

NEWSLETTER

SPRING BULB OF THE MONTH

Fritillaria meleagris

Fritillaria meleagris is commonly known as snake's head fritillary, snake's head, chess flower, frog-cup, guinea-hen flower, guinea flower, leper lily (because its shape resembled the bell once carried by lepers), Lazarus bell, chequered lily, chequered daffodil, drooping tulip or, in northern Europe,



simply fritillary. Vita Sackville-West once called it "a sinister little flower, in the mournful colour of decay". That name never stuck though, so let's stick to the botanical latin shall we? The genus name, *Fritillaria* is derived from

the Latin term for a dice-box (*fritillus*), and probably refers to the checkered pattern of the flowers and *meleagris* means "spotted like a guineafowl" because the flower has a chequered pattern in shades of purple.

Fritillaria meleagris is native to Europe and western Asia. However in the British Isles there is some disagreement amongst botanists as to whether it is a native species or a long-established garden escapee. The plant was first described in the 16th century by herbalist John Gerard who had only known of it as a garden plant and it was not recorded in the wild until 1736, which has led some to argue that it must be an escapee. However, the fact that its habitat is usually confined to ancient hay meadows and it does not easily spread to adjoining land, leads others to the conclusion that it is a native species which became isolated from the European population when Britain was cut off from mainland Europe after the last glacial period.

The plant was once abundant in the UK, particularly in the Thames Valley and parts of Wiltshire, and was collected in vast quantities to be sold as a cut flower in the markets of London, Oxford, and Birmingham. During World War II most of the ancient meadows were ploughed up and turned over to the production of food crops, destroying much of the plant's habitat. Although a popular garden plant it is now rare in the wild, although there are some notable sites where it is still found, such as the meadows at Magdalen College, Iffley Meadows, Oxford and the Oxfordshire village of Ducklington, which holds a "Fritillary Sunday" festival.

Fritillaries are relatively trouble-free, although being part of the lily family, they're susceptible to the voracious lily beetle. The best method of protection is to remove the bright red beetles by hand as soon as they're spotted or spray with home-made or organic pesticides - see page 4. Slugs and snails will also enjoy the foliage so take the usual precautions.



BHS News

Now it is officially Spring but it certainly didn't feel like it yesterday in the torrential rain! Today is the start of National Gardening Month but not looking too promising right now! Never mind, stay indoors this weekend and prepare your exhibits for the show on Wednesday - look forward to seeing you all there.

Barb



WHAT'S COMING UP AT BHS IN 2023

Meetings are held at St James Parish Church Hall,
Church Street, Weybridge, Surrey, KT13 8DE.
on the first Wednesday afternoon of the month from 1.30 - 3.45pm.
Tea/coffee and biscuits/cake when you arrive. Talk at 2pm.

5th April 2023

AGM and Spring Show
[See categories in February newsletter](#)

Summer Garden Visits: [more info on Page 3](#)

Wednesday 3rd May, 2023

Sheffield Park and Garden - coach trip

Friday 9th June 2023

Private gardens am: Hampton pm: East Molesey

Monday 31st July, 2023

West Dean Gardens - coach trip

Thursday 24th August, 2023

Woking private garden pm - self drive

Early September

TBC

4th October 2023

Cherrill Sands
[Tulips and Turbans](#)

1st November 2023

The ngs - history to the present day
[Clare Bevan, Surrey County Organiser](#)

6th December 2023

The work of the Swan Lifeline
[Cindy Smulders - Trustee of the charity](#)

3rd January 2024

Springing into a New Year
[Simon Horrill](#)

7th February 2024

Paul Whittle
[Homes and Gardens](#)

6th March 2024

Geoff Peach
[Audience led problem solving in the garden - Q and A](#)

More info on AGM/Spring Show

Hopefully you are all working on some prize winning exhibits for the show next Wednesday. The plans are for a short AGM and then the usual team quiz while the judging is taking place. The winning team will get mini chocolate eggs 😊

Have you drawn/painted your idea for a new BHS logo. We will get you to vote for your favourite as a guide to help the committee make the final decision. The winner gets a nice prize.

If you haven't signed up for the garden visits yet, please bring cash or a cheque in an envelope for Elizabeth. Both coach trips are currently undersubscribed so encourage one another to come along and bring a friend(s) as it would be an awful shame if we have to cancel them.



Brooklands Horticultural Society

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF BROOKLANDS HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

**TO BE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 5th April 2023
AT 2pm at St James Parish Centre, Weybridge**

AGENDA

1. Opening remarks and apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the meeting of 6th April, 2022
3. Matters arising from the Minutes
4. Chair's report
5. Membership Secretary's report
6. Treasurers report
7. Election of Officers and Committee for the coming year
8. Presentation of the Busy Lizzie Award
9. Any Other Business

Summer Garden Visits

Wednesday 3rd May, 2023: Coach Trip to Sheffield Park, East Sussex

Depart: 9.00am from Xcel Leisure Complex, Waterside Dr,

Walton-on-Thames KT12 2JG ≈ 1 ½ hr drive. Depart Sheffield Park at 3.30pm

The cost will be £25 for the coach. Entry will be free for National Trust members and RHS members (just 1 allowed per card). For non members the cost is £15 but the Gardeners World 2 for 1 card can also be used.

