



March 2026
SPRING NEWSLETTER

NEWSLETTER

Egham Gardens & Allotments Association



SPRING
2026

WELCOME TO THE
SPRING
NEWSLETTER

Welcome to Spring with the longer days providing opportunities for an increasing range of gardening tasks. March and April are the most important months for preparing seed beds and sowing seeds. However, outdoor temperatures can be unpredictable so keep a wary eye on the weather forecasts! When sowing in early spring the use of a heated propagator or heat mat is recommended as bottom heat helps keep the compost warm to reduce the risk of "damping off" – a fungal infection in soils that kills seedling stems at the base. Air flow and good sunlight are also important to get your seeds off to a good start. Happy sowing.



SEED SWAP AT THE
NEXT MEETING
12TH MARCH

We will be holding a Seed Swap at the next Club meeting on 12th March so if you have any unwanted packets of flower or vegetable seeds or even seeds you have collected yourself please bring them along.



DAFFODIL DAY
14TH MARCH 2026

The first item on the Clubs' calendar is the Daffodil Day event to be held on Saturday 14th March outside the United Church. Thank you to those members who have grown daffodils and other Spring plants for us to sell but, as always, let us know if you have anything else garden related to donate. We had a successful day last year both for our Club and in donations to Marie Curie.

If you have any time to spare on the day to help on the stall then let Janet know. Hopefully the weather will be kind and we will have another good day.

SPRING SHOW &
QUIZ - 9TH APRIL
2026

Looking forward to April, our Spring Show and Quiz is on 9th April so be sure to have this in your diary.

The Schedule accompanies this newsletter and I would draw your attention to a couple of changes : there is a new class 7 "Any Other Bulb or Herbaceous Flower" and in the

cookery section, class 17 is now Simnel Cake.

Once again the judges will be Richard White for plants and flowers and Elaine Marshall for the cookery classes.

Would the winners from last years' Spring Show please ensure you bring the Cup/Plate to the Spring Show or, if you are unable to attend contact Janet Hales beforehand to arrange delivery - bernard@enterprisen1.co.uk

I am putting together a Quiz for the evening for which there will be a small prize for the winner.



SPRING SALE 16TH
MARCH 2026

Our Spring Sale is on 16th May, again outside the United Church, so when you are sowing your seeds or propagating your plants perhaps do a few extra to donate to our stall. As ever, help on the day is requested





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MAGNA CARTA DAY
SATURDAY 13 JUNE
2026

Magna Carta Day this year will be on Saturday 13th June and we will have a stall on the day. This is our biggest fundraising opportunity of the year so anything garden related you can donate please let us know. Any help you can give on the day in setting up/taking down or helping on the stall would be very welcome.



A reminder that we have an RHS club affiliation card for all our members to use that gives you access to the RHS gardens around the country. The card means 2 adults can gain entry for 50% less – allowing for a treat at the café or a purchase from the garden centre. Please let me know if you wish to use it at any time.



2025 EGAA AGM &
PHOTOGRAPHIC
COMPETITION

The AGM was well attended and was a fun,

lively evening. The officers of the committee were all willing to stand for another year and the votes for them to do so were carried unanimously by the members.

The Photographic Competition held on the same evening had a good number of entries and was judged once again by Peter Walmsley.

The winners of each category were :
Brian Austin – Natural World;
Jill Williams – Gardening;



EUPHORBIA DECARYI - I have always been an ugly duckling but recently I felt like a swan when I won the photographic competition.

I was named after French botanist, Raymond Decary (1891-1973) and come from south east Madagascar. I grow in forest, shrubland and rocky areas in tropical or sub-tropical heat. In the wild, habitat loss has rendered me an endangered species but I am one of the most popular Madagascan species grown elsewhere.

I like to be not too wet nor too dry, plenty of sun and a little fertilizer when growing but, even then I spread very slowly and do that with rhizomes rather than seed. I think I am about 15 years old.



Veronica Cresswell – Monochrome.



Peter judged that Veronica's entry was the best overall entry and she was presented with the Charles Coleman LLP Tulip Vase to hold for the year.



SAVE THE DATE!
ST JOHN'S ECO FAIR

Save the date - St John's Eco Fayre this year is Saturday 5th September.



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PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION



2025 EGAA AGM & PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION CONTINUED.....

Having received a large number of donations for the Christmas Hamper raffle we were able to fill two large baskets with lots of lovely Christmas goodies. Congratulations to the two raffle winners Janet Hales and Brian Austin.



Brian Austin submitted an additional photograph titled "Robin AT Wisley". This a beautiful photograph of a robin in all its glory.



Congratulations also to Pat Hill who was the overall winner of the Monthly Competition achieving a total of 50 points across the year. Although Pat was unable to attend the AGM/ Social Jim was pleased to present her with the Miss H M Head Perpetual Challenge Cup at the February meeting.

The competition for 2026 is now underway so bring along your entries – points win prizes! (or a Cup)



You may recall that Peter came to give us a talk on how to photograph plants, gardens and landscapes on 8 January and that he was off on his travels from 18 January. Last time I heard from him he was visiting Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne before moving on to Tasmania.

