

Newsletter

June 2020 • Green Care

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Welcome

In this edition you will find indoor and outdoor nature based activities that can be carried out in your home or garden:

- June planting and growing advice
- Seasonal Craft: a rainbow of ideas
- Flower of the month: Rose
- Nature: take a shot at Nature
- Wildlife at home
- Wellbeing: sensory activities
- Edible Flower: Honeysuckle
- Game from the Wilderness: Quiz
- Thank you!
- Carers' and volunteer's week

If you have any queries or feedback, do please get in contact with Marco Galli, MHA The Wilderness Activity Coordinator at marco.galli@mha.org.uk or give him a call for a quick chat at **07597 135 220**.

MHA The Wilderness, one of London's secret gardens, tucked behind MHA Hall Grange Care Home, brings together ideas and activities that are part of the Green Care programme. Green Care activities play a fundamental role in keeping MHA residents active and stimulated.

Thanks to generous grants from the **National Heritage Lottery Fund** and thanks to National Lottery players, MHA The Wilderness is being restored for the benefit of residents and the local community

June is a month rich in celebrations: the most loved of flowers in British gardens, the Rose, symbol of many and of lovers. In June, we celebrate PRIDE, symbol of unity and support amongst the LGBTQ+ community. Lastly, it is Carers' Week! MHA The Wilderness want to celebrate the relentless effort and attention that our MHA Carers have put into their work in the last few months especially.

Thank you! **#CarersWeek**



June planting and growing advice

by Adam Fuller, MHA The Wilderness Head Gardener

Roses are the flower of this month

A key feature in many gardens and some with a wonderful scent.

Roses are best pruned hard in the winter or spring to get as much new growth as possible and remove old and dead wood from the main plant as flowers are produced on new wood. At this time of year whilst the roses are in flower most pruning will be gentle or slight (only formative) and with regular deadheading of flowers as they fade to promote new buds to open which can extend the flowering period.

To promote the best flowers, a horse or animal manure mulch should be applied to the base of the plant in the autumn/winter. This has the effect of increasing the acidity of the soil as roses love a bit of acid and keeping the plant warm during the winter and reducing the amount of weeds that it's competing with.

Regenerating old roses is possible at this time of year through cutting them back hard, but will mean no flowers until next year.



Vegetables

Vegetables to plant around this month include pumpkins/squashes, spring onions and food for the brain like broccoli which are relatively easily grown and require fairly well drained soil, full sun if possible and a whole lot of loving. All seeds should be sown at this time in order to provide as much warmth as possible in order to achieve the best start in life and germination.

Pumpkins and squashes will be harvested later on in the year but once fruit starts to form can provide interest all the way through late summer and autumn. Smaller fruiting varieties can be trained to grow over frames to create forms of art in the garden as well as pumpkins, but in order to achieve the best fruits, flowers are best germinated by manually rubbing flower stamens together to achieve germination and then restricting the number of fruits growing especially if they are large varieties, to only 2-3 pumpkins per plant.

Blue pumpkins are a favourite as they are both interesting to look at as they grow and taste a lot sweeter generally than orange or green varieties.

