

IDEAS FOR A BEAUTIFUL SPRING

Some years ago the Suburb Horticultural Society visited a small village near Cambridge, where every home and land-owner had planted daffodil bulbs. This resulted in a profusion of flowers in gardens, pavement verges, farm lanes, hedgerows and woodland walks. It was a remarkable sight. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we, as a GARDEN Suburb, could live up to our description?

If each householder planted just 20 daffodil bulbs (cost £2, labour about half an hour) there would be approximately 4,000 new flowers next year. And now is the ideal time to plant bulbs. Garden centres carry a large range of varieties.

I found the miniature Cyclamineus Narcissi "Tete-a-tete" a welcome addition to our rock garden and "Peeping Tom" — the daffodil whose flowers last so long that the Dutch call it the "Plastic Daffodil" — grows well on our heavy clay.

As a rough guide, plant bulbs two or three times deeper than the width of the bulb (depth measures to the base of the bulb). Never use fresh manure, but do incorporate compost and bonemeal at planting time. Ideally, leave the bulbs in the ground each year.

Tulips should be planted in November and December 6 inches deep (earlier planting can result in frost damage.) The Triumph Tulip, 16"-20" tall, is strong stemmed and useful for beds which must be cleared for summer planting. Darwin Tulips, 24"-30" — flower later, but are still the most popular garden variety.

Plant crocuses immediately. The spring-flowering Dutch Hybrids bloom in March and April, while the little multi-flowered cultivars, Crocus

Chrysanthus flower as early as February and are ideal for naturalising in grass. If you want a small bulb to plant under shrubs, try Chionodoxa — "Glory of the Snow" or Muscari, which looks superb under the golden boughs of Forsythia.

Bulbous Irises are ideal for rock gardens or borders, and blend well with spring bulbs. The Reticulata variety grow 4-6 inches, flowering late winter to early spring. The Juno group are taller and flower in April.

Two of the most commonly asked questions on the suburb are "Should I put lime on my garden?" and "Which plants will grow in the shade on heavy clay". The questions are related, because lime used widely improves the texture and quality of the clay soil. Lime is calcium and is a plant nutrient as such and should occasionally be replaced in the soil. Too little lime renders some of the major plant nutrients unusable and in the vegetable plot increases club root.

But beware, too much lime harms plants by withholding some trace elements leading to chlorosis and stunted growth. The only sure guide is to use a simple soil tester to measure the acid/alkaline level of your soil. (This is called the pH scale. 1 = acid, 14 = alkaline, 7 is neutral).

Most plants need a balanced soil of between 5-8 (6.2-7.5 for vegetables). For example — Lime is essential for plum fruitlets to form their stones. Without lime the fruits won't form and drop off the tree. If the pH is less than 6.5 (if the litmus paper goes red or pink) add lime in the winter to the base of the tree (4-5oz). Lime also improves the soil texture of tightly packed difficult to

cultivate soil by causing it to become crumbly. Lime should be applied after the autumn digging to get the best distribution.

Never apply lime and farmyard manure at the same time as they neutralise each other and destroy the ammonia. If both are necessary allow at least two months between applications.

Before you rush off to buy a crate of lime, do remember that some plants, such as Azaleas and Rhododendrons are Lime haters and will not tolerate any lime at all.

In a shady clay garden, use any means possible to improve the soil — manure, straw, compost, peat etc. A good garden needs groups of plants creating texture and colour, groundcover plants and feature plants set off by background plants.

Mahonia Japonica, Mahonia bealei or Fatsia japonica are feature plants which look good against a background of bamboo (Arundinaria murielae or Arundinaria nitida). Use large leafed ivies (Hedera colchia or Hedera canariensis) to form a carpet of groundcover, interspersed with clumps of hostas, ferns, Skimmia japonica, Viburnum davidii, and Daphne laureola with the deciduous Hydrangea petiolaris.

For the lazy gardeners guide to a cheerful spring display, interspace clumps of 5 daffodils with wall flowers (available in the garden shops now) and place For-get-me-nots and Polyanthus alternately in front of them. But most important make sure that your neighbour plants his twenty extra daffodils so that we can ALL enjoy them.

Clayfingers



The monument to Henrietta We think should be looked after better. The Trust and Barnet do their share But others do not seem to care. If young Suburbans often gather To drink their coke here and to blather, Listening to transistor pop Which makes their elders groan and hop With rage and want to call a cop, Why that is neither here nor there —

It does no harm to Central Square. What we must firmly say however Is that they must never, NEVER Defile the monument with paint, Use aerosols, however faint, Swing on the arch and make it bend — It costs an awful lot to mend. OBEY these precepts to the letter Out of respect for Henrietta.

