

## A message from our President, Catherine Schmitt

What a challenging horticultural year 2018 was! The first few months were so cold and damp that we thought spring would never come. Well, come it did - for all of two weeks - followed by one of the hottest, driest summers on record. Many of our favourite plants succumbed in spite of constant watering. The autumn was amazingly mild, encouraging pests and vigorous weeds to proliferate.

I would like to thank everyone who volunteers to work around the allotment sites - it really does make a difference - and in particular I would like to thank Eva for maintaining the border along the entrance fence and Anya for taking care of the planting around the Piggery. Of course, there are other common areas that need attention such as the area under the apple tree next to the compost loo. The wildlife plot also needs someone's love and attention. If any member, plothead or not, would like to volunteer for an extra challenge, I would gratefully welcome your help.

I am delighted that the FHS had so many successful social events in 2018. The NGS Day, the visits to Hidcote Manor, Kiftsgate Gardens and Wisley all enhanced our community spirit. Look out for the advert for this year's outing. The meetings formally known as 'Have Your Say Meetings' will continue this year as 'Community Meetings' which I feel reflects their true purpose.

Now let us take cheer for 2019 from the lengthening days as we make our plans for the season to come. Some of our members are not plotheaders but enjoy their home gardens and I would like to remind you all that Christine and I sell perennial plants every Sunday morning from March to October. There is usually something in flower such as Bleeding-heart early in the season through to Michaelmas daisies in the autumn. I wish you all good gardening in 2019.



**All FHS members are invited to our Annual General Meeting  
including the inaugural FHS Garden Lecture  
'Crop diversity and why it matters'**

Tuesday 26th March 2019 at 7.30

Finchley Tennis Club, Brent Way, entrance between 45 and 47  
wine and cheese and a raffle

James Robbins, local garden expert and blogger, will speak on the importance  
of crop diversity

**Please come and join us**

# Unearthing Earthworms

We all know that earthworms are important for the health of our soil but did you know that we have at least 29 species of earthworms in the UK? We don't know as much as we should about earthworms and The Open Air Laboratories (OPAL) network is a UK wide citizen science initiative to find out more. You can find out more about this venture on their website : [opalexploration.org](http://opalexploration.org). The OPAL network is led by Imperial College London and includes leading museums, universities and environmental organisations across the UK. You can see a more easily readable version of this guide to common British earthworms on the website mentioned above.

**The Greek Philosopher, Aristotle, understood the importance of earthworms calling them 'the intestines of the earth'.**

Earthworms are good for soil health: they break down organic matter which improves soil fertility, they aerate the soil so it doesn't become compressed and they create space underground so that water can drain away freely. It's important to have a diversity of earthworms in our soil as each species does something different for soil health.

**Earthworm Ecology:** Earthworms can be divided into four groups called ecotypes, each of which describes a different ecological group based on their behaviour. Earthworms have a positive effect on bacteria and fungi in soils, making them more active. Fungi and bacteria are key in enabling the release of nutrients from organic matter.

**Compost earthworms** prefer warm, moist environments with a supply of fresh compost, which they will rapidly consume. They tend to be bright red and stripy and some stripy species are known as 'tiger worms'. They breed rapidly and are good at removing contaminants from the soil.

**Epigeic earthworms** live on the surface of the soil in leaf litter. They are often small, red or reddish-brown in colour but are not stripy. They do not make burrows, but feed on the leaf litter and make new soil. Adult worms grow to about 6.5 cm.

**Endogeic earthworms** live in and feed on the soil. They make temporary, horizontal burrows near the surface of the soil. These worms are usually pale in colour - grey, green or blue and are useful for transporting nutrients underground. These worms grow to about 10 cm long.

**Anecic earthworms** make deep permanent vertical burrows in the soil, which help with water drainage. At night, these worms come up to feed, dragging organic matter down and leaving middens - piles of worm casts - which make lovely new soil. They are the biggest species of earthworms in the UK and are dark coloured at the head end and have paler tails. These black-headed worms are 12.5 cm long.