June planting and growing advice

Invaders and unwanted visitors to the patch

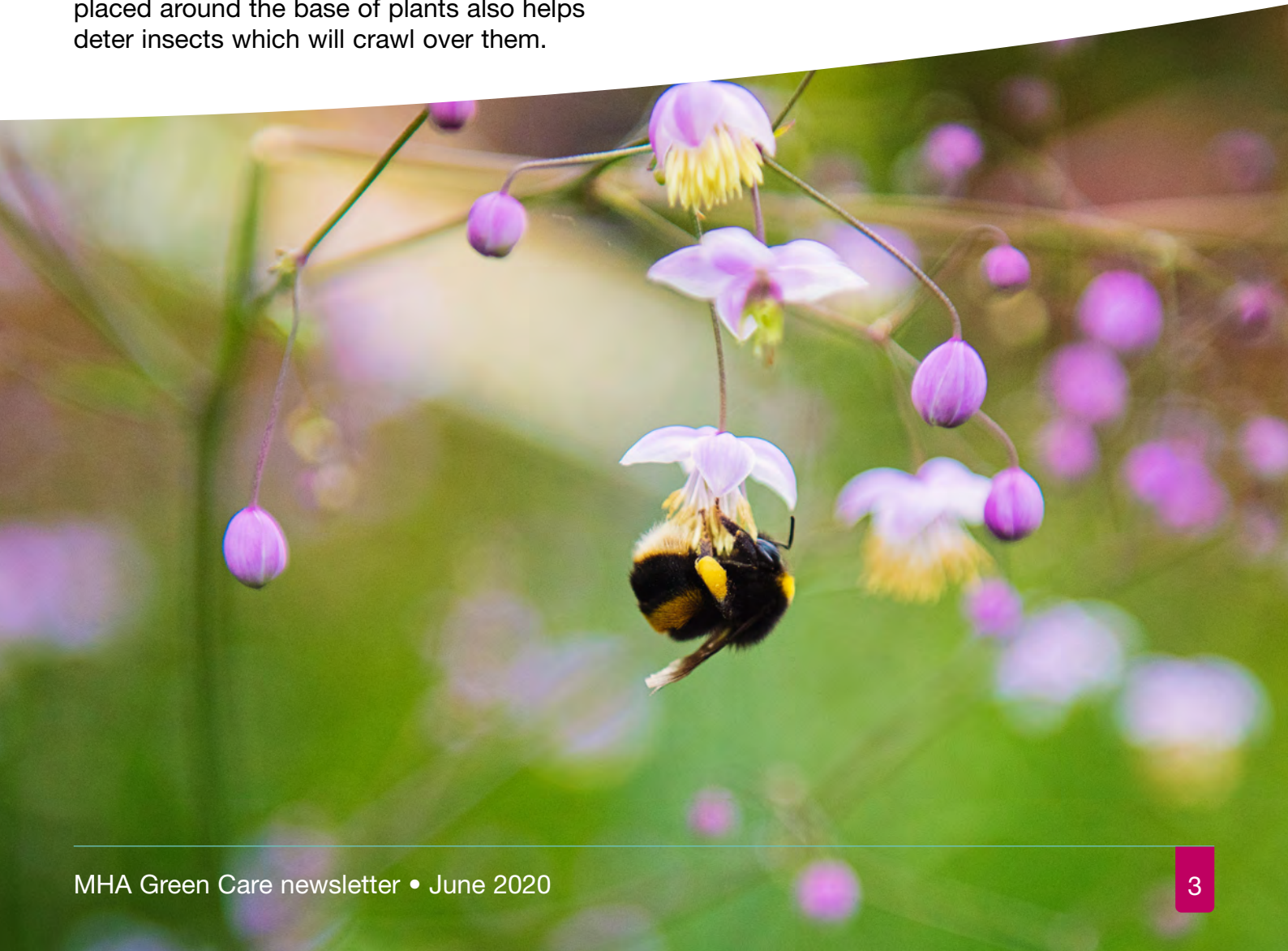
Greenfly and a number of other insects which feed on the sap of vegetables and buds as they open can sometimes be deterred if the plants are gently sprayed with a diluted washing up liquid. I have known this to work on a variety of plants including Dahlias, Lilies and even to have some effect on snails and slugs munching Hosta's. Copper rings or even copper cables are the best deterrent for slugs and snails if placed around the base of the plant on the surface of the soil. Copper contains a natural electric charge which deters insects.

Sharp objects such as egg shell or coarse grit placed around the base of plants also helps deter insects which will crawl over them.

Don't forget the wildlife

At these times of year, our wildlife and plants in the garden appreciate a helping hand and many (especially birds) love a drink. Shallow areas of water or containers which allow animals to get in and out of easily or drink from the edge of are best.

