



# SPRING IS SPRUNG

**AS new life starts to erupt all around the garden I thought it would be a great time to tell you about a 'new idea' that has taken off within the RCHS.**

As I mentioned last year, horticultural societies nationally are struggling to recruit up-and-coming young enthusiastic gardeners to take over from the aching back, sore hands, lifting and humping around that we have done for years. Maybe one of the contributing factors is everything is available from wherever, whenever you need it. Just pop on the internet and there you have it, 24 hours later, delivered to your front door, I'm sure it's even possible to buy an instant garden!

Well, I am proud to say that three local schools in Ruislip have found the time to come on board and join the RCHS in our latest venture. Patricia Swindells, who is Show Manager on the Committee of the RCHS, explains about this exciting event...

Spring is the time for looking towards the future. Every year the RCHS looks for ideas and initiatives that will benefit not only the existing membership but also the future members who are only just beginning their journey towards becoming enthusiastic gardeners.

At the Spring Show (Saturday, March 28th) there was a new category in the schedule: "Spring is Sprung" especially for Primary Schools in Ruislip. The schools have been challenged to produce a display of spring bulbs grown in a wheelbarrow. Three schools took up the challenge: *The Sacred Heart*, *South Ruislip* and *Lady Bankes Primary* Schools. RCHS gave all three schools the same components to work with for this challenge. The pupils will be able to submit photographs of their progress as well as write or draw on the given theme.

The Society hopes that this initiative will not only encourage youngsters and their families to become involved with the RCHS but also this will support the Science curriculum in the schools by giving the pupils hands on experience of growing plants. The competition also allows a lot of cross

The RCHS has the great pleasure of welcoming Christine Walkden from BBC1 on Tuesday May 26th at 8pm for an "Evening with Christine Walkden". There are a few tickets still remaining priced at £10 each. Call Warren on 01923 451616.

curriculum work in the areas of Art, Reading, Writing and Mathematics as well

as allowing the pupils to experience co-operation in working towards a successful goal. All three schools already have thriving gardens but this competition gives the pupils a particular focus and the chance to measure themselves against others.

The Committee hopes that this initiative will be successful and become a regular feature of the Spring Show with more Primary Schools taking up the challenge in future years.

There has been a long-standing category that has been open to children of members and non-members who are 12 years and under: that of section I. In this section the entrants can enter any item made or grown by a child who is 12 years and under. This is such a wide category that it should encourage many youngsters to enter.

These initiatives demonstrate our commitment to encourage and foster the love for all things horticultural within the future generations.

The committee is always looking for new ideas that would benefit the Society so if you have any ideas or suggestions then please get in touch with any member of the committee.

The schedule for the Summer and Autumn shows in June and September can be viewed and downloaded from the RCHS website <http://ruislihorticultural.org.uk/2015-show-schedule/>

## GARDENING TIPS

**Just because you don't have acres and acres of garden, and rolling pastures where you can create your own forest or parkland does not mean you can't enjoy the spectacular show of ornamental trees.**

**Did you know that if you prune certain trees back hard, you will in actual fact encourage very large leaf growth. You may sacrifice the flowers of certain trees or large shrubs, however the foliage can be magnificent. I have for example in a pot, admittedly the pot is very large (pictured above), an Indian Bean Tree (*Catalpa Bignonioides*). I prune this right back at this time of year literally to just over 2 foot high. The result is fantastic large leaves, sometimes reaching 6 inches wide!**

**Another shrub I prune back very hard is my "Smoke Bush" (*Cotinus Grace*.) Again I lose the "Smoke" effect of the flowers, however the leaves which are a fantastic dark purple will be double the size of a shrub that is left to its own devices.**

**So just because you may have a 'small' garden, does not mean you can't have the 'larger trees.'**

We have had a lot of 'mail bag' questions this month of which all have been answered but please keep sending any questions in to [rchstalks@gmail.com](mailto:rchstalks@gmail.com)

Join us next month, when we will be bringing you a recipe for 'Elderflower Cordial' and advice on making your own.

Warren