

March 26

Vol. 24 Issue 1



Juliotter Garden Club Newsletter

For everyone in North Cornwall who loves gardens and gardening

Cornish Spring

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Cornwall in spring, verges full of primroses, pheasants scrapping in the lanes, a wild view of the sea from every bend in the road or windy cliff top; shy violets hiding on the banks, daffodils posing in the hedges - they give our county an atmosphere of botanical jauntiness. Early spring coincides with the roadside flowers of alexanders, an angelica-like plant that the Romans used like celery; my cowslips are uncurling their welcome flowerheads, and what's this I see? Snake's head fritillary dotted about the edge of the woodland, and at last beginning to bulk up to make a lovely show. This county of great family estates has a long history of forward-thinking, serious horticulture. Plant collectors from William Lobb to Frank Kingdon-Ward and George Forrest are all represented here, and it takes more than the fiercest gales and wettest winter on record to permanently destroy our world-famous gardens, even though they were hit for six. Yes, we lost some lovely old trees, but the great Cornish showpieces - magnolias, camellias and rhododendrons - are beginning their spring crescendo as our gardens, great and small, spring into life. BBC Spotlight did a feature on a National Trust garden recently - I think it might have been Lanhydrock, and the commentary said that the camellias had never been so floriferous. And I have a large-leaved rhododendron in flower for the first time in five years - it's absolutely covered in blossom. Could it be last year's hot summer, the mild winter and all that rain has resulted in such a magnificent spring display? Our gardens are at their best this time of the year so I might go visiting once I've done my own garden pruning, weeding, seeding and spring clean. They always say the right time to sow seeds is about a fortnight ago but I think I might just have got it right this year and all the seeds I sowed in February have germinated, put on growth and tiny roots and have developed sets of true leaves. Having tried and tested many different varieties of tomato over the years I have returned to a few reliable old favourites from Marshalls: Gardener's Delight, Cherry Baby, and Shirley. it's great to be able to report that my little tomatoes are nearly ready to be potted on and are growing strongly in the warmth and sunshine of the conservatory, helped by a couple of grow lights. They are joined in their cosy home by basil, parsley, cosmos and leeks. whilst out in the greenhouse I am already gloating over broccoli, lettuce, radicchio and chicory. Under an insect netting out in the raised bed are broad beans, garlic and cabbage, all of which have over-wintered well, obviously helped by their protective netting. I think I've cracked this business of growing at 760 ft above sea level: protect your plants, either with fleece in the coldest weather, or fine insect netting the rest of the year. Ian Clemens was one of our speakers last year and gave us an inspiring talk about dahlias. He grows all his from seed and, fired with enthusiasm, I bought a couple of packets from Sarah Raven's catalogue. They germinated within the week, and produced their first true leaves two weeks after that. They have all been potted on and are doing well under cover. If I can keep the slugs at bay and raise them to flower, I shall be as pleased as punch. I tried to grow dahlias for several years, buying expensive tubers, making lots of elementary mistakes with them, and eventually losing them to slugs, or the weather, or not looking after them properly. But if you can grow dozens of them from seed, and even collect your own seed and "invent" new varieties - that puts a whole different perspective on things. If they are impressively strong enough I will bring some surplus plants for the club table at our plant sale on 2nd May. Cornish Spring? I just love it.

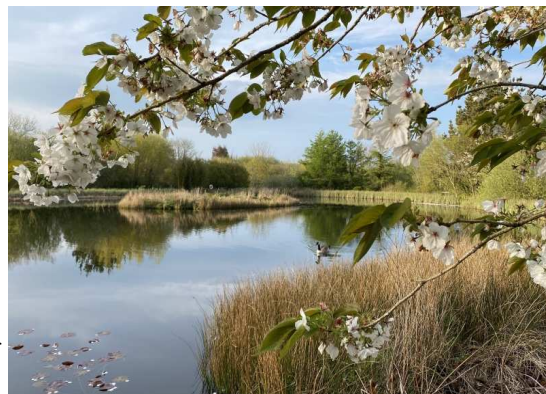
- Juliotter Garden Club meets on the fourth Tuesday of the month
- Otterham Village Hall at 7.30 p.m.
- New members and guests of members are made very welcome
- We have a full programme of events and talks throughout the year

Julie Otter

What's On Locally

Lower Tregamere, St Columb, TR9 6DN on Monday 30th March. An evolving 2½ acre garden. Bisected by a river, where English formal style juxtaposes with woodland and oriental styles. Walk through tall redwoods and past magnificent old oaks to take in many unusual trees and shrubs. Catch the cherry blossoms in late spring, the colourful acers, or the autumnal display of the Katsuras. Experience the air of tranquillity the garden evokes.

Cornwall Garden Society Spring Flower Show, Royal Cornwall Showground, Wadebridge on Saturday 28th and Sunday 29th March. The Chelsea of the West flower show with a feast of specialist nurseries, horticultural traders, artisan crafts and Cornish food producers. From locally-grown cut flowers and sub-tropical shrubs to vintage tools and garden ponds, the annual Spring Flower Show provides much to tempt Cornwall's gardeners. Also showcasing the work of some of Cornwall's finest craftspeople.



Little Dinworthy at Bradworthy

Trevina House Garden will be opening from 10.30am until 5pm on Thursday 16th April 2026 and Friday 17th April 2026 at Trevina House, St. Neot, Liskeard, Cornwall, PL14 6NR. Directions: 1m N of St Neot. From A38 turn off at Halfwayhouse pub. Head up hill to Goonzion Downs. Bear L & keep straight on towards Colliford Lake. From A30 take Colliford Lake/St Neot turning. Head towards St Neot. A Victorian cottage garden with original cobbled paths, rewilded woodland and medieval fish pond. There is a traditional kitchen garden and organic orchard.

On Sunday 19th April 2026, Little Dinworthy Garden will be opening from 11am until 4pm for the NGS at Little Dinworthy, Bradworthy, Holsworthy, Devon, EX22 7QX. Little Dinworthy gardens started life in 2003 as a conventionally farmed small holding. Today, the once bare fields with their tightly clipped hedges now support an abundance of wildlife from a myriad of native flowers to a multitude of insects, bees butterflies, moths and dragonflies, and huge increases in the species of birds and animals, such as the long eared owl and our treasured dormouse. The young wood continues to develop with a vision to create an ancient wood filled with bluebells and wild daffodils.

Caudworthy Park, Maxworthy, Launceston, Cornwall, PL15 8LZ, open on 3rd and 10th May. A naturalistic garden with ancient and newly planted trees, ponds, hardy perennial beds, established borders and a no-dig vegetable garden. An orchard and wildflower meadows support wildlife, while rewilding areas increase biodiversity. The garden balances productive growing with sustainable, diverse

Club Notices



Can I tempt you with a glass of wine and a few nibbles to make a point of coming to our AGM on March 24th? In addition to the wine and munchies, there is an exciting programme of speakers and events throughout the coming year that Laura has lined up for us; a garden-related raffle; annual prizes for flower of the month, vegetable of the month and house-plant of the month winners; perhaps a silly game or two; and your chance to shape the future of the club. We already have volunteers for most of the important jobs on the committee. And you know what they say: we're nothing without you, so you're not just very welcome, you're essential. Put it in your diary now. Tuesday March 24th at 7.30 pm.

Contact Details

We have got volunteers for most of these jobs, which will be confirmed at the AGM

Chairman:

Publicity:

Secretary (Minutes):

Events & Speakers:

Treasurer: Alan Green