Bees, especially if temperatures drop in the evening or are cold in the early mornings, appreciate a morning boost of a very weak sugar and water mix to get going; a bit like our mugs of coffee or tea.



Seasonal craft a rainbow of colours

Let's bring in new ways to maximise we get from the flowers that we have around us in our houses with creative seasonal crafts.

Let's send a colourful message to everyone in our community to celebrate people's daily efforts and contributions during these challenging times.

Also, June is Pride month where we all celebrate LGBTQ+ community rights: celebrate it with a rainbow craft

FLOWER POUNDING

This is a surprising way to extract colours from your flowers. Very few tools and steps are needed. Before starting, prepare a hammering surface with a cutting board on top of a towel (the towel prevents sliding). Now, take the flower and place it on a piece of fabric (preferably cotton), cover it with a paper towel, and hammer away. Lastly, iron your piece with a warm iron but with a paper towel over it.



POTPOURRI WITH DRY FLOWERS

Use dry flowers, essential oils and any herbs you would like to include. After drying up some flowers with the air method (hang them upside down for a couple of weeks), add them in a box with essential oil. Close the container for a couple of weeks to help flowers absorb the oil.

Now arrange it with decorative pebbles, cloves or cinnamon sticks.

Flower rainbow

The rainbow has been the image we share amongst our community to say thank you to the NHS Staff and Carers. The Rainbow flag is the symbol of LGBTQ+ Pride and promotes equality, diversity and inclusion.

Follow these few steps to create a unique rainbow with flowers.

Frame the rainbow

We have now learned different ways to dry flowers. We have also celebrated all NHS staff and Carers with a wonderful rainbow.

Let's bring more joy in our community with a rainbow made out of flowers. Then frame it and place it in your room.



Flower colouring

If you are thinking of what to do with flowers before they die, try this experiment.

Cut off the end of the stems and place them in a jar with water. Add liquid colour to the water and mix them up to obtain your rainbow selection. Leave them overnight, and a colourful surprise might await you in the morning.



Flower of the month



Rose

With over 150 species, and thousands of hybrids, this symbolic flower has, for several centuries, dominated poetry, art, literature and religion.

Roses have been a timeless symbol of love, beauty, and more: yellow roses symbolise friendship and optimism, and black roses symbolise rebirth and the beginning of something new. According to BBC Gardener's World, the Rose is the UK's favourite garden plant as well as the UK's most hated garden plant.

“O how much more doth beauty beauteous seem,
By that sweet ornament which truth doth give!
The rose looks fair, but fairer we it deem
For that sweet odour which doth in it live.
The canker-blooms have full as deep a dye
As the perfumed tincture of the roses,
Hang on such thorns and play as wantonly
When summer's breath their masked buds discloses:
But, for their virtue only is their show,
They live unwoo'd and unrespected fade,
Die to themselves. Sweet roses do not so;
Of their sweet deaths are sweetest odours made:
And so of you, beauteous and lovely youth,
When that shall fade, my verse distills your truth”

Sonnet 54, William Shakespear

Make your own rose

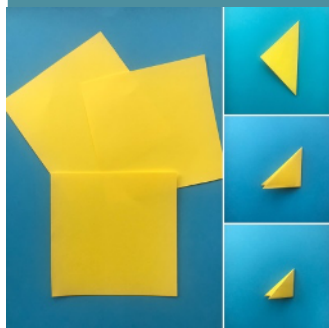
Follow these few steps to make your own crafted rose!

1

Material

For our craft rose we need: coloured A4 paper; scissors; pencil; glue; straw or tooth pick.

Start by cutting the paper to make 3 square pieces. Then fold the squared pieces and fold it diagonally, making two more diagonal folds.

