

Winter

Plantation's Bush Telegraph

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PLANTATION
gardens for living

Welcome to our new look newsletter!

Yes the Bush Telegraph has returned with a new look. Now to be published seasonally, we will have all your favourite things from the old newsletter - features, planting ideas, news and special offers.

Do let us know what you think.

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Christmas at Plantation

Late Night Openings by Candle light

Follow the candle-lit path to our selection of cut and potted Christmas Trees, natural wreaths and festive greenery. While you are here, why not treat yourself to cake and coffee or something a little more filling in our lovely Colonial Cafe?
First 3 Thursdays in December 'til 8pm.

Dine & Discover

New this year we are holding 'Dine & Discover' evenings.
Join us at 7pm for mulled wine, and a seasonal demonstration, followed by a 3 course dinner. Each evening will be licensed for those who fancy a tippie.
Tickets are £20 per person and must be booked in advance. Dates available:
3rd Dec - Tips For dressing your Christmas Tree
10th Dec - How to make wreaths, garlands and table centres using greenery from your garden.

Carols with St Oswald's Church Choir

Come along and join in the carols on Saturday 18th December between 2 and 3.30pm in our Colonial Cafe.



Congratulations from Toby Buckland - find out more inside.

Turn Over a New Leaf!

Leaves are falling in profusion at this time of year, don't let them go to waste, make them into leaf mould to be dug into beds or use as potting compost.

It is very satisfying, not to mention better for you, to sweep or rake leaves up, rather than use a blower or vac. Collect them weekly or wait for the whole lot to come down.



Most types of leaves are suitable, but some do take longer to rot down than others. Plane & chestnut, along with evergreens such as holly, laurel and conifer should be avoided. The best leaf mould is made from beech or oak, which have a high tannin content that breaks down slowly to release nitrogen. Once you have collected



your leaves, they can be kept in a container made from chicken wire tacked to stakes, or in bin liners pierced with 4 or 5 holes. Once the leaves are stored, they need little attention, just keep an eye on them to make sure they don't get too wet or dry. Now you just have to wait, not too long if you want to use them as a mulch, or as long as four years if you want fine compost.



Winter Opening Hours

Now that the clocks have changed and the nights are drawing in, we will be closing the garden centre at **5pm**.

However on the first 3 **Thursdays** in **December** we will be open until **8pm**.

The Colonial Café will close half an hour before the garden centre.

Please note that we will be closed Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Years Day.

A common question at this time of year is how to prune a fruit tree - here are the answers!



Pruning Bush & Standard Fruit Trees

If the flowers & fruit on your tree grow in clusters along the shoots, you need to 'spur prune'.

While the tree is dormant, cut back sideshoots to between 2 & 6 buds & shorten the tip of the main shoot by between 1/3 to 1/4. Thin spurs if needed by cutting out the weakest, and remove others to leave spurs well spaced & uncongested.

If the fruit grows mainly on the tips of the shoots, you simply need to shorten these branches by 23cm/9", cutting them back to 5 or 6 buds. Thin out very vigorous shoots growing close together and finally cut out crossing branches to keep the tree open and uncluttered.

Spiced Apple Sauce

This year, we have seen a bumper crop of apples so how about trying this recipe for spiced apple sauce?

Ingredients:

- 600g Bramleys, peeled, cored & sliced
- 50g golden caster sugar
- Finely grated zest of 1lemon & 1tbsp of lemon juice
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 5 green cardamom pods

Method:

Place all the ingredients in a medium saucepan with 100ml of water. Bring to the boil, cover and cook over a low heat for 15 - 17 mins mashing the apples to a coarse puree once or twice during the cooking time. Discard the spices, transfer the sauce to a bowl and leave to cool. The sauce is a perfect accompaniment to Cumberland sausage and potatoes that have been mashed with crème fraiche (or double cream if your arteries are upto it) and mustard.

Pruning Trained Fruit Trees

Apples & pears that are grown as cordons or espaliers must be pruned in summer & winter to encourage cropping.

Cordons:

Shorten any long shoots that have grown since summer, to 5cm/2" on sideshoots. Thin spurs on established plants while they are dormant, cut out the weakest, most congested first. Once the main stem has reached the required height, prune it to within 12mm/0.5" of the old wood. Prune sideshoots in late summer when they are brown & woody at the base. Prune all spurs to one leaf above the basal cluster.

Espaliers:

On dormant established plants, thin out over-crowded spurs. In late summer, when this years shoots are brown & woody, cut back shoots over 23cm/9" to three leaves above the basal cluster.

Cut sideshoots from spurs to one leaf above the basal cluster.

Planting Ideas for Pots

Topiary lends much needed structure to the winter garden. A clipped bay tree always looks classy and can be under-planted with spring flowering bulbs such as snowdrops, miniature daffodils or tulips. If you can't wait until spring for a burst of colour, choose from our selection of winter bedding - cyclamen, pansies and violas are all available in a variety of colours or for something a bit different why not try some of our home grown hellebores?



