



Breast Cancer Support Group Sussex

Dates
For Your
Diary

Hello Ladies

It was so nice to see you all at our February meeting. It seems such a long time since we had the Christmas Party and now look, here we are in March. It was nice to see Pat looking so much better and also feeling much better, keep up the good work Pat.

At our March group meeting Kelly will be giving a talk about the benefits of aromatherapy and massage. She'll be explaining the properties of the different oils that she uses. Jane will be available during this meeting for reflexology and massage along with our lovely Reiki ladies, Margaret, Jill and Jutta.

As some of you know Helen Clifton from Elizabeth Arden, who has been a big supporter of our group, underwent a serious operation at the beginning of January for a brain aneurysm. We wish her all the best with her recovery. Helen is hoping to be well enough to come along to do a makeup demonstration in either April or May. If you would like certain speakers to come along to the group to give us a talk then please let me know and I will do my utmost to get them there.

We've started at the Chapel Royal in North St on Saturday serving teas to raise money for our group. We desperately need two volunteers for the 24th and the 31st. It is only for a couple of hours in the morning – please let Gwen know if you can help

Remember we are not that far away with our Pink Stall in June so if you start collecting items for it then that would be great. We also need helpers for wrapping and working on the tombola stall for a couple of hours.

We hope everyone is keeping well and warm. At least we're now heading towards lighter evenings with spring just around the corner. It's a good time to get start getting out in the garden so we've included a few articles about things to do in the garden

Looking forward to seeing you all on the 19th of March.

Best Wishes

Joyce

March 10

Come & see us at the Chapel Royal Coffee Shop

March 17

Come & see us at the Chapel Royal Coffee Shop

March 19

Our Monthly Group Meeting with speaker Kelly Horne

March 24

Volunteers needed for Chapel Royal Coffee Shop

March 31

Volunteers needed for Chapel Royal Coffee Shop
Our Group Meetings are held at the

**Macmillan
Horizon Centre,**
Bristol Gate (opp
A&E at the RSCH)
**NOTE change in
time to 6.15pm
to 8.15pm**



Creating a Wildlife friendly garden

Wildlife can make it's home in our gardens in many different ways. There are lots of things we can do, from planting to maintenance, that will make them as welcome as possible.

A home for nature

Making our gardens wildlife friendly doesn't necessarily mean that we have to leave them to grow into wild jungles. Every space, whether it's a huge estate or a busy family garden, can give a home to nature.

There are lots of simple things we can do to help the animals we share a space with, from making sure that they have access to different habitats, to nurturing well-stocked feeding grounds for them.

A wildlife friendly garden is accessible to everyone whatever space we've got, whether we're maintaining an established garden, or creating a new one altogether.

Habitats

Even the smallest of gardens can offer up a huge variety of different habitats for wildlife. There are lots of ways we can introduce, or let nature create, a diverse range of homes for nature in our outdoor spaces.

It's good to create as many habitats as possible without cramming too much in. Think about the space you have available and focus on making these microhabitats as good as they can be.

You may not even realise that some of the most common unassuming garden features can house thriving worlds of wildlife.

Lawns for example, especially areas of un-cut long grass, are an important habitat for all sorts of insects and minibeasts, not to mention a feasting ground for the hungry birds which feed on them.

Borders, filled with flowering plants and shrubs, give nectar rich food to butterflies and bees, as well as seeds, berries and cover for birds and small mammals.

Trees, and hedges offer roosting and nesting sites for birds and mammals, as well as valuable shelter and cover from the elements and possible predators.

Ponds and water features can be a habitat for a huge variety of animal life, from amphibians and invertebrates to bathing garden birds.

Even woodpiles, compost and trimmings, the decomposing and discarded off-cuts from your garden, can be incredible places for animals to live, feed and hibernate.

Our gardens can be busy worlds of wildlife heaving with nature

To breed and shelter

A basic need for all wildlife is somewhere safe to breed and shelter. A garden can give this in many ways to many things.

Growing climbers against walls can provide brilliant shelter, as well as roosting and breeding sites for birds.

Trees, bushes and hedgerows can also be great havens for the bird world, as well as small mammals like hedgehogs. As a place for cover from predators and a safe spot to build a nest, these can be invaluable.

Providing bird boxes, bat boxes and hedgehog homes can be a great way of introducing good artificial shelters into nature. Natural roosting and nesting sites can be increasingly hard for animals to find and our gardens give us the chance to give them an ongoing safe alternative.

Butterflies need breeding sites too and growing the right plants can give them a place to breed and lay their eggs. Honesty and hedge garlic can be good for orange tip butterflies and buckthorn bushes are favourites for breeding brimstones.

Dead wood, trimmings and old foliage can be a valuable hiding place for beetles and other insects and minibeasts, as well as fungi and moss.

Leaving areas of grass to grow wild can give all sorts of wildlife a place to hide and breed. If you are looking to cut back overgrown areas, or untidy borders, wait until late winter or early spring, to give any minibeasts sheltering from the cold winter month the chance to move on.

To forage and feed

Another essential feature of a wildlife friendly garden is a variety of places for the different animal residents to forage and feed.

