



Bishop's Waltham Gardening Club

JULY 2026 NEWSLETTER

Our May 'Speaker event' welcomed Dan Pulling and he was asked about moss in the lawn. He has kindly supplied the following details which, at first sight, sound a bit complicated but it all makes sense and, as it is from an expert, well worth trying. One must accept that the lawn will look a bit sad for a while but will soon recover if you follow Dan's advice. Below is the information he forwarded.

Use Mo Bacter (Organic) or Iron Sulphate at a rate of 4-5g / 1L of water on the moss, and leave it to kill the moss over around 10 days.

2. Scarify the dead moss not breaking the soil surface.
3. Create a top dress for the patches. For this put a sheet of kitchen roll in the bottom of a 15cm plant pot. Fill a 70x70cm black bin bag $\frac{3}{4}$ full of multi purpose compost and mix the grass seed in. Moisten it and place in a garage tied up for 4-5 days.
4. Then add to the patches. One bag covers approx 10m².
5. Feed a lawn with a nitrogen heavy fertiliser in Spring and a Potassium/Phosphorus fertiliser in Autumn - the latter helps root strength heading into winter.
6. Always buy a quality lawn seed which has the cultivar names listed in the mix on the label as well as the date it was produced. Go for seed within 2 years old. This ensures modern hybrids.
7. Good cultivars to look for in mixes are *Lolium perenne* 55% by weight; *Poa pratensis* 10% by weight; *Agrostis tenuis* 5% by weight and *Festuca rubra* 30% by weight

There are, however, points to add and that is WHY you have moss. It's usually poor



drainage -sometimes caused by years of walking over the lawn which then becomes compacted, so the problem may well resurface if you don't act accordingly. The lawn may also be too shaded, but this would normally affect just a portion. Feeding will help healthy grass to compete once you have got rid of the moss.

If you don't feel like raking the lawn – it is quite a chore- for around £25 you can buy a scarifier. If you have a few more ££ to spend you could hire a motor scarifier -you will get buckets full of 'stuff' from the lawn, it will really surprise you!- and even a 'corer' such as they use on the putting greens. These two only make sense for a larger lawn, of course. I have ordered a manual "Aerator Manual Aerator Lawn Tool with 15 Spikes, Metal Grass Aerator" for just over £17.50 (Temu.com). If the grass is moist this should be useful, so I will mix some horticultural grit and seed compost from our shop and rake this in and sprinkle some grass seed on top. You can buy a push/pull spiker/aerator, but they are hard work, and the manual hollow tine tool always gets the holes blocked up with soil. However, these are personal views.



Cabbages are a versatile vegetable belonging to the brassica family and come in a range of different colours and shapes, and with different leaf textures. They take up a lot of growing space and are slow to mature, but there's such a huge range of types to grow that you can harvest cabbages almost all year round. Cabbage can be used in many ways, including shredded in salads and coleslaw, added to stir-fries or mixed into soups, as well as a side dish to accompany main courses.

Cabbages are rich in vitamins and high in fibre, aiding general health as well as a healthy



digestive system. Be careful eating cabbage and drinking boiled cabbage water if you have a sensitive digestive system, including IBS. Some studies have shown that a high fibre diet aids gut flora and protects your digestive system against bacteria, while others advocate avoiding cabbage and other high-fibre leafy plants as they can cause bloating and wind.

How about trying Red Cabbage? This one's called Jason Ingram

Treat any new vegetable with caution and consume in small doses to test your gut responses before consuming significant quantities.

Grow cabbages in a sunny spot in deep, fertile soil. The soil pH must be alkaline to neutral, so if you think your soil may be acidic then do a [soil pH test](#) before planting, and add lime to the soil if necessary, or grow in a raised bed where you can control the growing medium more easily. Bear in mind that cabbages take several months to harvest, so grow them where you won't need to use the space for something else.

If you feel (like me) that growing from seed is too fiddly, try plug plants.

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If the soil is loose, tread over before planting. Plant at 30-45cm (n.b. different varieties should be spaced at different intervals.) Firm the plants well to secure the roots and help prevent cabbage root fly laying eggs in the soil around the stem. Adding a root collar immediately after planting also helps keep cabbage fly at bay. Water in well.

