

# Stratford sub Castle Garden Club January 2021

## Those Three Words .....

Many of the Garden Club members live in Stratford and so I need not give the following explanation to them but, a substantial number of our members live outside the village so just bear with me. David Balston, who lives in the village, kindly let us all know, again, about the lock down support system in the village, such as who to phone if you are shielding and need someone to collect your prescription. I emailed to thank him for this and remarked that what I really needed was light evenings and good gardening weather. I had just spent two days indoors, one day because of frost and fog and the next because of rain. I had not had my daily dose of one or two hours gardening for two whole days. He replied just simply, '**SPRING WILL COME**'. Well, YOU know that, and I know that, but in that early January gloom it just didn't cross my mind. But, the next day I was outside, in miserable weather, happily and with renewed vigour, feeling the need to get jobs done in time for Spring. Those three words worked wonders.



Now you may be forgiven if you are wondering what I find to do, so urgently, in January. It is not your typical gardening season. Well, I am redoing all the edges of the flower/veg/fruit beds. It sounds simple enough. In some places, I am doing just that and taking back the edge of the lawn a few inches. In other places I am re shaping to make the curves gentler so that our long and heavy mower does the job more easily. Importantly, this lets me gain more gardening space so that I have extra room for planting. In addition to everything else I want to grow climbing French beans (as well as runner beans), sweet

peas, (which I used to have room for but not anymore), move raspberries to a new area and grow more dahlias.

If you look at old maps of this area, St Lawrence Close, where I live, is built over an old orchard. That must be true, (think Orchard house) but possibly there was a dip in the ground where our garden is situated and the builders felt the need to raise the level of the ground. (To be above the flood plain?) Under our lawn we have two centimetres of soil and then a 3D jigsaw of house bricks, (whole and broken), smashed paving slabs, flints of various sizes and coarse hard core. It sometimes takes me two hours to do a 60 cm length that is two spades wide. It is quite therapeutic! Just sometimes I have to call in reinforcements, namely a chap called Andrew arrives with a kneeling pad, a lump hammer and a crowbar. The crowbar was actually a Christmas present for me a few years back. I have dug so much stuff out of this garden, recently, that I need another two tons of top soil to bring the level up. That brings me to 11 tons since we moved here (or it could be 12)



**I wondered if anybody knows, or knows someone that knows, what this land was like just before 1970 -72 when the houses in St Lawrence Close were built. One local builder who did a job here remarked that the remains of an old filling station were dumped here so he wasn't surprised about what I found in the garden.** This may explain why one piece of garden

kills everything that I plant in it. Luckily it is out of sight. No one else in the close has the problem of rubble under the ground.



Today I have done cuttings and root divisions of Achillea 'Cloth of Gold'. As the name describes, its flowers are bright golden yellow, it reaches 1.5 metres and is not an ounce of trouble and the leaves are a lovely sage green and feathery. Insects love it too. The photo shows the Achillea.

I am starting to build up a collection of plants ready for a stall at the Garden Club or outside on the pavement if we are still unable to meet indoors. In that event I will use the proceeds to make a donation to a charity.

I so look forward to our friendly and useful Club meetings, hopefully we will be able to meet

again before too long. Meanwhile, keep out of trouble and **SPRING WILL COME.**

Dorothy Richards