Of course, we can provide food for some of them, such as birds and hedgehogs, but there are lots of ways which we can help nature provide too.

A range of plants which flower and seed at varied times throughout the year, will provide food for the animals and insects that are active and feeding over different periods.

Berry bushes and fruit trees will give another source of valuable and irresistible seasonal food. Ivy is a great source of autumn nectar for insects and late winter fruit for birds.

An array of colourful nectar-rich flowers will attract bees, wasps, butterflies and other insects.

If you create a garden which is full of minibeasts and insects, you're also providing wealthy feeding ground for insect-eating birds, grub-hungry chicks and minibeast-eating mammals like hedgehogs and bats!

A source of clean safe water is as important as food, whether it's a larger pond or a small dish.

One of the best things you can do to help butterflies and moths, is to make sure their caterpillars have the right plants to feed on. A variety of different host plants will attract a more varied range of butterflies and caterpillars.

Thinking sustainably

Being sustainable and thinking of the environment is another important part of wildlife friendly gardening.

So many of our actions have an impact on wildlife which goes beyond our gardens, and it's important for us to think about this when choosing materials and creating our spaces.

Peat extraction destroys vital habitats, so avoid using peat and find alternative forms of compost. You can even try producing your own, with a composter or compost heap.

Give the tap a rest and save rainwater in water-butts and barrels. Pond-life will much prefer natural rain water if you need to top up your water features.

Buy FSC accredited garden furniture or charcoal

When planting native plants, ensure they are of genuine native stock and not of continental origin. Also, ensure 'wild flowers' have been cultivated from legally collected seed and not dug-up from the wild.

Recycle wherever possible. Use reclaimed, old materials when building raised borders and other garden structures. Old pallets and scaffold planks can make great materials for building.

Avoid using pesticides and use non-toxic, non-chemical alternatives.

Read more at

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/advice/gardening-for-wildlife/creating-a-wildlife-friendly-garden/#Qks5EtD8CBpAYIHd.99>

Ready, steady, grow: spring gardening tips from Alan Titchmarsh



Your garden soil is likely to be in poor condition right now, after the very wet winter has washed away many of its nutrients. So one of the very first jobs to do, now that the weather has warmed up, is to get the soil up to scratch – then it can nurture all your plants, just as they're starting to grow.

Make a show with dahlias

Some people are a little snobbish about dahlias, or think that they don't have enough room, but you don't have to go for the traditional double dahlia walk or huge dahlia border. If you want something showy and reliable with a long flowering season, from July to late October, dahlias fit the bill. They're great for filling sunny gaps between spring-flowering shrubs, as they take over where the early display left off. They are also ideal for stocking a new border with colour and superb for growing in a row on the veg patch to provide colourful cut flowers right through the season. And since dahlias came back into favour, you can now get neat, compact varieties that are perfect for growing in tubs on the patio. Dormant tubers are still available now in garden centres and other outlets, so stock up.

For the fastest flowers, plant them now in pots in a frost-free conservatory or similar spot, so they start into growth as soon as possible (use four or five-inch pots, so the whole tuber fits inside with space to spare, and peat-free potting compost). You'll have sturdy young plants perhaps six inches tall by the time it's safe to plant them out in the garden in late May.

If you don't want the bother of starting them early inside, wait another few weeks and plant dormant tubers straight into their planting positions. Plant them in a sunny situation with well-drained soil that's had plenty of well-rotted organic matter worked in, planting them deeply so the crowns of the tubers are four to six inches below the surface of the soil. That way, the tubers are insulated from the cold and new shoots won't reach the open air until any risk of late frost has passed.

Dahlias are fairly high-maintenance plants that repay regular attention. Support the tall, top-heavy stems by tying them up to strong stakes with soft twine. Water well in dry weather, remove dead heads regularly and feed generously all summer. Then they'll flower their socks off.



Sow your veg patch

The middle of April is the ideal time for filling the veg patch with crops you'll be picking throughout summer and autumn. Hoe off any weeds and rake them up, then fork the soil over, sprinkle on general fertiliser, rake finely and you're ready to sow. Things to sow now include carrots, lettuces, rocket, spring onions, spinach, Swiss chard, leeks and beetroots, along with annual herbs such as parsley and chervil.

Sow sparingly, since fresh seeds germinate well, then you'll make every seed count. When seedlings come up, let them grow about an inch high before thinning them out to leave them at their final spacing (see the backs of the packets for full instructions). Find a spare corner to make a seedbed, with specially well-prepared ground, and sow crops that need transplanting later – this technique is mostly used for brassicas (calabrese, summer and autumn cabbages, autumn and winter cauliflowers, sprouting broccoli – check the backs of the seed packets for precise sowing dates for each variety). But be sure to leave enough room for planting frost-tender veg that can't go outside until late May.



Feed the garden

Feed beds and borders with any good general fertiliser such as blood, fish and bone or another organic alternative. Sprinkle it on by hand all over the soil, applying it right underneath shrubs and round the base of climbers, perennials and clumps of bulbs. Trickle a line of fertiliser along the base of all your hedges – they'll be feeling fairly starved after this winter and spring is the perfect time to feed them.

