NEWSLETTER

PLANT OF THE MONTH
Erigeron

Erigeron is a large genus of around 400 species of plants in the composite family Asteraceae and is closely related to the Old World asters and the true daisies (Bellis). Its common name, fleabane, is shared with related plants in several other genera. It appears to be derived from a belief that the dried plants repelled fleas or that the plants were poisonous to fleas. It was used in the Middle Ages to fight diseases, is also said to have been placed in the cradle of children to protect against evil spells.



The generic name Erigeron is derived from the Ancient Greek words eri "early in the morning" and geron "old man", a reference to the appearance of the white hairs of the fruit soon after flowering or possibly alluding to the early appearance of the seed heads.

Erigeron includes annual, biennial, and perennial herbaceous species, all of which are evergreen. The flowerheads are on erect stems and can have different colours depending on the species and variety although the centre of the flower is usually yellow. The composite plants form achene fruits after flowering, which spread by flying umbrellas.



Recognising Erigeron can sometimes be difficult, as the species of the genus are easily confused with other plants such as asters, bellis, camomile, and ox-eye daisy.

Most of us think of Erigeron as the perennial Erigeron karvinskianus or Mexican fleabane with white ray florets, turning pink as they fade, growing to 20 cm tall, and readily self seed into dry areas and cracks in paving slabs etc. However there are many other species but one caught my eye during our visit to Chinthurst Lodge last week which is the non native Erigeron annuus or tall fleabane growing up to 170 cm.



<u>Should you control Erigeron as a weed?</u>

Annual Erigeron and in particular Erigeron annuus is considered problematic because of its vigorous dispersal by its seeds and is a particular problem in agriculture, as it can reduce yields. The same likely applies to our own gardens so my original thought at Chinthurst of getting some for my garden has changed since researching this!

However as our summers are getting warmer and drier, I suspect plants such as the perennial Erigeron karvinskianus will become increasingly valuable. It is long-flowering, pollinator-friendly, drought-tolerant, and remarkably easygoing. Not a bad combination.

Do you welcome Erigeron into your garden, or are you forever pulling out seedlings that have appeared where they weren't invited?

BHS News

1 teeny, weeny drop of rain 2 days ago and thats it now as the forecasted rain for next week has gone!

Don't forget if you have a leaky hose this is exempt from the ban and if your garden is not too big they are not very expensive to buy. Another option is to get onto the priority register with your water company - over 65's will qualify - phone or easy to do online

Barb x



WHAT'S COMING UP AT BHS IN 2026

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

Summer Garden Visits

Thursday August 20th	am - Old Vicarage, pm - Ginnie's garden, Warnham
Monday September 7th	pm - Woodpeckers, Woking

Upcoming In-House Meetings - Autumn/Winter

7th October 2026	Clematis Through the Seasons Everett Leeds
4th November 2026	A Lifetime of Roses Catherine May, Seale Roses
2nd December 2026	Monet Painter and Gardener John Hughes
6th January 2027	The Victorian Gardener Judith Hill
3rd February 2027	February in the Garden Valerie Munro, Auntie Planty
3rd March 2027	Herbs – culinary, cultivation & folklore Jacqueline Aviolet
7th April 2027	AGM and Spring Show

Annual Membership is £20.00 payable in January
£2.00 for non-members (first visit is free)

July Garden Visit

What an excellent day we had. 23 of us gathered at Shamley Wood to be greeted by Claire the garden owner and designer and her gardeners.



Shamley Wood House is an impressive Mock Tudor property located in the beautiful Surrey Hills. Claire showed us around the garden which extends over three acres and includes a series of different areas, with many different seating options, a stunning pond and rill, her experimental bedding area and much much more. What are we all looking at and photographing?



- the amazing view from the back of the house with the South Downs in the distance. What a way to enjoy a glass (or 2) of wine on a summer evening!
The coffee and cake was served in a wonderful old barn where we could escape the increasing heat of the day.











Then it was off to the Bricklayers Arms for a lovely pub lunch. What a great relaxing meal for 20 of us all seated outside under shades in the garden. We had chosen our food in advance and only 1 person eat someone else's lunch!! Ordering drinks and paying was very smoothly organised compared to somewhat chaotic lunches we have had in the past. Well worth a recommendation.

Then off to Chinthurst Lodge a quick 5 minutes down the road.

We were greeted by Hilary and Michael who told us of the amazing achievement of opening their garden for the ngs for 33 years and raising more than £40,000 for the charity. The 1 acre garden is laid out in a number of linked 'rooms' with herbaceous borders, a white garden, specimen trees and shrubs, a gravel garden with a water feature, a kitchen garden, fruit cage, two wells, ornamental ponds, a herb parterre, and the Millennium rose, iris, and hollyhock garden. The herbaceous border with the white phlox and blue agapanthus was much admired. Once again lovely tea and cake and a very good plant sale but no idea where I am going to put the ones I bought - yet again!