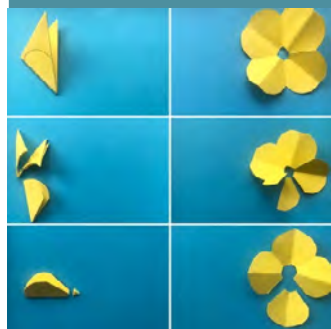


2

Mark and Cut

First, make a semi circle, remove the top portion, and cut a small hole at the bottom. Now we have a flower shape!

Next, take one flower shape, cut and remove one petal. Cut and remove two segments from the second flower shape. Three segments from third flower shape.



3

Curl and glue edges

Use a straw to curl edges outwards. Then put some glue on one segment, fold it and glue next segment over the glued part. Then, glue on edges of other smaller pieces we took off from the flower shape, roll and press.



4

Arrange Petals

Take the largest piece and place the second largest inside. Arrange all other glued pieces inside. Adjust each piece in a different manner to see how they can be glued to make look like real one. Support your pieces by lightly gluing pieces separately.

Our paper rose is now ready.



Nature

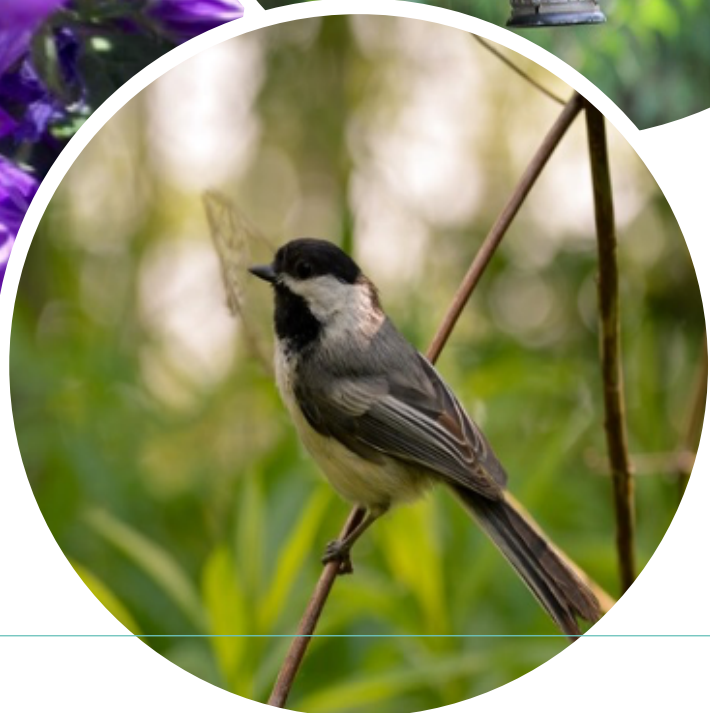
Take a shot at nature

A few weeks ago we celebrated World Bees Day, and the National Bugs Week recently. Get your camera, and let's go and spot some beauties from our garden, patio and window. Tag @MHATheWilderness in your photo and share it online.



<https://www.facebook.com/MHATheWilderness/?ref=bookmarks>

Here are some shots taken by the Wilderness team from their gardens, homes and windows, and the incredible surprise nature brought to us during lock-down.



Wildlife at home

Use this BUG identifier (ID) to explore and find out which of these mini beasts hide and thrive in your garden.

1



Snail

☐

4



Whitetail bumblebee

☐

2



Stag beetle

☐

5



Millipede

☐

3



Dragonfly

☐

6



Asparagus beetle

☐

Bug hotels and bat houses

Bug hotels

Create your own bug hotels to welcome these tiny creatures while they thrive in your little but cosy DIY hotel.

Recycle and collect

Look out in your backyard, garden, or when you are walking back home pick up natural items and things that you can recycle to make the best out of what you have. Use: a wood or cardboard box for your hotel; then flowers and stems; straws made out of paper or greaseproof paper; acorns and pinecones; dry leaves, moss and brunches (the latter will support your structure).



Ram it in

Now, arrange your hotel and ram it in.

