

DARRINGTON GARDEN CLUB

January 2021 NEWSLETTER (10)



**Every Best and Sincere wish to you and Yours for a
Healthy, Safe and Optimistic 2021!
We all deserve that!**

After all, now we can look to last year with 'true' 20:20 hindsight, we can say in all honesty, 'if we knew back then just half of what we know right now, we would have done so many things very differently!

But, in the words of the inimitable Stephen Sondheim,
*"Good times and bum times, I've seen them all
And, my dear, I'm still here"*

Although this nasty, insidious chameleon called Covid isn't going away anytime soon, there are now, even more than ever before, REASONS TO SMILE!



1. Smiling is CONTAGIOUS! Perhaps, even more contagious than Yawning! (and don't dare tell me that masks stop smiles! They don't, 'cos sincere smiles start in the eyes!)
2. Smiling doesn't only relax your body, it also has the power to slow your heart rate, reduce your blood pressure and decrease your chances of heart disease!
3. Smiling and its relaxing qualities helps boost your immune system!
4. Smiling can help you live longer! Yes, several studies suggest you can squeeze an extra 7+ years if you are a sincere and 'from the eyes' smiler!

Remember, 'You're never fully dressed without a smile'? and 'When you're smiling, the whole world smiles with you'. Also, 'Peace begins with a smile'. However, Charlie Chaplin co-wrote a sadly appropriate song for our 'Modern Times', 'Smile though your heart is breaking'

In 2013, David Domoney (you may know him as the co-presenter of 'Love your Garden' with Alan Titchmarsh as well as being resident gardener on ITV1 This Morning) conducted an experiment at The Chelsea Flower Show. He used Facial Recognition cameras to monitor visitors' facial expressions when shown images of various plants. Over 30,000 people gave it a go and he recorded the plants that received the most attention.

These three plants were crowned champions and could well help bring a smile to you!

1st Place: LILY of the VALLEY



...which ironically is extremely poisonous when consumed. So take care when growing it if you have small children.

Why did people like this plant so much? One of the reasons people responded to this plant was the positive memories it evoked. Walking in the woods and seeing sprigs of the plant growing wild.

With their creamy white bell-shaped flowers that nod in the wind, they will make a charming addition to any garden. Plant them in your borders or perhaps underneath a tree. Extremely easy to grow, you can plant them by seed in containers and then move them to a shady location with moist soil. They are very low maintenance. Making good ground cover for shady spots, as they will spread up to half a metre. So for a nostalgic nodding plant guaranteed to make you smile, chose Lily of the Valley for your next garden addition.

2nd Place: SWEET PEA



Coming in at second place is the Sweet Pea. What made it made special? It was its ability to generate childhood memories. Gardening with loved ones and grandparents. Sweet Peas come in a huge variety of bright and pastel colours, with a frilly, delicate and often sweetly fragrant flower head.

They work well in a sunny or partially shaded area in fertile well-drained soil. Make sure you deadhead

them regularly, and they also benefit from regular fertilising

3rd Place: JASMINE



In third place was the fragrant climbing plant Jasmine, triggering memories of happy holidays abroad for a lot of people. There are several varieties; Some that flower in summer and others that are winter flowering. All varieties produce pretty flowers and are fairly easy to grow in UK gardens.

A summer flowering jasmine will do well against a sunny, sheltered wall or trellis. A winter flowering jasmine is tolerant of partial shade and are more frost hardy, so use this type for a south east or northwest aspect.

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FROST



Frost Injures plants! Maybe the damage has already been done in your garden? **Moisture** is the key to whether frost will nip your plants. **Condensation warms and evaporation cools.** When moisture in the air condenses on plants and soil, heat is produced, sometimes raising the temperature enough to save the plants. On the other hand, if the air is dry, moisture in the soil will evaporate, removing some heat.

If temperatures **below 32°F (0°C)** are predicted, expect "frost." If temperatures in the 25 to 28°F (-4 to -2°C) are predicted, expect a hard "freeze" which is widely destructive to most vegetation.

Frost protection is especially important for tender plants such as tropical houseplants, succulents,

begonias, impatiens, peppers, and tomatoes.

Generally, covering plants to **create a temporary pocket of warmer air** is the best way to protect them.

