



Bird's eye view: Stephen and Ruth just before opening their garden.

Garden of delights

Visitors to Stephen and Ruth Kersley's open garden at their home in Abbots Gardens, N2, at the start of June found plenty to enjoy in Stephen's beautifully



Natural beauty: Rachel and Jeremy's garden in Twyford Avenue.

Glory of a garden makeover

There's a chance to explore another local garden this month when Rachel Lindsay and Jeremy Pratt open theirs at 24 Twyford Avenue, N2, for the National Garden Scheme.

When they moved in, the garden was unloved and badly in need of a makeover, half of it being covered by grass and the rest by overgrown brambles and bushes. Now it is full of beds packed with cottage garden plants and shrubs, and some of Rachel's own sculptures. Last year, Rachel and Jeremy raised well over £1,600 for the

NGS charities despite clashing with the World Cup Final and the Wimbledon men's singles final! It was also the height of the heatwave.

This year, their garden is open on Sunday 14 July from 2pm to 6pm. Entrance is £4 (children are free). Home-made teas and home-grown plants will be on sale.

designed borders, vegetable plot and water features, along with Ruth's glass and mosaic works.

The couple were grateful for perfect weather on the day and thanked family and friends for helping them sell a record number of tickets, raising over £1,000 for the many National Garden Scheme charities, which include Macmillan Cancer Support, Marie Curie, Hospice UK, Queen's Nursing Institute, Parkinson's UK and the MS Society.

The hidden pest that spells trouble for your topiary

By Paulina Spencer-Lugtenburg

You may have noticed in your garden or your neighbour's that box trees (*buxus sempervirens*) appear to be drying out, shrivelling and dying. Look closely and you will likely find an increased number of moths, minute green balls or pellets on the ground, webbing nests in your box plant and a very well camouflaged box tree caterpillar.

They are hard to spot initially but soon you will notice them everywhere, including in front gardens in Beech Drive, Beresford Road and New Trinity Road.

most visible during the evening and at night. Their pupae are more easily spotted in a cocoon of white webbing spun among the leaves and twigs.

'Exterminate'

Destructive newcomer

The box tree caterpillar (*cydalima perspectalis*) is a troublesome pest, slowly eating its way through London's box plants. It has an almost exclusive taste for their tiny evergreen leaves so you won't find it on other shrubs. Native to East Asia and established in Europe since 2014, it has no natural predator in the UK.

These little critters are most active between April and October, laying pale yellow flat eggs in a sheet on the underside of box leaves. The well-camouflaged caterpillars are greenish yellow with black heads and can grow up to 4cm long. They are



Garden menace: Is the box tree caterpillar lurking in your greenery?

The most ecological way to get rid of them is to remove them by hand. Wearing gloves is recommended. You should also prune out stems covered in the webbing. This takes an enormous amount of time and patience for heavy infestations, with regular checks to ensure you have caught them all.

Another option is organic pesticide spray, particularly products based upon a bacteria called *Bacillus thuringiensis ssp Aizawai*. This specific strain will not harm bees, mites or spiders. Spray over the box plant and within the foliage too. Forceful spraying is required to penetrate the silk webbing, treating the areas again a week later.

Additionally, the use of moth traps should prevent the next generation of caterpillars. So make like a Dalek and 'exterminate, exterminate'. If you don't, you are creating the moths that will make their way to your neighbour's box plant. Female moths can fly up to 10km!

Computers and a cuppa

The popular Internet and a Cuppa computer club will move for a period to the Old White Lion pub next to the tube station while its regular home, the Five Bells in East End Road, is under refurbishment.

People looking for help using their smartphones, laptops or tablets can bring them in to the Old White Lion between 2pm and 4pm on Tuesdays 2 and 9 July, and possibly for a week or two after that.

There will be no club on 30 July, or throughout August, as fewer volunteers are available to help run it. Sessions will start again on 10 September, back at the Five Bells. Sign up to receive the club's newsletter at <http://bit.ly/2wDgVPP>

Time to get snappy

CommUNITY Barnet is inviting residents to get behind their cameras this summer to capture images of what the borough looks like to them. The photo competition marks 40 years of the community and voluntary group charity.

There are two categories, Culture & Communities and Buildings & Environment, with £150 on offer for first place, £50 for second and £25 for third. Full rules and details can be found online at: bit.ly/CB40Years

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English classics

Finchley Chamber Choir and Finchley Symphony Orchestra join forces once again to present a feast of music for summer by two of England's greatest composers, Vaughan Williams and Elgar. The concert, conducted by David Lardi and supported by the Elgar Society, takes place at Trinity Church, Nether Street, N12, on Saturday 20 July at 7.30pm Tickets priced £15, concessions £13, under 18s £6 in advance at www.finchleysymphony.org/concerts.