Keep cabbage plants well-watered during dry spells so the soil never dries out, but don't let it get waterlogged either. Keep the soil around the crop clear of weeds which would compete for water and nutrients. Remove any yellowing leaves, which could become the source of diseases. One big threat comes from marauding pigeons, especially in winter. Protect plants by covering with netting, stretched taut to avoid the risk of the birds becoming entangled. Hanging up bird scarers such as fluttering fabric on strings may deter birds, but this depends on the type of scarer and how hungry the birds are. Netting is the safest bet.

Above details taken from 'Gardeners World'

It's not just the Royal Family that we refer to when we think of succession, it's also the veg plot. There's many varieties to consider; French Beans, Peas, Beetroot, Chicory, Salad leaves, Carrots and Radishes.

The Strawberries are starting to produce runner so, if you want a larger crop next year, pot up some of these runners. Strawberries are great 'runner producers' and go a bit 'OTT@ at times as I find out every year! It's quite a job to keep up with them sometimes. If you let them run riot, all their energy will go into everything but the actual fruit. Many a time I have had to untangle the myriads of runners. Some can be pulled off but mostly they are well attached to the mother plant. Pin them down in a pot of peat-free compost, and try and keep them shaded until well rooted.



They will need looking after, mainly watering in the warm weather. They will dry out very quickly!



Plant out Brussels sprouts, Cauliflowers, Cabbage, Leeks and French Beans. All but the latter will need care until next year, so your planting area will need a good supply of soil to keep them nourished.

Beware the dreaded Pigeons. They can strip green leaves in

an evening – usually after you have gone home! That nice young plant will look very sad the next day, almost a skeleton! **Your -not so friendly- garden pest!!! >>>>>**

Just waiting for the opportunity!!!



Those darned caterpillars will destroy your crop if left alone, so check the underside of brassica leaves and crush any eggs you see. Fine mesh from our shop should keep the cabbage whites (large and small varieties) and Cabbage Moth away but they are very good at exploiting the smallest hole. Again, as above, ensure no birds can be entangled.



A very nice way to protect your crops. The hoops are not too expensive, and the netting is available from our Albany Road shop.

WHATEVER YOU DO MAKE SURE THE NETTING IS FULLY ANCHORED AND 'BIRD SAFE'. WE HAVE HAD MANY INSTANCES OF BIRDS CAUGHT IN NETS WITH SEVERAL FATALITIES – OFTEN BLACKBIRDS OR ROBINS. IF YOU HAVE A CAGE, THE SAME APPLIES BUT ALSO ENSURE YOUR 'DOOR' INTO THE CAGE HAS NO GAPS, ESPECIALLY AT THE TOP.

Mulching and watering are the main items that should be to the fore in your thinking.

Water then mulch if you can. Mulching a dry soil doesn't help and, in fact, defeats the object of keeping moisture in the soil. The official words on the subject are.....

“Mulching is generally used to save water, suppress weeds and improve the soil around plants but it also gives your garden a neat, tidy appearance and can reduce the amount of time spent on tasks such as watering and weeding”. Well, now you know and that does sum it all up. Help your plants and save your time weeding. You know it makes sense!! The RHS says.... Mulching with black plastic for instance is good for marrows and can be used to produce crops of potatoes without having to earth them up.

Most mulches, however, are made from organic material - such as those used to improve the soil structure (compost, well-rotted manure, leafmould etc.). To be totally effective they need to be around 5cm (2in) thick, but mustn't make direct contact with the plants. Bark chippings can be used >>RHS>>>



With your onion crop maturing fast, there's often a difference of opinion about bending the tops over.

They do this quite naturally, anyway, but it may be better to 'convince' them to lay down in an orderly way, thus preventing it's neighbour from being in the shade. Either way, leave them alone as long as you can as they are making food for the bulb and helping it swell.

WITH OUR ANNUAL SHOW ON SATURDAY 25TH JULY, PLEASE SUPPORT ALL THE HARD WORK THAT HAS BEEN EXPENDED IN PROVIDING YOU WITH AN OPPORTUNITY FOR ENJOYMENT BY SHOWING YOUR PRODUCE. GOOD LUCK AND HAPPY GARDENING.