RAYLEIGH HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

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e-mail peskypixie@supanet.com

www.rayleighhorticulturalsociety.co.uk

Newsletter JANUARY 2026



from the chairman

Hi All,

Hope you have managed to stay fit and well and have been taking the opportunity during the dark, depressing days to plan what you will be growing and/or showing in 2026. David has a good selection of seeds in the Store, plus of course, the seed potatoes are now in, as well as summer flowering bulbs.

If you've not yet renewed your membership, you can use the postal form on page 4 and send it in – or go and renew at the Store or Club Meetings.

Ann has been busy sorting out the schedule of speakers for this year's Club Meetings, so have a look at page 2, and do go along if you can.

We are working hard on getting the member's email list ready, as we are hoping to go "live" for the next issue, so please let us have yours asap, or, if you will still require a paper copy, please ring on 075 128 19 19 2 to let us know.

Finally, if you are hoping to enter some classes in the Shows this year, go to the Store and ask for a Show Book (as these are only available for members wishing to enter in a Show).

Here's hoping for a good growing year!

Colin Andrews

It's Show Time

The days now grow longer and the growing season approaches and so does the spring show, which is usually held on the first Sunday of April, however so does Easter this year.

Therefore the last Sunday in March was chosen by the committee, this does unfortunately coincide with the clocks going forward but delaying to the second Sunday in April may have been too late for the daffodil exhibitors.

Looking forward to seeing you all on 29th of March

Kind regards Shaun Cox,

Show Manager

Plant Sale at THE STORE SUNDAY 10th May

Open 10.00 to 12.00

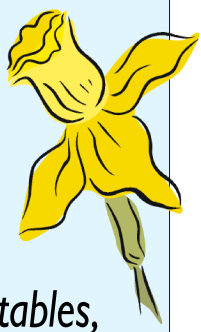
Anyone wishing to book a table to sell plants, see David at the store or phone Colin 075 128 19 19 2



SUNDAY 29th MARCH

SPRING SHOW

Mill Hall, Rayleigh



Every member welcome to exhibit Flowers, Fruit, Vegetables, Craft & Cakes

(Not shown before? — now is the time, if you need help phone a committee member, call in the store or just turn up on show day, we are only too pleased to help)

2026 SHOW BOOK AVAILABLE AT THE STORE AND ONLINE

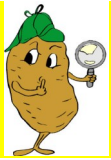
Children's Competition

"Abstract seed picture"

See page 4 of the SHOW BOOK

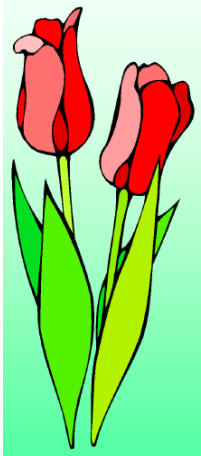
ALL AGES UP TO 16 YEARS

Bring them along to Mill Hall on the morning of the show before 11.30



Don't forget to pick up your seed potato and pot available at the store now — ready to enter 'Potato challenge' in the Autumn show.

STORE NEWS



Summer flowering bulbs & Potatoes in store NOW



First Earlies *– Casablanca, Foremost, Pentland Javelin, Francis, Swift*

Second Earlies *– Kestrel, Nadine, Twinner, Charlotte (salad) & Nicola (Salad), Saxon.*

Main Crop *– Cara, Desiree, King Edward, Picasso, Maris Piper, Valor, and Sarpo Mira*

Onions *– Stuttgarter Giant, Turbo & Rumba*

Shallots *– Golden Gourmet, Yellow Moon*



Keep warm and safe. See you on your next visit to the store.

Kind regards David Baughen

We are looking for volunteers !!



Staff to help in the store- If you are interested and would like to help please contact: David Baughen 01702 527456 or Les Cooper on 07599 970686

A club secretary - If you are interested and would like to find out more about the role, please contact: Ann Baughen, on 01702 527456.

Society Archivist—If you are interested and would like to find out more Contact Viv Irvine 01268 747418 Email vivienirvine688@gmail.com



Despite power washing the wooden bird table small slugs were still coming out and leaving slime over the bird food - which the birds then wouldn't eat. Google said slugs don't like aluminium foil so we glued a square of kitchen foil in the centre of the table and put the bird food on that, and it works a treat.

