

GARDENING

THE SUNSHINE HAS BEEN SUCH A TREAT (BUT WE COULD DO WITH SOME RAIN!)

Ruth Darrah at the Norfolk School of Gardening

On and on and on it goes! The sunshine has been such a treat, even if it hasn't been very warm. It seems ridiculous to complain, but the only problem with all this glorious weather is that we have had next to no rain for the past few weeks.

March was an incredibly dry month and we are busy watering everything in pots outside as well as in the greenhouses.

Trees we planted last year are also getting a regular drink, as are perennials and shrubs we have moved in the past month.

The sun has brought out lots of blossom and the first tulips are now in flower as well as narcissi and hyacinths.

Many trees are greening up as the first leaves appear and spring is well and truly here.

The Diploma students had a study trip to Barcham Trees near Ely this week.

Barcham is a fantastic tree nursery which supplies the trade as well as individuals and they gave the students a great insight into how they work with designers.

We want the students to graduate with a relationship with lots of local suppliers so this is just one of their nursery visits.

After Barcham they had a private tour of the wonderful Fullers' Mill garden in West Stow, Suffolk.

It is a beautifully maintained garden with many interesting plants and design features, so was another really useful visit.

The garden is about to open for the season to the public, so do go if you get the chance.

We have had some great news about one of our first Diploma graduates, Sam Outing, inset, a

garden designer based in north Norfolk.

Sam has been invited by the RHS to design and project manage their branded planting at this year's Chelsea Flower Show.

His scheme mirrors the ethos of the RHS and the Chelsea Flower Show - a celebration of the wonderful world of horticulture and garden design, whilst being seasonal,

sustainable and environmentally positive.

The focus is on pollinator-friendly, high-impact plants which are at their peak in late May, providing pockets of interest and inspiration for visitors.

If you are going to Chelsea do look out for Sam's work around the RHS hub and in the beds in Ranelagh Gardens.

If you, like us, want to grow the best dahlias you can this year you won't want to miss the Dahlia Workshop on 8th April which shows you how to propagate and grow these gorgeous flowers which last for so many weeks in late summer, giving so much pleasure.

These are a few of the other upcoming courses which have some spaces available. Let us know if you'd like to join us:

- Dahlia Workshop – 8th April
- Advanced Practical Gardening – 9th April
- Sustainable Cutting Garden – 10th April
- Certificate in Practical Horticulture – 25th April
- Advanced Pruning & Training – 30th April
- Basic Bricklaying – 1st May
- Gardening Under Glass – 14th April

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Enjoying the sunny weather at the Norfolk School of Gardening

PLANT OF THE WEEK

Fritillaria meleagris or snake's head fritillary, always attracts attention. No other members of the *Fritillaria* genus can match this native wildflower for the bizarre and unmistakable colouring of its bell-shaped flowers.

These come in various shades of purple and occasionally white, always with a pronounced checked pattern all over. They are extremely hardy and trouble-free, and are ideal for growing in a variety of situations including containers, sunny spring borders and in wildflower meadows or areas of long grass.

The Royal Horticultural Society has given it its prestigious Award of Garden Merit (AGM). Grow in free-draining soil in light shade. Allow foliage to die down completely after flowering.