- Bed sheets, drop cloths, blankets and plastic sheets make suitable covers for vulnerable plants. Drape loosely to allow for air circulation. Secure to ground with rocks or bricks or stakes to keep the covering from touching the foliage beneath.
- Keep sheets or row covers at the ready, stored somewhere dry, neatly rolled up and off the ground to keep them away from vermin. If you use polythene covers, hose them down if they're dirty and dry them so they're ready to use when frost threatens. It's best to have all covers in place well before sunset. Before you cover the plants in late afternoon or early evening, water your plants lightly.
- Remove the coverings when temperatures rise the next day (mid-morning) so that plants can get full exposure to the warming sunlight.
- **Protect Containers:** In winter the biggest enemy of crops in pots is persistently wet potting soil. Make sure there is adequate drainage by placing containers onto pot feet (or improvise with small rocks). Some containers can crack in very cold conditions. To prevent this, wrap pots in bubble plastic or burlap. Move pots somewhere more sheltered if possible, for instance against a South-facing house wall, or into a greenhouse.
- **Protect Soil in Winter:** Don't forget about the soil! Keep soil covered to protect beneficial soil life such as worm-, bug- and fungi-happy. Before it gets too cold, add a thick layer of organic matter to the surface to keep soil life fed and protect the soil itself from erosion.

SPRING FROST TIPS

Here are some extra tips for preventing frost damage in spring. It can be very annoying to lose young plants to a late spring frost.

- In early spring, warm up your soil faster by covering it over with row covers or garden fleece. This technique is particularly useful for heavy or clay soils that retain a lot of moisture. Lay the material over the ground at least one week before sowing and soil temperatures will rise by a couple of degrees, making all the difference for early sowings.



**GOODBYE 2020
HELLO 2021**

THANKS Margaret Hopwood!

Margaret was quite poorly in 2020 – broken rib and bad back - but was well on the mend (supported by her dear 21 year old cat) when I had a socially distanced chat with her in December.

We had a great natter about Harrogate – specifically, Bilton, where I lived through my teens. At the end of our chat she unexpectedly shared an Irish blessing that was decidedly a tad dodgy! (surprised at you Margaret but it brought a HUGE smile to my face – and did we laugh!)



Got me thinking about other similar sayings: **‘Worrying won’t stop the bad stuff from happening, it just stops you enjoying the good stuff.’**

A good laugh and a long sleep are the two best cures for anything!

This set me on a HUGE research journey where I discovered some AMAZING sayings and greetings from around the world, far too many and not gardening-related.

I also discovered LOADS of no-touch greetings, many of which sound LOADS better than the ‘Fist or elbow bumps’. Once again, far too many for this newsletter, but I do commend the Tibetan ‘Stick-out-your-tongue’, the Zimbabwean/Mozambiiquan ‘clapping’ and the Indian (and Prince Charles) ‘Namaste’.

I then wondered about how different plants have come to symbolise different greetings and thoughts.

For this, our January Newsletter, I’ll concentrate on the flower of this month - **CARNATION**



WHITE CARNATIONS: Chinese Weddings = good luck

RED: Deep romantic love and passion

GREEN: secret symbol of the followers of Oscar Wilde

PINK: a woman’s/mother’s love

MAUVE: Dreams of fantasy

GROWING TIPS

Carnations date back to ancient Greece and Roman times, and their family name, Dianthus, is Greek for “flower of the gods.” Here are some guidelines to keep in mind when growing carnations in the garden.

PRE-PLANTING Proper care of carnations begins before you even plant your seeds. Growing carnations will be much easier if you plant the seeds in an area that gets a minimum of four to five hours of sun each day. Well-draining soil without mulch, for good air circulation, will help you grow thriving carnation garden plants.

PLANTING CARNATIONS INDOORS Six to eight weeks before your area will be frost-free, you can start your carnation seeds indoors. Choose a container with drainage holes in it, filling the container within an inch or two (2.5 to 5 cm.) from the top with potting soil. Sprinkle the seeds across the top of the soil and cover them lightly.

Water until the soil is moist and then wrap the container in a clear plastic bag to create a greenhouse effect. The beginnings of your carnation garden plants should poke through the soil in two to three days. Move the seedlings to their own pots once they have two to three leaves, and transplant them outdoors once they reach a height of 4 to 5 inches (10 to 12.5 cm.) and your area is free of frost risk.

PLANTING OUTDOORS Some people would rather learn how to grow carnation flowers outdoors after the threat of frost has passed. Learning how to plant and take care of carnations in an outdoor garden is similar to growing carnations indoors, but it’s unlikely that your plants will bloom the first year when the seeds are sown outdoors. Begin planting carnation seeds outdoors by sowing them in 1/8-inch (3 ml.) deep soil that will drain well. Keep the soil in your garden, or container, moist until the seedlings are growing. Once your seedlings are thriving, thin them to 10 to 12 inches (25 to 30 cm.) apart.

