

# SUBURB GARDENING

Now that we have had time to make and to break all those fine sounding resolutions, let's start again with three ideas which will improve the quality and content, increase the productivity, and enhance the look of our gardens. I refer to planting, pruning and spraying fruit bushes or trees.

Originally, the new owner of a home on the suburb was presented with two fruit trees. Some of the original trees are still producing fruit. Sadly some have gone, but unfortunately many are suffering from continual neglect, producing practically inedible crops and looking awful.

For those of you who plan to remedy the deficiencies and plant new fruits, the two most important things to remember are pollination and space. Unless the flowers are fertilized as a result of the right pollen reaching the stigma at the right time there will be no crops. Do get good advice when buying new plants to ensure that either they are self-pollinating or that there is a suitable cross-pollinator in the neighbourhood. The tremendous advancement in the technique of producing dwarfing and semi-dwarfing rootstocks means that a suitable fruit tree can now be grown in a very small garden. For those of you wanting more variety or feeling more adventuresome, think about growing a "restricted" form, cordon, espalier etc. With very little effort a trained blackberry or loganberry, or a bush gooseberry, redcurrant or blackcurrant can be fitted into most gardens.

An annual pruning of all fruit plants is tremendously advantageous, and the time taken is more than repaid by the improvement in both quality and quantity of the fruit, and by the more pleasing look of the tree. Any good gardening book will give detailed, practical steps on pruning fruit.

If good quality fruit is desired it is essential that the trees and bushes should be healthy. The plants must be given an annual feed of chemicals and organic compost for manure if available, and an annual spray programme should be undertaken to eliminate pests and diseases. Growing fruit is relatively easy and takes little time. But the pleasure to be found in eating fresh, hand-picked, sun-ripened fruit from one's own garden is indescribable. Try it! **CLAYFINGERS**

**What's the name of the station cat at Euston?**

The above could be one of the twenty things you may be asked to obtain on the Family Holiday Assoc. scavenger hunt on Sunday 22nd March.

Win the Family Scavenger cup, help a good cause, have an afternoon's fun and enjoy a good tea. See What's On/Coming events for details.

# BIRDS BEYOND THE SUBURB

A month or so back I wrote a short piece about birds resident, or seasonally visiting the suburb. Some readers might like to know of special bird reserves within a reasonably short drive of home.

First I should mention Northaw Great Wood. This is a fine broadleaved forest near Potters Bar which has been exhaustively studied since it contains a relic of the flora and fauna original to this part of the world. Woodland birds are easiest to see in winter, of course, and hawfinch flocks and little owls may be met with. In summer garden warblers, the world's most undistinguished looking birds, enliven the scene. To my taste though these woods are too full of chaps with wellies and muddy retrievers.

The closest really good place I have tried is the R.S.P.B. reserve near Hoddesdon, Rye House Marsh.

This is about 40 mins. drive, just alongside Rye House station, and is a series of inter-connecting stretches of water and reedbeds harbouring most of the species which like such habitat. Heron, bittern sometimes, kingfishers, duck, grebe, and sedge and reed warblers. In summer there is a breeding colony of common terns on the lagoon.

Fowlmere is a full hour's drive, and inaccessible by rail. Again R.S.P.B. managed, this beautiful lake is an oasis of wildlife in the agricultural desert of the Herts/Cambs borderland.

The 'mere' is really a swamp, largely covered by reeds, surrounded by salix scrub and

oak woodland, and through each of the carefully maintained habitats, hedgerow, marsh, reedbed, meadow, wood winds a track which is a masterpiece of variety. An elevated hide surveys the scene, and in addition to the birds mentioned above, grasshopper warbler, hen harriers and many more can be seen.

Remember; always circulate around the track clockwise to avoid meeting people, and then read the list of birds noted the day before ... great grey shrike, merlin, osprey ... jam tomorrow too, no doubt!

With the M25 and the Chelmsford bypass open at last it must be possible to reach Fingringhoe in about 80 mins. This is the HQ of the Essex Naturalist's Trust, and is sited on the south bank of the Colne estuary, with

magnificent mud, as you might expect. The star turn for me is the great flock of brent geese which spend the winter barking and growling to each other through the murk. Sweet music!

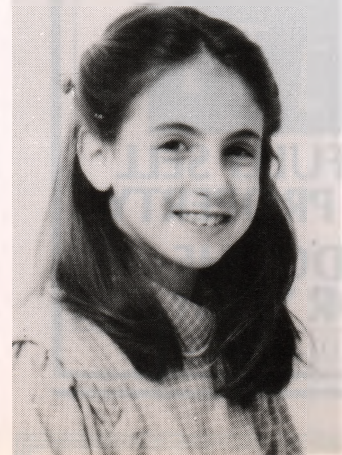
On the river itself there are often sea duck, scaup and sawbills, goldeneye, and on the mudflats close under the hides, waders in thousands.

In summertime Fingringhoe is a prime spot for nightingales which sing all day to the respectful accompaniment of blackcaps, whitethroats and turtledoves. This 'pastorale' is completed by a wide range of flora, butterflies, dragonflies, bees and ... snakes and mosquitos.

