

**March
2020**



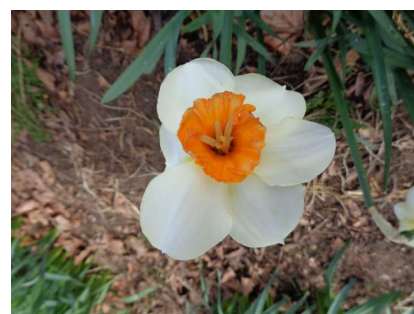
**The Bridge Garden
Newsletter No 35**

Unprecedented times.....

Well, what can we say about the month of March except that we are in the midst of some seriously troubling times with major health concerns at the top of the list. It is almost like gardening and growing is almost insignificant BUT far from it!! Getting out into the garden particularly when the sun shines is almost the perfect pick up – lots of research backs this up too. The soil is starting to warm up slowly although with cold overnight and early morning temperatures it is still wise to be cautious with seed sowing unless you can protect what you are sowing..... Follow these pages to see what we are doing in The Bridge Garden during these extremely challenging times.....

A perfect pick me up!!.....

All around the garden areas there are some stunning spring flowering bulbs which really do brighten the day. See below for some of these bright colourful flowers.....



Pond construction question?.....

Do we really need a pond liner? That is a serious question that we keep asking ourselves, indeed with the amount of rainfall that we have had during this last autumn and winter period, if we had a liner in place it probably would be full of rainwater by now. Just take a look at the photograph below to see what we mean..



Broad beans are looking healthy.....



Here you can see our broad beans that are really starting to produce some strong vibrant growth, with the plentiful rainfall, if we get some sunshine now, then hopefully we will start to see some flowers form which will be followed by a bumper crop of broad beans.....

Splendid Cornus Colours.....

There are lots of plants that really produce some stunning colours, none more so than the perennial shrub cornus which really produces some stunning red branches as you can see from the photograph below.....



Wild garlic is producing plenty of leaf.....

The wild garlic that we have growing in the garden area is starting to produce lots of leaf which hopefully will be followed by the stunning white flowers that garlic produces – plus the smell of the flowers is absolutely stunning.....



Raspberry Canes are producing new growth.....



Our row of raspberry canes are starting to produce plenty of new growth so hopefully these canes will provide us with a crop of tasty fresh berries.....

Ideal growing conditions.....

With all of the rain that we have had over the last few months this has produced almost perfect growing conditions for our marsh marigold plant that is starting to produce plenty of lush green growth and masses of bright yellow flowers.....



Rainbow Chard is still producing leaf.....



Rainbow chard must be one of the toughest plants around – no matter what weather conditions are thrown at these plants, they always seem to keep going producing lots more leaf plus the stunning colours that these plants produce is amazing too.....

Rhubarb bed looks great.....

Our rhubarb bed has produced masses of growth with lots of stems ready to be picked – plus with all of the mild weather we have not had to force any of these plants at all to get an early crop. The downside of a mild spring is that rhubarb will produce flowers which is what has happened to lots of our plants. You can still eat the stalks but it is best to get rid of the flowers before they turn to seed and ultimately they will weaken the plants in future growing seasons.....



Lots of rhubarb.....



Flowers too....

Subway continue to support our schools growing work



Schools growing work

Lots of perennials starting to produce new growth.....

We have lots of perennial plants growing in and around The Bridge Garden which at this time of the year are starting to produce lots of new growth.....
Below you can see some examples of the perennials that are starting to grow.....

Golden Rod – Solidago..

This plant is actually a herb,
its golden yellow flowers are
a particular favourite of the
bees plus it has many
medicinal properties too.....



Exochorda – another perennial shrub that
produces masses of tiny green leaves with
masses of five petal white flowers.....



Lemon Verbena.....



We have two different areas where we have our
lemon verbena plants growing – one inside the poly
tunnel which is in the photograph and the other area
is outside which has not starting producing any new
growth yet. This plant has such a strong aromatic
smell plus it is great for herbal tea.....

Lots of new plant growth.....

Peas have been sown.....

We have set - up some pea growing supports using twigs and branches, peas when they grow put out tendrils which allows the pea plants to cling on to the supports..



Shallots planted too.....



Here you can see that we have planted our shallots in the ground now.....

Initially we planted the shallots in seed modules to get them started, indeed the root system they have produced will hopefully see the shallots really grow quickly now.....

Plum blossom.....

Below you can see one of our plum trees which has got blossom on for the first time – this variety is called Czar so it will be interesting to see if we get some fruit from this tree this summer.....



Grape vine is in bud.....



Our Glenora grape vine is now starting to produce plenty of new growing shoots so hopefully this year we will get an even bigger crop of grapes..... Last year was the first year that this vine produced any fruit so hopefully we will see more grapes.....

Fig tree is also producing new growth.....

Our fig tree which is a second - year plant has started to produce some new growing shoots which will hopefully see this tree produce some figs that will ripen this year, the small fruits that were produced last year were late on in the season so as a consequence they did not have time to ripen.....
Below you can see the growing shoots.....



Lots of fruit growing in the garden.....

There are lots of different fruits growing in the garden such as grapes, figs, apples both cooking and eating apples, pears, two different varieties of plums, a cherry tree, gooseberries, blackcurrants, raspberries and strawberry plants.....

Fresh fruit.....

Spring flowers are stunning.....

We really do have some stunning spring flowers in all different areas of The Bridge garden in lots of different colours too – here you can see the planting theme is all blue with muscari and chionodoxa flowers in this pot.....
Not only stunning colours but stunning detail in the actual flowers – look closely!!



Stunning daffodils too.....



Pink hyacinth



Red tulips are stunning.....

These red tulips are just starting to open – they will provide even more colour at the entrance to school.....



Cold March nights.....

The last full week of March has most certainly given us some cold frosty nights then followed by some glorious daytime sunshine, one very small consolation in these troubled times – to see the sunshine and the bright spring flowers goes a very small way to changing your mood in these unprecedented times.....



Another pot of spring colour.....



Stunning detail.....



Stinging Nettles – [*Urtica dioica*].....



Most of us at some stage have been “stung” by stinging nettles including me – this big clump is in The Bridge garden.....

Despite the stinging sensation, nettles have some wonderful properties both in a culinary and medicinal way.....

Nettle tea and nettle soup for starters.....

Medicinally nettles are full of vitamins and minerals – both the leaves and the roots have really good nutrients.....

Makes great plant food too.....

Gunnera manicata.....

This is another really unusual plant that is growing in The Bridge Garden – often referred to as giant rhubarb which originates from Brazil.....
Although this is only a young plant, this plant can produce leaves 4 feet in diameter when it starts to mature. A real specimen of a plant once it establishes.....



**This plant can produce
leaves 4 feet in diameter!**