It'll make them grow greener and stronger – which may mean a little more clipping than usual, but it's worth it for the general improvement in condition and the “thickening-up” effect. In the kitchen garden, fruit trees, bushes and canes also benefit from a good start-of-the-season feed, so use the same general fertiliser for those too. But since they need extra potash to encourage flowering and

fruiting, also give them sulphate of potash (at half an ounce per square yard). If they are growing in beds, sprinkle the feed evenly all over the surface of the soil.

But where you have individual trees growing in a lawn, apply their feed in a circle, covering the area underneath their entire canopy of branches. This same “cocktail” is a good late-spring feed for clematis, which is a greedy plant and also appreciates extra potash.

You could use the same mixture for roses if you want to keep costs down, but it's worth using a special rose feed with added magnesium, which helps bring out the best in the flowers and toughens up the foliage.

A specialist feed is also advisable for lime-hating plants such as rhododendrons and camellias – this contains the extra iron they need, and liquid formulations are available for plants grown in pots. If you grow fruit or all-year-round shrubs in containers, they'll also be ready for a good feed. In this case, it's best to use liquid tomato feed and apply as liberally as you would with a normal watering.

If you really want to give plants a treat, on top of their normal April feed give them a dose of diluted liquid seaweed extract, which provides all sorts of trace elements. It's an optional extra, but it makes the perfect start-of-the-season tonic to perk plants up after a bad winter.

Handy tips:

Sit plant “cages” over floppy perennials and tie tall kinds such as delphiniums to stakes or canes for support.

Clear out ivy, weeds and seedlings of sycamore or brambles etc from the base of hedges.

Don't worry about the sudden flush of greenflies on fruit trees and roses – bluetits will soon clear them up, and any crinkling of leaves will soon grow out.

Clear netting from ponds to allow waterside plants to grow up without snagging.

Tie in the new growth of climbers.

Fully grown summer bedding plants often appear on sale in nurseries and garden centres several weeks before it's safe to plant them out. Only buy them if you have suitable facilities to grow them undercover, where they are protected from cold nights and late frosts.

Griddled pak choi with soya beans and toasted sesame butter



Preparation time:20 minutes

Cooking time:5 minutes

Total time:25 minutes

Serves: 4 as a side

Ingredients

2½ tbsp sesame seeds, toasted
35g unsalted butter
2 tbsp light soy sauce
1 tbsp rice wine vinegar or lemon juice
200g frozen soya beans, defrosted and patted dry
2 x 235g packs large pak choi, trimmed
½ tbsp groundnut oil

Method

1. Crush 2 tbsp toasted sesame seeds in a pestle and mortar, then tip into a small saucepan. Add the butter, soy and vinegar or lemon juice. Warm through gently to melt the butter. Add the soya beans, stir and keep warm.
2. Put a griddle pan over a very high heat until smoking hot. Slice each pak choi in half from top to bottom. Toss with the oil. Place on the griddle in a single layer, in 2 batches if needed, and cook for 2-3 minutes on each side. Divide between plates and spoon the buttery beans over. Scatter with the reserved sesame seeds to serve.

Recipe courtesy Waitrose

MASSAGE THERAPY

Massage is often offered as part of cancer care in cancer centres, hospices, community health services and some GP surgeries.

Massage is a form of structured or therapeutic touch. It can be used to: relax your mind and body

- relieve tension
- improve the flow of fluid (lymph) in the lymphatic system (lymph nodes are part of the immune system and help to filter germs and disease)
- enhance your mood.

Some studies of people with cancer suggest that massage therapy reduced symptoms, such as pain, anxiety, depression and fatigue.

There are different types of massage therapy. Some massages are soft and gentle, while others are more active and may be uncomfortable. Your therapist will be able to adjust the pressure for your comfort. Cancer doctors and complementary therapists will usually advise you to try gentle massage and avoid vigorous, deep tissue massage.

Some people worry that massage could cause cancer cells to spread to other parts of their body. Research has not found any evidence of this, but massage therapists will avoid any areas affected by cancer, such as tumour sites or lymph nodes. Talk to your cancer doctor or nurse if you are worried.

Massage therapists working with people with cancer must be properly trained and qualified. They should have some knowledge of cancer and its treatments. They can sometimes teach relatives or friends how to do basic massages, so that they can support you at home.

During your therapy, it is important to avoid massage:

- directly over a tumour or lymph nodes (glands) affected by cancer
- to areas that are bruised or sensitive
- to areas being treated with radiotherapy, during treatment and for a few weeks after it finishes
- around intravenous catheters (such as central lines) and pain relief patches
- to areas affected by blood clots, poor circulation or varicose veins.
- It is also important to be particularly gentle if:
 - cancer has spread to your bones
 - you have a low platelet count (platelets are cells that help the blood to clot).

If you tend to bleed or bruise easily, or have cancer in your bones, speak to your cancer doctor before having massage therapy.

Have a chat with Kelly our Aromatherapist who attends our Group Meetings