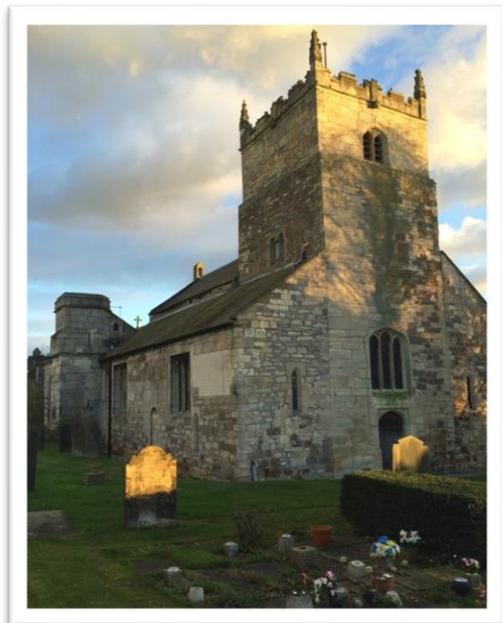
CARNATION CARE Water your growing carnations once each week, and encourage strong carnation garden plants by fertilizing them with a 20-10-20 fertilizer. Pinch off the flowers as they become spent to encourage additional blooming. At the end of the flowering season, cut your carnation stems to ground level.

JANUARY GARDENING JOBS

Importantly, Wrap up warm and take care as you walk outside – slip, trip and icy-finger hazards!!

- Clear away soggy, collapsed stems of perennials and compost them
- Press Mistletoe berries into the bark of apple trees to establish your own mistletoe plants
- Check that small alpines don't become smothered by fallen leaves and other wind-blown debris.
- Deadhead winter pansies and other bedding regularly, and remove any foliage affected by downy mildew
- Move dormant plants that are in the wrong place to more suitable sites
- Top up bird baths with fresh water daily and melt ice with warm water on frosty days
- Repair wobbly or damaged fences, and treat wooden structures with preservative during dry spells
- Give your lawn mower a basic service or take it to a dealer for maintenance, while it's not in use
- Put up bird boxes in sheltered spots, on tree trunks, sheds or walls, well before the nesting season begins

Even after the worst storm, the sun will shine again and we will smile, hug – and remember



Sending sincere wishes for Much Better Health and Wellbeing to Fred R and everyone who's currently struggling.

'Choose to be optimistic, it feels better'
-Dalai Lama

DARRINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

continues to welcome

questions or comments from our residents.

(Next meeting Thursday 21st January, 7pm)

Tel: Vice Chair: 01977 797644 who will give you the log in details.

Be a GOOD NEIGHBOUR.

Useful contacts in these sadly, still tricky times

St Marys Centre, Chequerfield 01977 705341.

Email: denisepallett@stmaryscommunity.co.uk

WMDC is supporting this Community Centre as a key friendly, support 'Hub' for Pontefract.

Wakefield Samaritans

Call: 116 123 (free to call – no code needed)

<https://www.samaritans.org/branches/samaritans-wakefield-and-district>

Offering a safe place to talk any time you like, in your own way – about whatever's getting to you.

Live Well Wakefield

Supporting healthy living for the people of Wakefield District, providing information, advice and support in coping with everyday life. 7 Bank St. Castleford

Call: 01924 255363

Website: www.livewellwakefield.nhs.uk/

Age UK Wakefield District

Age UK Wakefield District is a local independent charity working with and for older people across Wakefield District.

Call: 01977 552114 email: admin@ageukwd.org.uk

Website: www.age.uk.org.uk/wakefielddistrict/

Maybe email me/phone and suggest something for the next edition – **Due February 10th**. If you've received a printed copy and you have an email, please share that with me for next time. Thanks.

Be Safe. Be Well. Be Kind

Andy Tagger:

andytag@hotmail.com/07985676324

My 2021 New Year's resolution is to read more – so I'm turning-on the subtitles on my TV

I was going to give up all of my bad habits for the 2021, but then I remembered that no one likes a quitter.

After 2020, I'm not buying a 2021 calendar until I see the trailer.

My New Year's resolution is to procrastinate. I'll definitely..... start tomorrow!

Learn from yesterday, Live for today, hope for tomorrow (Albert Einstein- famous for a strange smile)