



GARDENING

Don't Panic

By Zena Robson

DESPAIR has set in... my Agapanthus have been reduced to a soggy and revolting mess, well the leaves, that is. The roots are fine because I wrapped the pots in bubble-wrap to protect them from just such surprising frostiness but now what? Well, I'm going to have to leave everything as it is for the moment and wait until I'm sure the frosts are finished.

On the other hand, my little violas and winter-flowering pansies have made a remarkable recovery and that's exactly why I use both. Bulbs are popping up and down like yo-yo's and my sojourn in the protected area to the south of Chester (which has its own micro-climate) has led me to go around having conversations with said plants to remind them that if they continue to come along too early they will be clobbered either by late frosts or early aphids. It's amazingly true to tell you that it works - but bad language does nowt, so be polite!

February will bring us the first flowering of that wonderful Helleborus genus. Niger (the Christmas/Lentern rose) should already be exposing its white cup-shaped flowers, followed by orientalis, foetidus and corsicus.

Dead on arrival

Please remember what I said about buying winter aconites, snowdrops and cyclamen in the green - i.e. in leaf but maybe not in flower - you will find that 'in flower' means expensive and generally dead flowers

but living leaves if bought from garden centres - look in garden magazines for much more affordable prices, it's not too late, although all flowers will be gone until next spring.

If you have Wisteria, don't panic! Just look at all that leafy growth and cut bits back to the outside of the third bud from the main stem. Leave floppy whips that you want to tie in to extend growth later. Grapevines should also have been pruned hard but I have to say that I think they are a pain and much prefer to go for something like the golden leaved hop for growth coverage, and buy my grapes from the greengrocer's.



Dear Deirdre...

I would like to give my partner a personal present for Valentine's Day. Could you please give me some information about massage oils and how to use them?

Aromatic Alex from Aylmer Road

Dear Alex,

What a nice, creative idea! There is actually a lot to know about massage oils (often called essential oils because they are essences distilled from plants) and about massage too, but for some very basic information, just enough to help you enjoy Valentine's Day, read on.

Several essential oils have an aphrodisiac effect: they can help us relax, increase our sense of wellbeing, heighten our awareness and generally make us feel more sexy and sensual. Here are just a few:

Jasmine is uplifting, inspiring feelings of confidence and optimism; **Sandalwood** has similar effects and has a spicy, woody scent; **Patchouli** can give you a boost and heightens the senses; **Neroli** (orange blossom) can help to overcome inhibitions; **Ylang ylang** helps with impotence and frigidity; **Rose** ... well how much more romantic can you get?!

You can use these oils individually or in combination. To make a massage oil, blend about 40 drops (roughly 2 ml) of the essential oil(s) with about 100ml of a base oil such as almond or grapeseed oil, to create a mixture which contains about 2 percent essential oils.

Then massage your partner all over, gently, sensuously, erotically... (rather than vigorously and with great gusto!), using a mix of long and short strokes, and varying the intensity of the pressure you use.

To create a sensual atmosphere light some candles, play some seductive music and have a bottle of wine (or champagne) nearby. Increase the fragrance in the room by sprinkling oils on your sheets and pillows or using an oil burner. And to get you in the mood why not luxuriate in a hot aromatic bath with your partner before you begin? Enjoy!

PS Oils are available from most of our chemists in the High Road.

Deirdre

The Dear Deirdre column is written by Jane Revell, therapist and stress management specialist. If you have a problem you think I can help you with, please write to Dear Deirdre at *THE ARCHER*. All replies will be treated in confidence.

Seems like a long time

By David Hobbs

It is hard to believe that this issue marks the eighth anniversary of the launch of *The Archer* in February 1993.

Since then we have printed and distributed over three-quarters of a million papers and have hopefully contributed something to the life of East Finchley.

I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to *The Archer* since its launch. Without the writers, designers, finance officers, advertising people and, most importantly of all, the distributors we would not have achieved all that we have.

The Archer is a community newspaper run entirely by volunteers. If you would like to become involved in East Finchley's very own newspaper you are assured of a warm welcome.