**Charles Darwin was fascinated by earthworms.**

**'It may be doubted whether there are many other animals which have played so important a part in the history of the world as have these lowly organised creatures.'**

## OPAL Key to common British earthworms

**Key to common British earthworms**  
By David T. Jones and Chris N. Lowe

These are the earthworms featured in this key:

- 1. Orange worm (*Eisenia octocolorata*)
- 2. Reddish worm (*Lumbricus rubellus*)
- 3. Black-headed worm (*Aporrectus agrestis*)
- 4. Reddish worm (*Lumbricus terrestris*)
- 5. Red worm (*Lumbricus terrestris*)
- 6. Black-headed worm (*Aporrectus agrestis*)
- 7. Coloured-headed worm (*Aporrectus agrestis*)
- 8. Black-headed worm (*Aporrectus agrestis*)
- 9. Black-headed worm (*Aporrectus agrestis*)
- 10. Reddish worm (*Lumbricus terrestris*)
- 11. Grey worm (*Aporrectus agrestis*)
- 12. Reddish worm (*Lumbricus terrestris*)
- 13. Reddish worm (*Lumbricus terrestris*)
- 14. Reddish worm (*Lumbricus terrestris*)
- 15. Reddish worm (*Lumbricus terrestris*)

**Start here**

Is it more than 2cm long AND does it have a clearly defined head?

- YES: Is the whole body clearly stripy, or is the red/orange/brown/red/orange?
- NO: Is the whole body clearly green, yellowish green or bluish/grey?

**Stripy earthworms**

Which description best matches your worm? Is the body (1) longer and wider or (2) shorter and narrower?

- (1) Orange worm (*Eisenia octocolorata*)
- (2) Reddish worm (*Lumbricus rubellus*)

**Pale earthworms**

Is the body from the tail segment to the middle (partly or entirely) pale in colour (whitish, pink or grey)? If not, have worm casts, reddish or dark segments?

- YES: Is the head small and round?
- NO: Is the head small and round?

**Red earthworms**

Is the head small and round?

- YES: Is the head small and round?
- NO: Is the head small and round?

**Black-headed worms**

Is the head small and round?

- YES: Is the head small and round?
- NO: Is the head small and round?

**Coloured-headed worms**

Is the head small and round?

- YES: Is the head small and round?
- NO: Is the head small and round?

**Grey worms**

Is the head small and round?

- YES: Is the head small and round?
- NO: Is the head small and round?

## FINCHLEY HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

### Visit to Pashley Manor Gardens and Great Dixter House and Gardens

**Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2019**

We are organising a coach trip to both of these gardens on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> June. Mr and Mrs James Sellick are the owners and inhabitants of Pashley Manor, a Grade 1 listed timber-framed house dating from 1550. They opened their gardens to the public in 1991 having employed the eminent landscape architect the late Anthony du Gard Pasley. Delight in the sweeping herbaceous borders, elegant rose and historic walled gardens, the productive kitchen garden, enchanting woodland paths and tranquil vistas that form this award winning garden. After lunch in their Garden Room Cafe we will then take the coach to Great Dixter House and Gardens. Great Dixter was the family home of gardener and writer, Christopher Lloyd. Designed by Edwin Lutyens and Nathaniel Loyd, Christopher Lloyd made the garden one of the most experimental and constantly changing gardens of our time. It is now under the stewardship of Fergus Garrett and the Great Dixter Charitable Trust. The garden features clipped topiary, wild flower meadows, the famous long border, pot displays, exotic garden and more.

We will be travelling in a luxury coach (with loo) leaving at 9.00am. Departure will be from Regents Park Road (just up from Henlys Corner). Plenty of parking in nearby roads. The cost per person is £37.50 (£39.50 non-members). Please make your cheque out to Finchley Horticultural Society.

*To secure a place on this visit please complete the form below and send it to Judy Woollett, 27 Broughton Road, London N3 3ES together with a cheque made to FHS. If you prefer to make an on-line payment please contact [judywoollett@hotmail.com](mailto:judywoollett@hotmail.com) and details will be sent to you.*

Name: .....

Phone no:.....

Address: .....

Email :

I would like to book ..... places and enclose a cheque for .....