Royal Horticultural Society Diary Dates 2026

RHS Malvern Spring Festival 7– 10th May
RHS Chelsea Flower Show 19 - 23rd May
RHS Badminton Flower Show 8 - 12th July
RHS Sandringham Flower Show 22 - 26th July
Book now at ***rhs.org.uk/shows***

Upcoming EVENTS

SPEAKERS FOR 2026

6th FEBRUARY	**MONICA KNIGHT**	PERMACULTURE – A NEW WAY OF WORKING?
6th MARCH	**KEITH EVANS**	MY LIFE AS A MUSICIAN IN THE ARMED FORCES
10th APRIL	**PETER JONES**	ZEPPELINS OVER ESSEX
8th MAY	**TIM WHITELOCK**	PAINTED BOATS
5th JUNE	**ANDY BUNKER**	ALTONS GARDEN CENTRE
3rd JULY	**NICK DOBSON**	FIVE FAMOUS EASTENDERS
7th AUGUST	**EDD GILLAN**	ARBORICULTURE (trees)
4th SEPTEMBER	**GRAHAM MEE** (rspb)	BIRDS IN YOUR GARDEN
2nd OCTOBER	**JANE PIPER**	FASHION TO DIE FOR

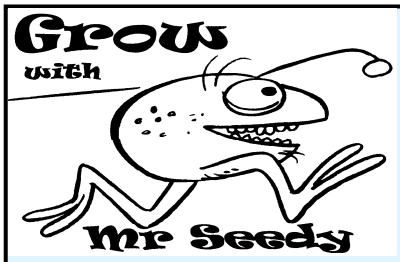
We do hope you can make some of the meetings and look forward to seeing you at Holy Trinity Church @ 2pm. on the first Friday of each month.

Check our website regularly for updates and information on the society

www.rayleighhorticulturalsociety.co.uk

Everybody welcome **-Members £2.50 - Visitors £3**

On the first Friday of the month
@ 2p.m. Main Hall
Holy Trinity Church, Rayleigh SS6 8BB



THE SQUARE FOOT GARDEN

Square foot gardening is a great space-saving way of growing vegetables. It allows you to raise lots of crops in the smallest garden by using a raised bed, which is split into a series of 30x30cm (l x l ft) squares with a different plant grown in each.

You can grow nine different vegetables in a 9Ox9Ocm (3x3ft) bed made from timber, The bed is filled with a mix of 50 per cent sterilised topsoil and 50 per cent multi-purpose compost, along with a few added handfuls of sharp sand to improve drainage

So what can you grow in your raised bed? Well, that's entirely up to you, although you should avoid plants that grow too tall or spread too much. Low-growing, compact peppers, beetroot, salad leaves, spring onions and radish are ideal. It can also be fun to grow carrots, lettuce, basil (a herb), dwarf beans, beetroot, tomatoes, hot *hot* chilli pepper, and spring onion, potatoes can be grown in old compost sacks next to the raised bed as these take up a lot of space, courgettes are also good to grow, but take up lots of room so will need a whole raised bed of their own.

After choosing which vegetables to grow, decide whether you will raise plants from seed or buy in young plants. For the biggest choice of varieties, it is best to grow from seed (and more fun), but if you are a new gardener, let professional growers do all the hard work for you for the first year and buy ready-grown plants.

Making the raised bed

It's simple to make a tough, long-lasting raised bed by putting together lengths of new or recycled timber, old scaffold boards are perfect or decking planks. Building your own requires only the most basic DIY skills. Here's a recipe to construct a 90x90cm (3x3ft) bed.

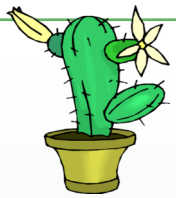
Cut planks to length for the frame. You will need four 900mm (36in) pieces. Next, cut four corner stakes 450mm (18in) long. Make pencil marks 5cm from the edge on the 90cm (36in) plank sides. Place a corner stake against the side and line it up with the pencil mark. Drill through the side, countersink to ensure the head of the screw sits flush, then screw the side and stake together. Continue in this way until you have built a square frame. After building your bed, apply preservative if the timber is untreated.

What you will need

- 4 Lengths of 900mm x 25mm x 150mm timber for the sides of the bed (Gravel boards)
- 4 Lengths of 50 x 50mm x 450mm timber for the corner stakes
- 16 x 8cm wood screws

Tools: saw, drill, 4mm drill bit, countersink drill bit, pencil, set square, screwdriver.





Do any of these apply to you?

You enjoy taking cuttings of your favourite plants.

You end up with too many small plants when sowing a packet of seeds?

If you spot a nice self sown plant in the flower bed do you pot it up?



If so, please support our annual Plant Sale which this year is on Sunday, 10th May, from 10 to 12 at the store. We have run this event for many years but several members who used to have a table are no longer able to, so we are looking for more people to sell their excess plants. We are **not going to charge for tables this year** (but it was only £2 in the past!) but would like a booking to be made in advance to know if this event is still viable. It is really nice to be able to show your 'babies' off to other members who come to buy - and you will go home with a little pot of money to spend on more plants.....

