



Some of those who enjoyed The Residents Association festivities in St Jude's and on Central Square on New Year's Eve. One echoed the opinion of many when he said, as the fireworks ended, "This has become a Suburb tradition, we won't let the RA stop doing it every year now."



## Suburb in Bloom awards

As part of the national *Britain in Bloom* event, all the London boroughs run their own regional competitions. For *Barnet in Bloom 2002*, the HGS Horticultural Society sponsored a special class for Suburb residents, awarding a silver cup and garden vouchers to the winners. On 14 July last year, the judges visited fifteen gardens, eleven of which were open to the public on the day.

On 9 December, the Mayor of Barnet, Cllr Joan Scammell,

presented Prue Unger with her £25 first prize, the Horticultural Society's 'Suburb in Bloom' Millennium Cup and a certificate (see above) at a lunch reception for all the Barnet in Bloom winners at Hendon Town Hall. Garden vouchers and certificates went to second and third prize-winners Carol Kemp and Marjorie Harris, and the Mayor also presented a certificate to Adrian Dell for his 'highly-commended' garden.

MARJORIE HARRIS

## I don't do winter!

Hibernation seems to be a great idea to me. Those of you who have read my previous articles know that I don't do winter terribly well and if December was anything to go by I might not make spring! Never have I seen a wetter, darker December than the last one and only with the help of the occasional gardening programme on TV and a pint of Drambuie have I survived thus far.

However, the flower shows held at Vincent Square in the early months of the year often rove a great boost to me. The sight of the colourful flowering

plans and shrubs mixed with the heady perfumes of sarcococca, viburnum and daphne lifts both my heart and spirits.

Looking back over my gardening year I haven't had too many disappointments but I will be much happier when my herbaceous plants bulk up and make more of an impact and, I will try to keep on top of lily beetle which rather decimated my plants last year. Actually, it wasn't my fault, they took a hold when I was on holiday and my son thought they were ladybirds!

After all this rain an awful lot of nutrients must have been

washed from the soil so one of my first jobs (weather permitting) is to replace them. I think a good scattering of Growmore followed by a pelleted chicken manure should do the trick and certainly won't do the soil any harm.

Creeping into February you should prune the wisteria – now there's a lovely job to do in an east wind (I'm almost glad mine died) – not really. Plant bare rooted trees, shrubs and rose bushes. Cut down the old clematis growth. (I did mine months ago because I couldn't stand the sight of the tangled mess) but don't do as I do. Do as I say! Now for

the best bit, pour yourself your drink of choice (mine's a double) and get ordering those glads, dahlias and all those wonderful seeds, not forgetting Rudbekia Cherokee Sunset for that fantastic autumnal colour.

In March the Horticultural Society are having a speaker from David Austin Roses. The talk will be about potatoes, no not really, it will be about roses – what to do, where to put them, which varieties work best where, what not to do, etc. The talk will be accompanied with slides and rounded off with a question and answer session. Mmmm! That sounds good doesn't it?

Continuing in March, it's time to prune the roses, lift and divide clumps of snowdrops or, if you are in this enviable position, purchase new ones in the green. I'm sure they will be available at the RHS show in Victoria on the 4th-5th March.

Another Horticultural Society event takes place on Wednesday 9 April. A trip for members only at a special price of £5 to RHS

HQ Wisley. The coach holds 51. Remember, this is for members only and on a first come first served basis. Give me a call on 8455 0455 for the final details. If the lure of Wisley itself is not enough, on our visit day there will be an auricula display. Personally speaking, I am fascinated by auriculas, the range of colours are quite stunning, looking almost like painted enamels, some with contrasting white bloom on the leaves. I have tried growing them, currently without much success (maybe they are a bit specialized for me) but there's no harm in trying.

Following through, April is the time to sow those hardy annuals, give the roses a good feed and watch the new growth on the clematis, not forgetting to tie it in as it develops. Hard prune the buddlias and prune all the spring flowering shrubs to control their size and shape.

Moving on. On a trip to the dump I noticed a display of composting bins and water butts which were so reasonably priced that I treated myself to one. I am now the proud owner of a spinning composting bin known in the house as my 'rumbly-tumbly'. I put my green waste in, spin it every few days and lo compost. I am constantly surprised at how quickly and how much the waste rots down.



As promised, I have an update on the state of play at the allotment. I planted broad beans in November. They seem to be doing nicely. I am in the process of planting – via the instructions on the back of the packet, more beans, little round carrots, beetroot and mixed lettuce. My pal Anne has rainbow chard and some very special runner beans. We can't wait to get out there. More news next time.

Finally, on a different note, last year we had a very successful Suburb Gardens Open Day. The Society would like to do the same again this year but this will only happen if you will volunteer your garden. Please, give it some thought. It doesn't have to be perfect but it helps (only kidding). Give me a call and make my day.

Good gardening.

DIANE BERGER

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## All sorts of rain records in 2002

Another year over and another rainfall record. In fact, all sorts of rainfall records. The 2000 total of just over 41½ inches was previously the highest since these records began in 1980. However, the past year has seen a total of 41½ inches. This was a third as much again as the average of 30½ inches. No-one is really likely to be surprised by these figures as 'wet' has been the story of the year. There have only been three months in the whole of the 23 year period with over seven inches and last November was one. Followed

by over six inches in December, it is entirely understandable that the ground is so sodden. The October-December total at 16½ inches was the second highest after 2000.

It is the five years of 1998-2002 that have seen the great increase in rainfall. So, is this a trend? Five years is, of course, far too short a time on which to base a long term trend in weather. However, a ten year running average for October-December has been higher for the last five years. Winter moisture is predicted to increase with global warming

but the summer drought that has also been predicted has not occurred in North London. If June, July and August are taken as summer, a ten year average has been rising. Five out of the last six years have had above average rainfall with 2002, at 10½ inches, the highest ever. It is hard to see that beech trees could have died near here and the delightful Mediterranean garden planted in Golders Hill Park, presumably in anticipation of a dry summer, must have felt a little sad this year.

DIANA IWI

News, pictures, articles and letters are welcomed by the Editor, 26 Hampstead Way, NW11 7JL. Deadline for the Spring issue is 15 March for publication 26 April. Views expressed in Suburb News are those of the authors and not necessarily of the publishers, the Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents Association.

ON THE NET

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