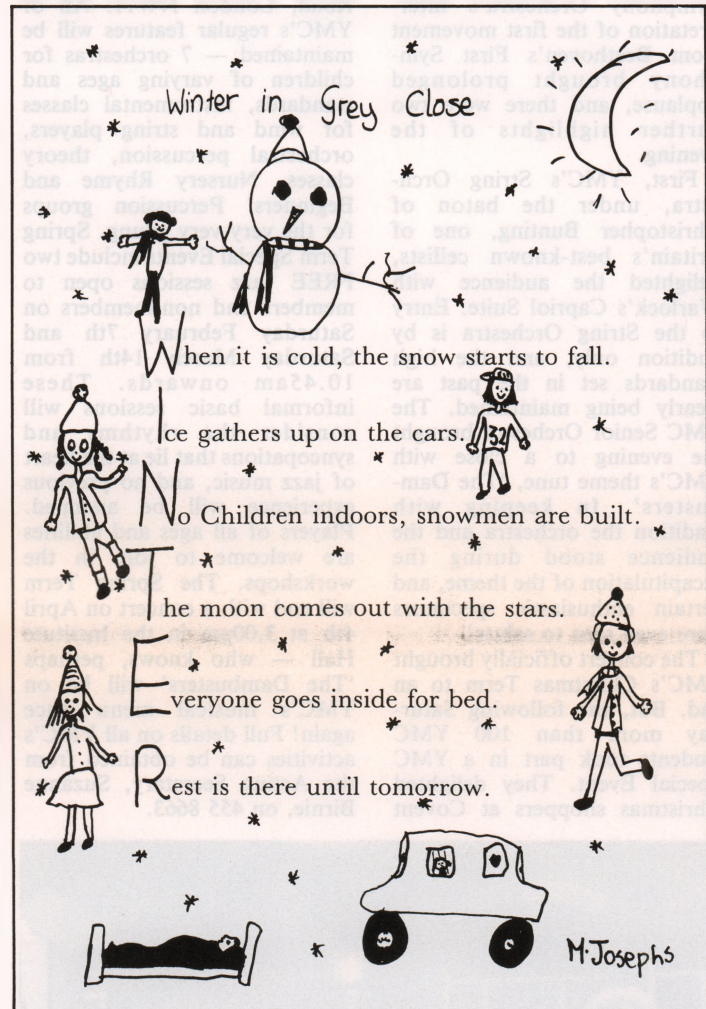
Each of these reserves is open everyday except Rye House Marsh which is open only at weekends.

## WORDSEARCH WINNER

### AUTUMN '86 WORDSEARCH



Well done Lucy Michaels of Constable Close, winner of the Autumn Wordsearch Competition. Lucy, age 11, found the puzzle fairly straightforward as she has always lived in the Suburb. She went to school locally until she was seven when she started at the City of London School for Girls. Lucy has a wide range of interests including Horseriding, clarinet, water-skiing, collecting stickers and reading. When she grows up she wants to be an archaeologist or a spy! With her £5 Book Token Lucy has bought three exciting novels. **EW**



## WORDSEARCH COMPETITION

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF BRITISH BIRDS  
Find and ring the names of fifteen British Birds hidden in the box of letters. They may read forwards, backwards, up, down and diagonally.

B	A	S	E	D	W	O	O	D	P	E	C	K	E	R	F	I	G
C	C	E	P	L	K	N	O	E	G	I	E	S	O	O	W	H	I
N	U	M	A	A	T	Q	A	Y	B	E	D	E	A	P	J	O	P
N	C	O	R	S	R	V	U	F	L	A	H	I	J	C	M	E	Y
O	K	L	R	I	C	R	E	W	A	R	H	C	V	A	M	W	N
L	O	P	A	M	I	K	O	H	O	J	E	M	G	N	Y	R	A
P	O	K	T	U	R	E	I	W	G	O	F	P	A	B	P	L	B
H	B	S	C	R	G	B	U	L	L	F	I	N	C	H	E	L	A
S	N	A	S	O	A	F	G	H	H	E	J	H	L	O	A	F	S
U	V	S	W	R	L	I	A	T	G	I	A	W	I	C	O	X	M
R	U	T	A	M	U	L	J	N	G	F	K	U	K	O	T	N	R
H	W	T	L	O	Q	I	N	N	F	E	D	B	C	P	A	B	O
T	O	A	L	Y	O	H	S	I	G	N	I	L	R	A	T	I	O
G	Y	T	O	V	E	T	N	Y	B	R	Z	U	E	T	R	L	K
N	E	B	W	M	U	C	B	I	D	O	E	E	I	Z	O	M	P
O	B	U	S	M	H	U	E	O	W	E	R	K	T	S	N	O	D
S	W	M	K	E	L	A	Y	L	U	T	I	T	E	U	L	B	G
A	T	X	S	K	Y	L	A	R	K	H	A	G	E	F	U	D	A

If you are under thirteen on the 1st March this year you may list the answers on a postcard with your name, age, address and telephone number and post to: 35 Wildwood Road. The first correct entry drawn on the closing date, 1.3.87, will receive a £5 Book Token. To help you on your way we have given you the first answer. Happy Hunting!

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