Tributes to Helen Roberts

One in a million

On 3 December last year, East Finchley lost a truly wonderful person. I lost my best friend, six children lost their mum and a husband lost his dear wife. Helen Roberts was only 48 when she tragically lost her long battle against cancer.

She was an active part of the East Finchley community and loved by many. Her older children, Rebecca, Zoe and Ewan attended Brookland School where Helen was a member of the PTA. Nothing was too much trouble for Helen to organise, even though she was busy studying for an Open University Degree.

Many years ago she was a pioneer of the East Finchley Toy Library, which continued to thrive following her involvement. She always encouraged people to shop locally and was a keen supporter of the East Finchley Community Festival.

Her three younger children, Mia, Chrissie and Russell attend Holy Trinity School where Helen was not only a member of the PTA but also an immensely popular School Governor.

Her friends and her family are left with the most incredibly happy memories of her life which we will treasure forever. God Bless Helen - one in a million.

By Eve Hurst

Shining Example

Helen was a shining example of how to live a life of loving kindness, energy and care. She gave of herself tirelessly to her family, her church and to Holy Trinity School. Whatever the fundraising event, it was always "Put me down for something".

As a Parent Governor she always found time to listen. She showed sensitivity and concern in equal measure. Central to all her work as a governor was how our decisions would affect the children. She always held others in mind.

We all feel the loss of such a generous-hearted person, but Helen will live on in spirit, always.

By Sylvia Duthie, Chair of Governors, Holy Trinity C of E Primary School

YOUNG ARCHER

Living Doll

By Diana Cormack

I've just come back from a holiday in Egypt. I saw some wonderful things there including the Pyramids, the Sphinx, lots of mummies and the treasures from Tutankhamun's tomb. But as well as remembering all the amazing riches of the pharaohs, something else sticks in my mind. In one display cabinet I saw two little carved dolls. They lay there looking hard, stiff and a bit boring yet, thousands of years ago, they were probably happily played with and dearly loved.

Children have always had dolls and, of course, over the years they have changed a great deal. My own favourite was a "walkie-talkie" doll, which I had when I was about eight. I was so proud of her!

She was made of hard plastic and when you stood her up and pushed her shoulders forwards one after the other, each leg would snap forwards and she would walk. She would say "mama" if you laid her on her tummy and when you turned her onto her back her eyes would close. She had brown eyes, which was unusual for a doll those days, and her long, brown hair was in plaits. I loved her to bits but, unfortunately, so did my little sister. When I went out, my doll was placed safely on a high shelf in the airing cupboard, out of her

reach.

One day I came home from school and, as usual, went straight to the cupboard. No doll. I looked everywhere in the house, but I couldn't find her. There was no sign of my sister either. I rushed out to search the garden and saw my mother dragging my mud-covered sister up the path.

Gradually the painful truth came out. Somehow (and I still don't know exactly how) my sister had got her hands on my doll. She had toddled off with a couple of her friends to a nearby pond. Somehow my doll had ended up at the bottom of that very deep pond and I never saw her again. I don't suppose she'll survive to be discovered and displayed by archaeologists thousands of years in the future!

Fairy

Interesting!

Would you like to know what sort of dolls your mother, your grandmother or even your great grandmother used to play with?

If so, you must go and see the exhibition at Church Farmhouse Museum in Hendon. There are hundreds of dolls on display ranging from the early 20th Century up to the Teletubbies of today. The amazing collection belongs to a lady called Brenda Faris who is in her seventies. She has been collecting, making and mending rag dolls for nearly seventy years! Her collection includes lots of fairy dolls in many different shapes and sizes.

There are activities for young visitors, including a competition to draw your favourite doll in the exhibition, which is on until 4 March. The museum is on Greyhound Hill, Hendon and is open on Monday to Thursday 10am-12.30pm and 2pm-5.30pm; Saturday 10am-1pm and 2pm-5.30pm; Sunday 2pm-5.30pm. Admission is free. For further information phone Gerard Roots at the museum on 020 8203 0130.

Joke

Son: "Mum, it's Valentine's Day today isn't it?"

Mum: "Clever boy! How did you know that?"

Son: "Because my teacher put ten kisses on my maths test!"