Friday 9th June: Hampton and East Molesey Private Gardens

Cost £16 to include entry and tea/coffee and cake in both gardens

Morning meet at 11.00: 9 Warwick Close, Hampton TW12 2TY

Afternoon approx 2pm: 61 Wolsey Road, East Molesey, Surrey, KT8 9EW

Initial thoughts were to have either a pub lunch or picnic in Bushy Park. Neither of these is going to be practical. Firstly due to the late start at the Hampton garden, there will probably not be enough time for a pub lunch. and the stop off at the cafe/gardens in Bushy Park won't work now as the road through the Park has been closed to through traffic.

The current idea is to drive to Hurst Park via Hampton Court bridge. There is a car park and 2 nice looking cafes and the car park is 5 minutes walk to the afternoon garden in Wolsey Road.

I haven't done a recci of this so could Molesey residents let me know if this is a sensible suggestion - I know a few of you live very nearby.

Monday 31st July, 2023: Coach Trip - West Dean Gardens, West Sussex

Depart: 9.00am from Xcel Leisure Complex, Waterside Dr,

Walton-on-Thames KT12 2JG approx 1 ½ hr drive. Depart West Dean at 3.30pm

The cost will be £27 (coach £17 and entry to gardens £10)

Members of Historic Houses have free entry so only need to pay £17.

Thursday 24th August, 2023: meet at 2pm

Woodpeckers, Poplar Grove, Woking, Surrey, GU22 7SD

The cost will be £8 to include tea and cake

All about the pesky Lily Beetle

Lily beetle (family Chrysomelidae) and its larvae feed on the leaves of lilies and fritillaries. The adult beetles are very occasionally found on other plants but lilies and fritillaries are the only plants on which eggs are laid and the grubs develop. Plants can produce a good display of flowers despite leaf damage although heavy defoliation in early summer can result in undersized bulbs, which may not flower next year. Lily beetle has become widespread in Britain and Ireland since the early 1990s. Red lily beetle overwinters as adult beetles in soil, leaf litter and other sheltered places. This could be anywhere, not necessarily in the vicinity of lilies and fritillaries. They can also fly and find new hosts in the spring. They find lilies and fritillaries at least in part by volatile chemicals given off by the leaves, the adult beetles will also produce aggregation pheromones drawing more beetles to suitable host plants.



Consequently, there is no advantage in attempting to treat the soil below lily plants. The beetles begin emerging on sunny days in late March and April when they seek out the foliage of host plants. Eggs are laid in small batches on the underside of leaves during April to mid-summer. The eggs hatch and the larvae feed on the foliage. They are usually completely hidden under their own wet black excrement (insect excrement is known as frass).



When fully fed, the larvae go into the soil to pupate. The next generation of adult beetles emerges from mid-summer onwards. These beetles add to the feeding damage but there is only one generation a year and these late summer adults will not mate and lay eggs until the following year.

Where possible control the beetles by removing by hand or shaking the plants and squashing them - YUK!. A product called Grazers G4 is sold as a repellent and is based around the plant nutrient calcium (the CaCl form), combined with a natural adjuvant of a plant extract. It is sprayed onto the leaves and stems and absorbed into the plant cells, resulting in a 'plant mediated effect' of making them seem 'bitter' or unappetising to the attacking grazing pest, so they look elsewhere for their food. There are also Grazers G1, G2, and G3 for slugs, deer, rabbits and cabbage whites.

A number of insecticides are available although their use is frowned upon in gardening circles. There are also a number of homemade recipes including dilute sprays of garlic, cider vinegar, and vegetable oil.



WOW - Elizabeth's Daffodils



Don't know where she is going to put them, but she tells me she has just ordered some more for next year.

Poppy enjoyed the sunshine amongst them as well plus a few hyacinths as a token gesture!



Bits And Bobs

IDENTIFY YOUR SOIL TYPE

the jar test



- 1 Fill a clear glass jar halfway with your soil sample.
- 2 Fill the remaining half with water, leaving 1" of air.
- 3 Attach lid, then shake the jar vigorously until you have broken up any clumps of soil.
- 4 Set the jar aside to rest, undisturbed, overnight.

After 24 hours your jar's contents will have settled into distinct layers:

SAND	SILT	CLAY
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By examining the proportions of these layers, you can gain a sense of what type of soil you have, and what you need to add to improve your soil. Here are some examples to use for comparison. The middle jar is ideal soil:

 <p>25% clay 25% silt 50% sand</p>	 <p>30% clay 40% silt 30% sand</p>	 <p>50% clay 25% silt 25% sand</p>
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GardenersEDGE A.M. Loomer's
GardenersEdge.com
888-556-5676

Use Baking soda and Vinegar to check the soil pH.

Your soil is alkaline if



Soil + Vinegar = Bubbles

Your soil is acidic if



Soil + Baking soda = Bubbles

PLANT SWAP DAY



Saturday 29th April

St Mary Oatlands Church
9am – 12 noon

Bring your surplus plants, bulbs and seedlings and take home some different plants for the garden.

Refreshments available as you browse.



Optional donations to St Mary Oatlands

Just found this!

Thompson & Morgan have developed a brand new strain of sunflower which generates its own electricity captured from the sun. The PowerFlower has a USB in the stem that can charge mobile phones and tablets. Plants are supplied 12 inches high, and in bud.