LW

Chairman's Statement

In my introductory statement to last year's report and accounts I said that the Trust Council has resolved to set up the most rigorous system of budgetary control and to reduce costs wherever this was possible without impairing the Trust's ability to discharge its essential functions. I made that statement against a background of rising management charges over preceding years and of consequent fears on the part of residents that costs and therefore charges might continue to escalate.

The measures taken over the past twelve months are now showing signs of bearing fruit. As the Report and Accounts show, the amount spent on professional fees has been reduced by over 60%, income from building consent fees has increased by over 160%, and the amount owed by management charge debtors has been reduced by 37%. At the same time there has been an increase of over 55% in the amount contributed voluntarily by leaseholders in response to this year's appeal by the Trust. The Trust Council expresses its warm appreciation to all leaseholders who have contributed. Each has received a letter of thanks.

These results reflect a general stepping up in the efficiency of the Trust office, which now has at its disposal a fully computerised and constantly updated list of all Suburb households, thus speeding up and streamlining a great deal of its work. They also reflect the Trust Council's determination to place the Trust on a sound financial footing in order to enable it to continue to discharge its functions without the uncertainties about its long-term financial viability which have afflicted it in the past.

As a result of these changes and others connected with the accounting procedures, which are explained in the following report, the additional management charge for 1984-85 is £1.00. This is broadly in line with inflation during the year. At £20.00 the management charge is lower than in the previous two years (£20.60 and £23.70 respectively). For 1985/86 the estimated charge is £21.00. As we promised last year there will only be one bill for management charges and this will be sent out prior to the Annual General Meeting.

A further effect has been to reduce the deficit on the leasehold account by 63%. In this connection the Trust has held discussions with representatives of the RA and of the Association of Freeholders and has sought expert legal advice to determine whether it might be possible, through a change in law, to spread the financial burden of the Trust's operations more equitably between freeholders and leaseholders. The matter is being actively pursued, but in the meantime, as this past year's results show, the Trust is doing its utmost to maximise revenue from other sources in order to lighten, or at the very least stabilise, the freeholders' burden.

The Trust's main function, of course, is to seek to preserve the Suburb's architectural heritage and its environmental amenities while not unreasonably withholding permission for alterations and extensions which are in harmony with the intentions of the Suburb's founders. The number of formal applications for planning permission rose to 301 in the year under review and continues to increase. This has imposed a growing burden on the Trust architect and on the members of the Properties and Plans Advisory Committee, resulting in lengthy evening meetings and long hours for the architect. 66 applications were rejected, but in many more cases potential applicants were dissuaded at an early stage by the Trust architect from further pursuing proposed developments which were obviously unsuitable. A high proportion of the approvals were only granted after the Trust architect had obtained substantial modifications to the original plans to make them acceptable.

In making its decisions on planning applications the Trust has to consider many, often conflicting, factors, some of which involve difficult judgements on matters of taste and appropriateness. Few cases are so clearcut as to make an immediate and obvious decision possible, and the Trust is well aware that some of its rulings arouse controversy. This is bound to be the case in matters of this kind, and the Trust has to accept that the nature of its functions will not always make it popular. It must, of course, be seen to be applying policies which are reasonable and defensible, but at the same time it is entitled to expect from residents understanding and support for what it is trying to do, which is ultimately in their interest.

Company members will recall that at the last AGM views were expressed from the floor concerning the length of tenure of Trust Council members. As a result the Trust Council resolved that henceforth its elected members should not serve more than six years at a stretch, an arrangement similar to that which exists in the RA. Accordingly Pat Tyler, the Council's Vice-Chairman and Chairman of its Finance and Management Advisory Committee since its creation, will be retiring after the AGM, having served the Trust for nine years. I believe special tribute is due to him for his dedication to the service of the Trust over a long and particularly difficult period, and more specially for his wise and successful management of the Trust's investment portfolio. It is hoped that the Trust will be able to continue to call on him for advice in this field.

Save for Dr Mervyn Miller and Mr Ian Hodgson, who have now served as appointed members for six and thirteen years respectively, there will have been a complete change in the Trust Council's membership in the past two years.

The Trust Manager and Architect also joined the Trust only eighteen months ago. There has therefore been a substantial injection of new blood which I hope is welcome.

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The New Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust Limited
862 Finchley Road, Hampstead Garden Suburb, London NW11 6AB
Telephone: 01-455 1066 & 458 8085