Garden Design & Build Service

A well designed garden can add value both to your house and your life. It can also save you money as you can be sure that the plants used are right for the site!

If your garden isn't working for you then why not have it professionally designed by Andy?

We can now offer a complete, in-house design and build service for any size garden. Our new Garden Design website will be up and running soon with plenty of 'before and after' pictures of the gardens we have designed and built to date.

Services include consultancy, planting plans, garden designs, project management, planting and paving.



Success at RHS Show Tatton Park 2010

After putting in more than 2 years of hard work and investment building our garden centre 'Plantation' here in Plumley, Andy decided that the time was right to re-launch his garden design business and what better way to do this than by building a garden at the RHS Show Tatton Park.

The garden, titled 'Visit Plantation: Colonial Chic & Bajan Roots' was in fact a pair of 'Back to Back' gardens each measuring 6m x 4m and joined by a Bajan inspired pavilion. Lush architectural planting was used to suggest hotter climes and the use of natural wood and simple neutral shades allowed the plants to really stand out.

The 'Colonial Chic' garden had more formal lines, with its travertine paving and smooth spherical sandstone water features, whereas 'Bajan Roots' was more informal, with curved lines, hammock and raised planting beds.

Much to the delight of everyone involved we were awarded **GOLD** and the garden was featured on BBC2's Gardener's World. Andy has since been invited by the RHS to build a garden at the world famous Chelsea Flower show.



For many people, running a garden centre at the same time as designing and building a gold medal winning garden would be enough. Not for Andy. A few weeks prior to the show he was approached by the RHS, who wondered if he would be interested in building a 'Show Feature' measuring 20m x 20m.

Thinking this would be a great way to involve all the garden centre staff Andy agreed and 'Destination Plantation' was created. Every member of staff was able to help out with this and we built four different gardens each representing different aspects of Plantation.

There was an 'Incredible Edible' garden featuring herbs, fruit and our home grown vegetables, a traditional 'Cottage Garden' complete with summerhouse, an 'Oak Woodland' and finally a Tropical Garden with thatched hut from where samples of our Puro coffee and homemade cakes were given out.

The centrepiece to the display was an oak pergola from Crown Oak. Our show feature was also judged and was awarded '**Highly Commended**' and '**Best in Show**' – a fantastic achievement and one of which all our staff can be very proud.

Next time you visit the Colonial Cafe, be sure to have a look at the pictures, certificates and medals from the show, or flick through the photograph albums while you are having a coffee.



Incredible Edible Garden



Country Cottage



Oak Pergola



Caribbean Cruise

This season's Jobs in the Garden

Bring tender plants indoors if possible, if not then wrap them up well with fleece, hessian or bubblewrap; check it is all still in place following any particularly wild weather.

Raise patio containers onto feet or bricks so they are not sat in cold water.

During January, seed potatoes, onion sets and garlic will all be available - save old egg boxes as they are useful for chitting seed potatoes in.

Put up nesting boxes for the birds, along with plenty of food and clean water. We have a lovely selection of bird tables available, made just down the road in the village of Swettenham, suitable for all styles of garden and nice enough to be given as a Christmas present.

Winter is the time to plant bare root trees and hedging. For something a bit more girly, wallflowers and tulips can be planted out in November.

In the new year, on a mild sunny day, weed and dig over any empty beds, then sit down with a cuppa & plenty of garden magazines and plan what you are going to plant in the spring.

If your garden pond freezes over, resist the urge to smash the ice. Instead melt a hole gently by sitting a pan of hot water on top of it.

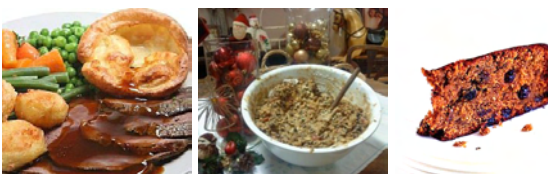
Give your greenhouse a good clean out, wash the windows, staging and capillary matting, then insulate it using bubblewrap. Check the heater is working and keep an eye on the temperature using a max/min thermometer.

News from the Colonial Cafe

Ever popular, our lovely cafe is just the place to meet friends for tea and cake, or a more substantial meal - all homemade from fresh local produce, much of it from our own incredible edible garden. Now that the cold weather is here we are serving full Sunday lunches, complete with all the trimmings, from 12 until 3 each Sunday.

Our team have been very busy over the last few weeks making chutneys, pickles, preserves and Christmas Puddings, so if you are stuck for a Christmas present or just want to treat yourself, why not pick up one of our hampers full of homemade goodies? Orders are also being taken for our Luxury Homemade Christmas Cakes. These rich, sumptuous fruit cakes are steeped in brandy, covered in marzipan and white iced for you to decorate yourself, priced at £12.99.

We are delighted to welcome 2 new faces to our cooking team - Stephanie and Jordan. Milly, who had been with us since we opened, is now enjoying her maternity leave following the birth of 'not so little' Mimi, who arrived on 22nd August weighing in at 8lb 11oz.



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