

# ELTHAM AND AVERY HILL GARDENS SOCIETY

[www.eahgs.org.uk](http://www.eahgs.org.uk)

## NEWSLETTER - SPRING 2026

We've been lucky to have enjoyed several weeks of beautiful sunny spring weather but now, if your garden is anything like mine, the soil is bone dry and hard and planting anything is difficult. Still, as we approach May with two bank holidays to enjoy we might start to see April showers which have been lacking this year.

### **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2026**

The Society's AGM was held on Monday 30 March 2026. Despite the date being circulated in newsletters and emails and posted on the website the number of members attending was disappointingly low. The minutes of the meeting are available to read on the website.

The business of the meeting was followed by an interesting and informative talk by John Webb on the history of Avery Hill Park the the Winter Gardens, and fortunately was well supported by guests from The Eltham Society and Mottingham Horticultural Society.

### **AROUND THE SOCIETIES**

We are lucky that within the area there are other garden and horticultural societies that are as enthusiastic as we are about growing our own flowers, fruit and vegetables.

In the interests of ensuring that we all get the best from our gardens and enjoy our enthusiasm it has been great that both Mottingham Horticultural Society (MHS) and Charlton and Blackheath Amateur Horticultural Society (CABAHS) are willing to share some of their activities with us. As you know MHS invited us to their recent AGM talk and their members were invited to attend our event. In a wider world which currently seems to be in conflict it is wonderful that in local horticulture there is a little more cooperation!

### **Charlton and Blackheath Amateur Horticultural Society**

The Society have regular talks and events which are held at the Old Library at Charlton House starting at 7.30pm and these are open to non-members to attend (admission for guests £5). Full details can be found on their web-site but forthcoming events are as follows:

#### **Monday 18 May: Miss Wilmott's Ghosts**

Sandra Lawrence, author of Miss Willmott's Ghosts, on the fascinating life of Ellen Wilmott FLS VMH.

#### **Monday 15 June: Gardening Q&A**

Our experienced panel will tackle members' gardening questions.

#### **Monday 20 July: Hardy geraniums**

Graham Spencer of Plants for Europe will explore the varied world of hardy geraniums.

## Monday 17 August: The garden at The Exchange, Erith

Selina Ozanne, head gardener at The Exchange, will tell us all about this small but perfectly formed public garden in Erith, designed by Sarah Price.

### Inter-Society Trophy

This year's Inter-Society trophy will be held at MHS annual show at Eltham College on Saturday, 29<sup>th</sup> August. Final details to be confirmed but this year CABAHs are planning to join in the fun. A three-way competition for the coveted Inter Society Trophy!

We have still to agree the show list but last year it was as follows:

Flowers	3x stems in a vase
Mini vegetable collection	3x small of cherry tomatoes with calyx 3x carrots maximum length 6 inches 1x Courgette maximum length 6 inches
Fruit	3x fruit
Conserve	To be presented in a jar

The original idea was that this would be open to all members of our society to contribute. That way we really would be showing the best of what our members are able to produce. Until now only a few members have participated but I do hope that more of you will feel able to offer support this year. It really doesn't take itself too seriously (although winning last year was definitely a good feeling!) so even if you are not sure if you can contribute anything if you are interested in joining in, please do e-mail [brian@eahgs.org.uk](mailto:brian@eahgs.org.uk) to register your interest and we will let you know the final details nearer the competition time.

### NOTES FROM A GARDEN

After a few months when it felt like we would never see the sun again I have been loving all the spring sunshine. Not least because some time off work has proven to be particularly well timed with wall to wall sunshine! I have spent almost all of it in my garden, getting round to jobs that I have been meaning to do for a while. The ground is already solid again after no real rain for several weeks so I have had to focus on what I can do at the moment. That has included delineating my 'wild grass' area - in other words, the bit at the end of the garden I let run wild for a few months until either the grass dries out or the fox cubs wreck it by bouncing around in it. The grass is already over a foot high and looks lovely in the evening sunshine.

But my big job has been jet washing the patio, planting up pots and generally having a clear out. I took a Marie Kondo/Stacey Solomon approach to all those plant pots I had been holding onto just in case they would be useful. It's amazing how many you can collect over the years. I've now got about 25 plastic pots of various sizes, which is more than enough, but I got rid of six full compost bags worth along the way!

With the garden under control for now I've been enjoying wisteria season. I don't have one myself (yet!), but have made my annual trip to see it in bloom in Well Hall Pleasaunce, and managed to catch the wisteria at Eltham Palace on what must have been the perfect day. Just beautiful. Continuing the wisteria theme, there was also a lovely wisteria in full bloom at Batemans, the

house Rudyard Kipling used to live in, near Burwash in Kent. That is well worth a trip down the leafy A21 to visit. The planting in their perennial borders was really attractive and has given me some ideas. I also took a very close look at the apple trees in the small orchard, which had been pruned quite hard to create wine goblet shapes (ie completely clear in the centre) but still had plenty of blossom, and I now have plans for my Golden Russet tree, which is badly in need of a prune.

I haven't done much with seeds this year but have three healthy courgettes on my windowsill. I might bring one of them along to the plant swap (date to be announced). See you there!

## **TRADING NEWS**

Trading has really picked up in the last few weeks with the planting season under way. The Rosedale multipurpose reduce peat compost has been selling well and we are well stocked with RHS approved peat free compost.

The remainder of the seed potatoes ordered before Christmas have now been sold.

We still have some potatoes left to buy at 50p each to grow and enter for the John King Potato Challenge for the show in September.

**\*\*\*PLEASE SUPPORT THE SHOP\*\*\***

## **MEMBERSHIP NEWS**

To those of you that have not yet renewed your membership for 2025/26, the best way to do so is to call in at the Pippenhall shop on a Sunday morning between 10.00am and 12.00 noon. If this is not possible for you, please contact our Membership Secretary, Brian Greenwood ([brian@eahgs.org.uk](mailto:brian@eahgs.org.uk)) (tel 020 8850 6714) to sort something out. Membership remains at £5 pa for regular members, £3 pa for seniors and the membership year runs from 1 October to 30 September.

**For your diary: The annual show will take place on SATURDAY 5<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2026, at St Mary's School, our usual venue.**

**To keep in touch with all the Society's news, shop price lists, and many other items of interest, log on to:**

**[www.eahgs.org.uk](http://www.eahgs.org.uk)**