in the Iron Age but now virtually extinct in the wild and depends on gardeners growing it in an arable patch. Attractive and interesting in its own right, though admittedly not much use for attracting insects.

**John Tyler  
January 2022**



## CHERRY TREES

An interesting event that's run by the Oxfordshire Gardens

Trust: <https://ogt.org.uk/>

It's about Collingwood Ingram, who "saved" cherry trees from extinction in Japan, and about whom a Japanese lady has just written a book.

<https://ogt.org.uk/2021/12/11/24-february-lecture-collingwood-cherry-ingram-and-the-japanese-cherry-tree/>

They also have other events which might be of interest to you our members.

<https://ogt.org.uk/news-events/>



## **Programme of Events 2022**

### **FUTURE TALKS AND EVENTS**

*Talks are on Thursdays from 7.30pm in the Memorial Hall or on Zoom.*

*Zoom invitations are sent to all members two days before the event.*

#### **17 February – 'The herbaceous border at Waterperry through the year' (Memorial Hall)**

Talk by Rob Jacob, Head gardener at Waterperry

The gardens will be open under the NGS scheme for this year Sunday 19 September 2021

<https://ngs.org.uk/view-garden/6444>

#### **17 March – 'Wild flowers of the Cotswolds' (Memorial Hall)**

Talk by Craig Blackwell, former County Ecologist for Oxfordshire

#### **19 June – Charlbury Open Gardens**

After our colourful Virtual Open Gardens in 2020, and sadly the cancellation of the event in 2021, we are planning a bumper event in 2022, in conjunction with the Arts Society, on the 2nd Sunday of the Charlbury Festival (10th to 19th June 2022).

More information nearer the date!



**Spring Show 2022**

## **SPRING SHOW**

**(in combination with the Art Society Spring Exhibition)**

**09th April 2022 noon to 4 p.m.**

**Memorial Hall**

**Brown's Lane**

**Charlbury**

This coming April, we have high hopes that we will be able to hold our usual Spring Show in conjunction with the Charlbury Art Society Spring Exhibition.

Shows are open to everyone!

The Spring Show can be a wonderful sight. Segregating daffodils into different classes shows their variation and subtle colour changes to best effect. Don't forget the other classes especially tulips and flower arrangements. Plant material for the arrangements (classes 14-18) need not have been grown by the exhibitor.

There is one cup to be awarded at this Show, the Ian Tolputt Cup, for the Best Exhibit in the Show. There is no prize money.

The plan is to open the Show at 12 noon, immediately after the judging.

## **CHARLBURY GARDENERS**

Don't forget to check out the Charlbury Gardeners group. It's at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/charlburygardeners/> it's a place for chatting and sharing.

## **CONTRIBUTIONS & HELP**

If you would like to contribute anything to the newsletter for the next quarter due in May, please contact us. Photographs and short written articles would be welcomed.

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