

TASK FOR THE MONTH

Growing plants in containers on balconies, window sills and outdoors is becoming more common nowadays, especially as gardens are getting smaller on new housing developments. But through this necessity to adapt how we garden, there are some interesting ideas and lessons to be learnt.



Some gardeners actually prefer to grow vegetables in containers as they feel you bypass poor soil problems if you purchase compost from the shops. Also they feel they reduce weeding and digging elements from the workload and well as limiting problems arising from pest hidden in their own garden soil. Growing bags, which you see being sold in many outlets, can be used for growing a whole range of different crops, and if they are prone to frost damage, can be moved to a more sheltered position if the weather forecasters warn of impending doom!

Other gardeners don't like the idea of container gardening as they feel yields are significantly reduced in containers compared to plants being grown in open ground. Concerns are also raised about pots being unsightly if placed near the house, as well as the plants need more watering and feeding if you grow them in containers. I can see both sides to this, but container gardening to me allows more people to dip their toes into gardening, and some people I've met may not have even been introduced to gardening in the first place if it wasn't for container gardening in its rawest form.

Any container (with drainage holes in the bottom) will do as long as its at least 9 inches deep, as long as it is raised of the ground a little so water can drain out of the bottom if needed. Salad crops, peppers, tomatoes, aubergines are some vegetables that will grow in containers, but the flower varieties that can be cultivated in this way are endless.

If the consumption of herbs in your household is high, you can have rows of pots in a well lit window sill containing sage, rosemary, basil, lemon balm, parsley and thyme. They will all grow happily and supply you during the winter period. The steamy atmosphere of a kitchen windowsill is ideal, just keep them moist.

It is advisable though to restrict your window sill to just a few things that you pick regularly, because those plants that are not harvested regularly often become long and straggly and soon look like an untended eyesore. So don't be too ambitious initially.

Just fill your window sill containers with seed compost, the surface should be about 1 inch below the top of the container, so if you water from the top the water does not run everywhere. But it is generally better to water from below and let it soak up into the compost. When these pots in your windows are growing, watering once or twice a week is all you should need to do. If the pots are located in a dry room, mist the leaves daily, but as I say, the kitchen is the best place as it is a moist environment already.

Once you become more confident with window sill gardening, you can become much more adventurous. Growing lettuce in shallow plastic trays or miniature tomatoes such as Tiny Tim is the possibility.

Go on, have a go. Not having a large garden, or no garden at all is no excuse, we can all grow something..

Happy Gardening
STUART MABBUTT
 October 2008

MARCHAM CRICKET CLUB

The weather presented problems for cricketers again last month. Most of the scheduled OCA fixtures on 6th September were abandoned without a ball being bowled. For those matches that managed to get started "rain stopped play" was a major feature.



A week later only four of the scheduled end-of-season matches were commenced.

The 1st XI made a good start in its maiden season in Division 1 and, after being in the upper region of the table earlier in the year, finished in a creditable mid-way position.

Also the 2nd XI maintained a satisfactory position in its Division. Even though the playing season is over for this year, the Club's activities do not cease, the on-going programme of maintenance necessary to provide a high standard of field facilities for 2009. By way of cricketing history a report from the North Berks Herald of 4th October 1873 records the following:

"Marcham v Drayton. This match was played on Thursday 25th ult in Marcham Park, and although the time would not allow of its being played out Drayton claimed a victory on the first innings. The bowling of J Betts and S. Bullock of Drayton was admired, as also the batting of T. Champ for the Marcham side. When time was called Marcham had lost their four best wickets for 33 runs leaving but little doubt as to the result had it been played out.

Marcham 54 and 33-4 Drayton 81 and 61."

Information relating to Marcham CC (including playing for, or umpiring on behalf of the Club) may be obtained from Graham Hill (391415) or Terry Whittaker (391317).

CSB

MARCHAM PLAYERS

Our latest planned production seems to be dogged by ill fortune at the moment. Its second planned presentation date has, I'm afraid, come to naught. Apparently the 'Performing Rights' licence can only be held by one group at a time.



Marcham Players put forward a very strong case but couldn't quite convince the licencees that we had the kudos and audience appeal over the 'Old Vic' in the West End. Fear not though, we're now all geared up for it to appear later in the spring. Additionally, fine weather has been ordered.

To avoid total despair, a production to lift the hearts and raise the spirit will take place to celebrate another great British triumph. A festival of song, ditty and tableau; "**TRAFALGAR DAY**", commemorating the naval victory of October 21st 1805 will be presented, led by Captain Horatio 'Timmy' Nelson and his 'Crew'. Participation is voluntary but Press Gangs may be utilised in the event of any shirking or slacking. All landlubbers are welcome. Grog & hard tack will be slopped out during the interval and a 'Golden Rivet' raffle will take place during "stand easy".

Venue:- Wednesday 22nd October @ 7.30pm.

Date:- All Saints' Church, Marcham.

Tickets:- £5 & £4 (conc). From Marcham Post Office or on the door.

Joey Maclean (01865 391242), or Dave Hutchinson (01865 391964), are the people to contact for membership details.

STUART BRIGHTON

www.marchamplayers.co.uk