Put everything in a way that is not going to fall out. Use twigs to secure things, wedge things in using your twigs and moss. Use things that are available without compromising your habitat.

Then, decorate it, make it personal. Have you given a name to your hotel?



Bats house

Bats are essential workers in our ecosystem. They are very important pollinators: some plants depend partly or wholly on bats to pollinate their flowers or spread their seeds. Thus, over 500 plant species rely on bats to pollinate their flowers. Other bats are also great at pest control by eating insects.

There are 18 species of bat in the UK, all of which are protected by law.

The Kent Bat Box is the easiest version that you can make by yourself just by the use of: rough (untreated) wood; screws (8 x 1½ inches) if using a drill; nails with hammer.

Here are a few simple but important steps to build our own bat house. For a more in depth guideline and measures, visit the page:

http://www.greenerwaldringfield.org/download/i/mark_dl/u/4013335968/4626269922/How%20To%20Make%20a%20Bat%20Box.pdf

TIPS FOR YOUR DIY BOX

- The opening of the box is crucial because prevents build up of parasites, and reduce the need for cleaning.
- The best wood to use is weather resistant wood.
- Make sure the interior wood is sufficiently rough for the bats to hang on, and the bats do not slip and fall.
- Bats don't like drafty homes, so when building your bat house, it is crucial that you seal it all to prevent water as well as cold and warm air drafts from entering the structure.

Wellbeing: sensory activities

From small, safe, green spaces to vast woodlands and forests, nature has always inspired, brought peace and calm, and provided space for reflection and enjoyment.

HEARING: BIRDSONGS

How many bird songs do you know? In this video, different sounds have been collected so that you can learn which bird is singing from your garden, patio or windowsill.



SIGHT: SPOT THE BUG

How many insects can you identify or see from your windowsill, patio or garden? These mini beasts hide and thrive in hidden places.

Keep a record of what you see and enjoy and celebrate the life surrounding you.



TOUCH: FEEL THE SPOT

Have you ever thought about how many different textures are present in your garden? From rough to smooth, slimy to dry, there are several spots around our gardens with different textures and layers. Take a moment to relax and feel your surroundings using your senses. Explore it!

SMELL: SMELL HUNTING

Another way to empower your senses is through your smell. I want you to go on a smell garden hunt and record what smells are present in your garden. Draw a map of different smells: pungent, fruity or woody?



Smell

TASTE

You are invited to explore the surrounding and try the nectar from the honeysuckles and explore what memories it brings back. There are several berries, or flowers that we used to pick and store perhaps during weekend walks. I hope that the taste of each will bring you back a nice memory.



Taste

Edible flower honeysuckles

Honeysuckle is the common name for about 200 species of flower.

Honeysuckle has a beautiful aroma when in bloom: a smell almost as good as honey tastes. There is no wonder how it got its name!

The flowers have a sweet nectar that is delicious, but please be aware: that is the only part of the plant you should eat. **The berries are poisonous!**

This is a delicate and precious operation for a wonderful experience!

Choose a bloom from a honeysuckle bush and pull it off the stem. Get the entire bloom all the way down to the point where it is connected. This will avoid spilling the nectar.

Pinch the bottom tip of the bloom to pull out the stamen. As you pull it out it will bring with it the nectar from the middle of the bloom.

Lick the drop of nectar off of the stem to enjoy the sweet taste of a honeysuckle. The leaves are edible as well, although most people don't eat them.