## Plant Heritage Grand Plant Sale

The venue: St Michael's C of E Primary School, North Hill, Highgate N6 4BG

Saturday 4th May 2019 10am-3.30pm

Admission: £2.50.

Free for Plant Heritage members and under 18s

Free on-street car parking on Saturdays

Transport: A short walk up hill from HIGHGATE tube.

[www.plantheritage.com](http://www.plantheritage.com)

### FHS swept the board at the Barnet Allotment Federation Awards Ceremony in October 2018

Prizes were presented BAF Chair Kirstie Burgin



Mrs Fung Wang was highly commended for her plot at Gordon Road

June Brookes collected the cup for best large allotment for Gordon Road Allotments



Penny Igoe collected the cup for second prize for best small allotment for Nethercourt Allotments

Claudine Fear collected the shield for Brent Way who won third prize for best small allotment



## The Finchley Horticultural Society

43 Oakdene Park, Finchley, N3 1EU

[www.finchleyhorticulturalsociety.org.uk](http://www.finchleyhorticulturalsociety.org.uk)

[twitter.com/finchleyhort](https://twitter.com/finchleyhort)

[www.facebook.com/FinchleyHS](https://www.facebook.com/FinchleyHS)

For all Finchley gardeners and for plot holders at Gordon Road, Nethercourt Avenue and Brent Way

### President

Catherine Schmitt

### Chairman and FHS Enquiries

Claudine Fear: 020 8346 0353

### Allotments Secretaries

**Gordon Road:** June Brookes 020 8349 2253

**Nethercourt Avenue:** Penny Igoe  
07871 846496

**Brent Way:** Elain Wright 020 8346 9975

### Treasurer

Chris Ouseley: 020 8346 1205

### Membership

Christine Williams: 07984 935668

### Trading Hut

June Brookes: 020 8349 2253

### Website

Judy Woollett: 020 8346 5107

### Allotments Security & Break-ins

Tony Ingram: 020 8349 1265 or  
07967 274739

### Newsletter Editor

Jo Cuttell: 020 8922 0241

**To contact any committee member by email please use this address and mark it for the attention of the person you want to contact:**  
[finchleyhorticulturalsociety@gmail.com](mailto:finchleyhorticulturalsociety@gmail.com)

Affiliated to the  
Royal Horticultural Society



Member of the Barnet Federation of Allotment and Horticultural Societies

## Events Diary

**9th - 10th February 2019**

### RHS Early Spring Show

RHS Hyde Hall, Chelmsford,  
CM3 8ET

Daily 10.00am - 3.00pm

Members go free and non-members pay the normal garden admission



**9th February 2019**

### British Iris Society Early Spring Show

RHS Garden Wisley, GU23 6QB  
10.30am - 3.30pm

Members go free and non-members pay the normal garden admission



**20th February 2019**

### Barnet Allotment Federation AGM

The Pavilion, Rathbone Allotments,  
Ryalls Court, Oakleigh Road North, London  
N20 0RY

8pm Speaker to be confirmed



**26th March 2019**

### FHS AGM

Finchley Tennis Club, Brent Way  
7.30pm



**8th - 10th April 2019**

### RHS London Spring Launch and Orchid Show

RHS Lindley Hall, SW1P 2QW and  
RHS Lawrence Hall, SW1P 2QD

Monday: 8th April 5pm - 9pm Preview Evening  
Members and Public £10 in advance and £12  
on the day

Tuesday: 10th April 10am - 5pm

Wednesday: 11th April 10am - 5pm

RHS members free, Public £5 in advance and  
£8 on the day



**May 2019**

### FHS Plant Sale

dates and times to be confirmed



**To book tickets to RHS shows, visit**  
[rhs.org.uk/shows](http://rhs.org.uk/shows) or call 0844 338 7539

**Members of the RHS get discounts on entry to the shows**

## Winkworth

This issue of the Grapevine has been sponsored generously by Winkworth Estate Agents.

T: 020 8349 3388 [www.winkworth.co.uk](http://www.winkworth.co.uk)

## Newsletter

If you received a paper copy of this newsletter and are now able to receive it by e-mail, please inform Christine Williams, [chrysw@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:chrysw@hotmail.co.uk).