

Open Gardens

Sunday 20 June

As part of the **Great Marcham Weekend** villagers are invited to open their gardens. There is no pressure to 'put on a display'. Front, back, pots on patios, fruit, veg, hanging baskets – all welcome. If you would like to participate, please ring me on 391592 or leave your name and tel.no

GRETA GOULDING



SUMMER SUNFLOWER COMPETITION!

To support the Marcham Moldova Lifeline appeal, you are invited to take part in a sunflower-growing competition this summer! Sunflowers are one of the main agricultural crops of this impoverished East European country. Moldovans don't just grow sunflowers because they look impressive, but to provide essential cooking oil.



Marcham Moldova Lifeline

Later in the spring you will be able to buy seedlings of Moldovan-style sunflowers at £1 per plant. Transfer them to grow in your garden and see if you can grow the tallest, the heaviest, the most wacky... At the end of the summer, you can submit your sunflower(s) to be judged in a community competition, with prizes in each category. There will be a special category for junior sunflower growers, and participation from surrounding villages is also welcome!

Next month's MADNews will carry details of where you can purchase your seedlings. There will also be a report on all the encouraging ways in which our financial help is being used in Moldova. In the meantime, our friends in Moldova send their heartfelt thanks for all the support from our community.

MARCHAM MOLDOVA LIFELINE

CAULIFLOWERS

Recession, what recession! My gardening business is busier than ever before. As such, this article is rather short as I am pushed for time and need a chance to sleep too!



I have been asked a question by a reader, that I would like to cover here, and as it's a short question, with a short answer, it will suit the time constraints I have for compiling this article.

The Question, "We don't seem to use cauliflowers in large volumes like we use to, as it has fallen off the radar with regards to many home growers. Can you tell me what varieties, when, where and how to grow them?"

Sure can! Cauliflowers like compacted soil (but not too compacted) with lots of compost in. It likes a sunny site, but needs to be sheltered if you are growing winter types. They are thirsty plants so keep them evenly watered or you will only get small heads. To store them, lift the entire plant and hang them upside down in a dark dry place, as they will last that way for about 2 weeks especially if you spray the heads lightly with water every few days.

Sow seeds from March to May regardless what month or season they mature in, and when the seedlings have at least 8 leaves, transplant them to the area they will be grown on in. Spacing is

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important, winter varieties need 3 feet between each plant and summer and autumn types need 2 ½ feet between them.

Summer varieties are small squat plants; **Alpha** is one I like as it does not run to seed as quickly as other types. Autumn types can be large or squat, it depends on what you like and how much space you have. **Flora Blanca** is the first kind of Cauliflower I ever grew, with huge white heads, ideal for showing if you were so inclined. It harvests in September, which follows on nicely from the summer varieties that are picked during June but mainly in July. Winter types and spring types can be susceptible to frost, so you need to protect them from the worst of the elements. **St Agnes** is a real favourite as I often have it at around Christmas time because it crops so early, but unless you protect it, it will disappoint even at a mere hint of a frost.

That's all for now, I'm now off to put my feet up and have a well earned sleep. I remember when I used to struggle to find enough gardening work during the colder months, this year there has been no respite at all. So no winter rest for me then this year it would appear.

Happy Gardening, STUART MABBUTT

Welcome to April



*We have shivered through January's ice and snow
And short gloomy days,
We have splashed through February's chilly rains,
Her flowing dykes and muddy ways.*

*We were blown by the moody winds of March -
Then, days were getting long,
Now at last, at last, April is here
And birds fill the air with song.*

*Winter has died, but the earth is alive,
Watered now by a more gentle rain,
Flowers lift their heads to the strengthening sun,
And trees and hedgerows are leafy again.*



Doris Dowling

Can you help? An appeal for memories from students of Oxford Polytechnic, College of Technology, Dorset House, Lady Spencer-Churchill, Westminster, Oxford City Technical School or the university itself.

OXFORD BROOKES UNIVERSITY

While 'The Poly' and the older College of Technology no longer exist in Oxford, their value to Oxfordshire is still clear. Students of both institutions have gone on to live and work here, benefiting local businesses and communities with their knowledge and expertise.

In 2015 Brookes celebrates its 150 year anniversary and we are appealing for memories from all former students of all our past institutions. We are especially keen to hear from alumni with personal memories of John Henry Brookes for a biography celebrating the life of the university's spiritual founder.

Please email your memories and photos to alumni@brookes.ac.uk or visit www.brookes.ac.uk/alumni