Games from the wilderness quiz

1 What is the food of honeybee queens?

2 How many breeding bat species are there in the UK?

- A. 20
- B. 18
- C. 19
- D. 17

3 How many plagues mentioned in the book of Exodus in the bible were caused by insects?

4 Which insect is a huge killer of broadleaf trees in the UK?

- A. Asian Hornet
- B. Harlequin Ladybird
- C. Asian Longhorn Beetle
- D. Oak Month

5 How long can a honeybee queen live for?

- A. 1 year
- B. 3 year
- C. 5 year
- D. 7 year

6 Insects make up what percentage of the world's animals?

- A. 35 percent
- B. 80 percent
- C. 60 percent
- D. 10 percent

7 What is the biggest insect ever discovered?

- A. Giant Weta
- B. Madagascar Walking Stick
- C. Hercules Beetles
- D. Meganeura Dragonfly

8 Of all insects, the fastest runner is the cockroach.

Yes or No

9 How many hours do brown bats sleep?

- A. 7 hours
- B. 20 hours
- C. 14 hours
- D. 17 hours

10 How many people eat insects every day worldwide?

- A. 700 million
- B. 1.8 billion
- C. 2 billion
- D. 200 million

Answers are listed on page 14



Thank you

Celebrate with us Carers' and Volunteers' Week!

Please, join us and share a massive THANK YOU for the incredible job that our MHA Carers do every day and night and the great contribution displayed by our volunteers.

To all MHA Carers, Staff and Volunteers, a massive THANK YOU from all of us!



Quiz answers from page 13

1. Royal Jelly.
2. B. There are 18 species of bat in the UK, 17 of which are known to be breeding here – that's almost a quarter of our mammal species.
3. Three: lice, flies, and locusts.
4. C. The Asian Longhorn beetle is very large in size and they cause extensive damage inside the tree as they feed on the wood. This damage can cut off water and nutrient supplies to the leaves and therefore cause the death of the tree.
5. C. A queen bee has an average productive lifespan of two to three years, but, the queen honey bee can live up to five years.
6. B. some scientists estimate the total insect population at 10 quintillion, which is 10 billion billion!
7. D. First discovered in France in 1880, Meganeura is one of the largest known flying insects to ever exist with over 75 centimeter wingspan.
8. Yes. In an experiment, a cockroach registered a record speed of 5.4 km/h (3.4 mph), about 50 body lengths per second, which would be comparable to a human running at 330 km/h (210 mph).
9. B. The little brown bat, for example, sleeps an average of 19.9 hours each day. (Giant armadillos and opossums are a close second, sleeping about 18 hours a day).
10. C. According to estimates, more than 2 billion people worldwide eat insects every day. Ants, bugs, grasshoppers and butterfly larvae are eaten in Asia, Africa and South America especially.

Keeping in touch

If you are able to, keep in touch with colleagues, friends and family through any of the following methods:

- Workplace
- Facebook
- Twitter
- WhatsApp
- Texting / Calling
- Letter writing (build this into your daily exercise walk)
- Zoom
- Skype



Wash your hands of coronavirus scams!

Friends Against Scams aims to protect and prevent people from becoming victims of scams.

Be **aware** of people offering or selling:

- Virus testing kits - these are only offered by NHS.
- Vaccines or miracle cures - there is currently no vaccine or cure.
- Overpriced or fake goods to protect yourself from coronavirus such as anti-bacterial products.
- Shopping or medication collection services.
- Home cleaning services.

Protect yourself and others:

- Don't be rushed into making a decision. If it sounds too good to be true it probably is.
- Only purchase goods from legitimate retailers and take a moment to think before parting with money or personal information.
- Don't assume everyone is genuine. It's okay to reject, refuse or ignore any requests. Only criminals will try to rush or panic you.
- If someone claims to represent a charity, ask them for ID. Be suspicious of requests for money up front. If someone attempts to pressurise you into accepting a service they are unlikely to be genuine. Check with family and friends before accepting offers of help if you are unsure.

Be a good friend,
help to protect
your family, friends
and neighbours
from scams.

**Read it.
Share it.
Prevent it.**

**#Coronavirus
#ScamAware**



Contact

For advice on scams call the
Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline on **0808 223 11 33**
To report a scam call Action Fraud on **0300 123 2040**
Contact your bank if you think you have been scammed.

**NATIONAL
TRADING
STANDARDS**

Scams Team

To learn more about the different types of scams visit www.FriendsAgainstScams.org.uk