August Garden Visit

Please let me know if you have booked The Old Vicarage and are coming to Ginnie's so we can look out for you and have enough cake!!

The Old Vicarage, The Street, Washington, Sussex, RH20 4AS

Thursday 20th August - garden opens at 10am
You will need to book this visit online via their ngs website. Its quite straightforward but if you have problems let me know and I will do it for you

1. Go to https://findagarden.ngs.org.uk/garden/21793/the-old-vicarage
2. Click on Openings Tab, then click Thursday 20th August, then yellow BOOK
3. On next page click black BOOK
4. Enter your details and click black CONTINUE BOOKING
5. Continue to PAY NOW
6. Will accept cards or apple pay
7. Receipt will be emailed to show on the gate on the day

I suggest we plan to get there at around 10.30 - 11am but this will depend upon traffic so rather than meeting up at the entrance suggest we just find one another in the garden. The car park is on the right past the church and looking at google seems reasonably big but we won't be the only visitors so best to car share if possible.
Although its an ngs open day (ie we are not doing a private visit - too expensive!) there will only be limited self serve refreshments so best to bring your own.
Re lunch - bring a picnic which you can eat in the garden or keep to enjoy in Ginnie's garden for our afternoon visit.

47 Bell Road, Warnham West Sussex, RH12 3QJ

We should plan to arrive at Ginnie's after about 1pm but no problem if you want to stay longer at the Old Vicarage. We will have tea and cake around 3pm and will have soft drinks available.

It's a very easy 20 minute drive. Just return back up the A24 and Bell Road is on the left at the sign to Warnham. Drive a short distance to parking in the lay-by on the left hand side and Ginnie's house is opposite this. Some of us visited in 2022 but her large garden is always being improved, has lovely seating areas and an absolute must if you haven't been before!



Our lawns in a Drought



By now most of our lawns are looking like this - everyone says that it has just gone dormant and will bounce back once it rains - and I think we will be relying on rain as I don't imagine we will be watering it anytime soon as the hosepipe ban is likely to continue well into autumn.

So what do we mean by dormant?

Its a bit like hibernation, but dormancy isn't a total resting state. The grass is still producing and consuming some energy in the root system and stems. but various cellular changes happen that help it survive with less water. Like the leaves in other plants, grass blades have tiny little holes called stomata that are an essential part of the photosynthesis process. When there's limited water in the ground, the grass closes the stomata stopping water escaping from the blade and returning it back to the root. The production of chlorophyll is halted hence the blades turn from green to brown. Once the soil rehydrates the grass will awaken, restart its cycle and return to its natural colouring.

But is it actually dormant or dead?

Dormancy stops top growth and turns brown, but the roots and crown stay alive. Most common grasses last up to 4 to 6 weeks without rain before the roots start to die. Grass leaves will be yellow or brown but will have retained a green colour at the base with a healthy, off-white coloured root. Dead grass will be brittle and brown all the way down to the root. It will also be easy to pull out of the soil or can be flaky if you run your hand through it.

The biggest mistake? Trying to force a lawn through a drought

Instead, it's better to work with nature. If your lawn has stopped growing, there's little benefit in mowing it. If you do need to tidy it up, raise the cutting height so the grass remains longer. Longer blades shade the soil, helping to reduce moisture loss and protect the roots from scorching.

Don't waste precious water

During drought conditions or a hosepipe ban, it's rarely worth using valuable water on an established lawn. Instead, prioritise watering newly laid turf, (allowed during a hosepipe ban) young plants and containers, which have much shallower root systems and are far more vulnerable.

Keep off stressed grass

Dry grass becomes brittle and is more easily damaged by heavy foot traffic. Limiting wear will give your lawn the best chance of recovering once the weather changes.

Resist quick fixes

It can be tempting to apply fertiliser or lawn treatments in the hope of greening things up, but during drought this often places even more stress on the grass. Wait until temperatures fall and regular rainfall returns before feeding or carrying out repairs. Avoid using aggressive liquid fertilizers containing iron, which can dehydrate stressed grass. Instead, apply a slow-release, high-potassium granular fertilizer to improve the turf's future heat and drought tolerance. Never scalp the lawn while it is trying to heal and raise your mower deck to leave the grass longer.



July in Sue V's garden



Clockwise from top left: Perennial Morning Glory and Glorious superba 'Rothchildiana' (glory lily): Gardenia: Polianthes tuberosa (tuberrose): Podranea ricasoliana (pink Trumpet Vine)