Please consider if you can help to make this event a success.

Book your table at the store, our staff will add your name to the list or phone 075 128 19 19 2

Leggy Seedlings

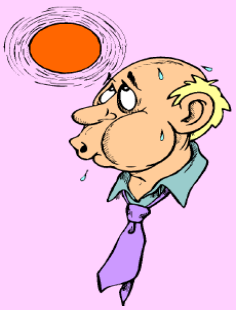


Seedlings normally become leggy when they are short of light or kept in the propagation area too long. Sowing seeds through the shorter days can always make this more of a problem. Using LED lights is okay, but you still have the problem what to do with the seedlings once they have grown, as most gardeners won't have enough space to keep plants under lights throughout the growing season. One method of keeping seedlings short and sturdy is, as soon as the seedlings have germinated in the propagator, they are moved out of the propagator, to a shelf as close to the glass as possible in the greenhouse at a cooler (10C/50F) air temperature. This enables maximum light during poor daylight hours and the cooler temperature slows down growth. Always sow in a good seed sowing compost (available in store) and water using tap water. Do not use water butt water as this can cause damping off.

Editors: Janet & Colin Andrews, 339 Eastwood Road, Rayleigh, Essex, SS6 7LH
email: peskypixie@supanet.com. Phone: 07 572 360 795

Club Meeting reports by Pat Hill

'Drop your trousers'



Our last Club afternoon of the year was at the beginning of November, luckily during the nice dry and mild spell. We had a free 'lucky dip' for a festive hamper put together by Ann and another lovely donated prize. This was drawn after the talk by Andrew Wiltshire who has worked as a consultant in many countries. His abiding memory of weeks in China was being treated like visiting royalty but being compulsorily accompanied everywhere. He also told us of the various signs which 'lost something in the translation' such as in Bangkok outside a dry cleaners 'Drop your trousers here for best results' and in several hotels 'You are kindly invited to take advantage of the chambermaid'. Also a sign which Essex County Council have managed to avoid on the road to Mersea Island 'When this sign is underwater this road is impassable'.

Quick jobs for the month.....

It's that time of the year again, ease yourself out of the sofa, rub your hands, stretch your legs and get going (slowly) with some preparation for another great season, so firstly -

Get those seed potatoes chitted, this is the process of starting your tubers into growth, old egg boxes do a great job, then place them in a light, cool and frost free place until the eyes develop small green shots (25-30mm long) then plant them out if the ground is warm enough.

While they are chitting get into a nice warm shed, gather up your tools, gets some old rags, a bucket of warm soapy water a sponge and a fine grade tool sharpener, (available in store) switch on radio and give everything a good clean and oil because dirty blunt tools spread disease and cut badly.

Next. Clean seed and cell trays, scoops and pots, tip out any old compost on to the garden, check you have fresh compost (also available in store). All done? You're set to GO……...

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL POSTAL ONLY FORM for 2026

Name……..

Address……..

……..……...

Post Code……

Telephone number……..

e–mail……

MEMBERSHIP FEE £8.00

Per household per annum.

Send this form with a cheque made payable to "Rayleigh Horticultural Society"

To: The membership secretary,

Rayleigh Horticultural Society,

Mr. & Mrs. C. Andrews, 339 Eastwood Road, Rayleigh, Essex, SS6 7LH

IMPORTANT

Rayleigh Horticultural Society works hard to keep your personal data secure. As a membership organisation we do not and will not share your data with any other organisation or individual who is not a member of our Committee.

PLEASE SIGN HERE to agree to the society contacting you, i.e. Sending newsletters etc.

Signed……

NEWSLETTER NOTICE.....

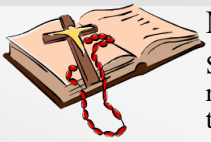
From **MARCH 2026** the society is putting the newsletter on the website, which means the printed copy will not be produced anymore, this is due to the ever increasing price of stamps and print costs, so please make sure we have your e-mail addresses soon, send them to

peskypixie@supanet.com

However, we do understand that for some members this may not be possible, so a limited number of photocopies will be available, if this is you, please phone

075 128 19 19 2

quoting your membership number and name



Mrs. Ruth Lushey

Some of our older members will perhaps remember Ted Lushey (who used to edit the RHS newsletter and has since passed away some long time ago, but we are sorry to report that his widow Ruth, who has been a life member of our society, passed away recently at the end of 2025. So, we would like to extend our sincere sympathy to her family and friends.