He has now been able to add a (free) sign-up feature to his website to provide notification of new content and occasional resources and tips on travel photography for anyone interested and promised to let members know when it was up and running. Whilst it is still early days in smoothing out the wrinkles, the subscription link is here: <https://www.evocationimages.co.uk/subscribe> His Blog page is also here with a recent image of Sydney Harbour: <https://www.evocationimages.co.uk/blog>

If anyone has any questions, please don't

hesitate to ask or provide feedback to Peter directly via his e-mail address: peter@evocationimages.co.uk

2026 OUTINGS TO PLACES OF INTEREST!

Katerina has been busy putting together some outings to various places this year



starting with Painshill Park on Saturday 18th April. Book online <https://www.painshill.co.uk/> £12.50 per adult.

Other destinations are:



Leith Hill Rhododendron Walk House and Tower on 16th May;



Denbies Wine Estate Vineyard Sparkling Wine Tour on 20th June;



Savill Gardens Guided Tour on 18th July;



The Ealing Beaver Project Self Guided Tour on 17th October.

There will be a sign up sheet and hard copy list of destinations at the next meeting where you can register your interest in all or any of these days out.



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Time to sow seeds and plants

Now is the time to get sowing tomato seeds. It's easy to get stuck in a rut and keep growing the same old varieties. There are many new varieties that are being bred every year that boast better disease resistance, boosted sugar levels and bigger, more flavoursome harvests.

Some cherry varieties to try are Sakura, Sakura or Suncherry Premium. Salad tomatoes – Cavendish, Honey Delight or Merveille des Marches ; cherry plum – Capriccio, Olivade, Santonio or lastly, beefsteak variety Brandy Boy or Buffalo Steak.

Some tips for growing your best tasting toms : Choose a recommended variety to ensure you got a great flavour.

Share seeds and seedlings with friends and neighbours, so you can grow more varieties.

Light is more important than heat for developing flavour. Recommended temperature is 21°C and 24°C.

Sow your tomatoes early or get a head start with plug plants.

Fast-growing cherry and cherry plum varieties ripen earlier than larger varieties.

Look out for pests and tackle them as early as possible.

Feed fortnightly with a potassium-rich fertiliser when flowers appear, but don't overdo it as overfeeding results in growth problems.



AS ITS DAFFODIL SEASON

The origins of *Narcissus*

The botanical name for the daffodil is *Narcissus*, named after a young man known for his beauty in Greek mythology who was tricked into falling in love with his own reflection. The drooping flowers that characterise most daffodils are said to represent Narcissus bending over to catch his reflection in a pool of water.

The name derives from the Greek 'narco', which is the root of the word narcotic. The etymology probably relates to the daffodil's toxicity – all parts of the plant are poisonous.

How daffodils came to Britain

The Romans are known to have planted daffodils in memory of loved ones or comrades fallen in battle. It's likely they brought them to Britain from the Iberian Peninsula, predominantly Spain and Portugal, where the largest variety of daffodil species are found.

Father of the modern daffodil

The Rev. George Herbert Engleheart is often credited as the father of the modern daffodil. He registered 720 new daffodil varieties between 1882 and 1923, although only around 30 are still commercially available. The *N. poeticus* species is the most well known.

Cultural inspiration

Daffodils have inspired writers, poets and artists through the centuries. A favourite flower among the Romantic poets, they were immortalised by Wordsworth in his poem Daffodils, one of the most famous poems in the English language.

The poet's line 'A host of golden daffodils' recalls the swathes of wild flowers discovered on a walk with his sister Dorothy along the shore of Ullswater in the Lake District in early April 1802.

Over the centuries, daffodils have been given many common or local names, including the 'daffodowndilly', 'yellow maiden' and 'Lent lily', which is a reference to their flowering season coinciding with the period leading up to Easter. 'Daffodowndilly' was writer AA Milne's choice for his poem about the flower, published in his book of verse for children, *When We Were Very Young* (1924).

She wore her yellow sun-bonnet



GARDEN JOBS TO DO! MARCH-MAY

March Jobs.....

- Harvest your early crop of rhubarb
- Divide large clumps of perennials
- Sow tomato seeds undercover in small pots
- Plant shallots, onion sets and early potatoes

April Jobs.....

- Plant summer flowering bulbs
- Protect delphinium and hosta new growth from slugs and snails
- Sow hardy annuals
- Sow carrots and peas
- Plant potatoes, onion sets and Jerusalem artichokes
- Add aquatic plants to the pond after its Spring tidy-up
- Prune hydrangeas
- Check your roses – milder weather can

May Jobs.....

- Remove side shoots on tomatoes
- Use up the last leeks. Clear away any old or finished crops and dig over soil.
- Continue to make direct successional sowings in the soil of lettuce, radish, spinach, turnips, beetroot.
- Sow peas

Website Address: <https://www.egaa.org.uk>.

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