

## Early Spring Gardening

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### Sow Sweet Peas

The first Sweet Pea (Latin name *Lathyrus odoratus*) flower variety appeared in Britain in 1730, sent by an Italian monk Francisus Cupani. It was a small-flowered wild variety which bore little resemblance to the Sweet Peas of today.

In the very early 1900s, Henry Eckford selected and crossed many Sweet Peas, laying down the foundation of the popularity enjoyed by the Sweet Pea today. From his work came varieties such as 'Dorothy Eckford' (pink), 'Lady Grisell Hamilton' (lavender) and 'King Edward' (scarlet) - the grandifloras. The first frilled or waved varieties were raised by Mr Silas Cole, gardener to Countess Spencer. These were known as the Spencer varieties. 'Countess Spencer', a pink variety, was the first of this type to be exhibited in 1901. At the same time, Mr W. J. Unwin produced 'Gladys Unwin' (pink). It is from these two types that the modern Sweet Pea has been derived. Varieties now run into the hundreds - scented, a wonderful range of colour (more recently multi-coloured), trailing and climbing, miniature and full size.

### When To Start Sowing Sweet Peas

Sweet Peas were traditionally sown during mid autumn, for flowering the next summer. In recent years

the spring sowing has become more common. Whilst spring sowing may be a little less time-consuming, an October sowing produces earlier and stronger plants and flowers (if the mice don't eat them.) In mid March fill small deep pots or root trainers with moist compost and sow one seed per pot to a depth of 1.5cm (1/2in). Maintain a temperature of around 15°C (60°F). Prepare the site for planting by digging to at least one spade's depth and incorporate lots of well-rotted compost.

When the seedlings have grown one pair of leaves, pinch out the growing tip. This will cause several further shoots to grow from the leaves resulting in a healthier plant with many more flowers. Plant out during May. If you want the best Sweet Pea flowers pinch off the tendrils as the plant grows. Tie the plants to the supporting stakes every 30cm (1ft) or so. Cut the flowers frequently and certainly prior to them setting seed. Sweet Peas are superb as cut flowers.

After the first frost in early September to early November, cut the tops of the plants off and put them on the compost heap. Leave the roots in the ground to rot over the winter, they are a good source of nitrogen.

Three must have plants for early spring

### Epimediums (herbaceous perennial)

A very tough and easy to grow ground cover plant, about 40cm (15

inches) high. The leaves stay on all the time turning copper coloured in winter, with new green shoots appearing through the old foliage. Delicate yellow flowers appear early March. Epimediums are best grown in sun or half shade.

### Corylopsis paucifolia (shrub)

This graceful Japanese shrub is popular for its early display of bright primrose yellow, cowslip-scented, flowers which appear on bare branches. All the corylopsis species thrive in a lightly shaded part of the garden where their blooms will be protected from spring frosts. It is densely branched, often wider than it is tall, with a naturally graceful habit that can be spoilt by pruning.

### Chinodoxa (bulb)

Glory of the snow is an appropriate common name for these beautiful low-growing bulbs from Turkey. They are some of the first to flower in spring and, when planted generously, create a dazzling carpet of blue stars borne in dainty sprays. Flowering lasts for 3-4 weeks, after which both the flowers and the foliage quickly fade from sight. They tolerate a wide range of soils but should be planted in full sun, under deciduous shrubs, beside hedges and in patches in the lawn.

For more information on the garden in early spring, visit my website: [www.gardens-by-nadia.co.uk](http://www.gardens-by-nadia.co.uk). Enjoy your gardening,  
Nadia

## Letters

Dear Buzz,

Further to the letter by Mr L Marshall in the Cumberland News complaining of poor Freeview reception in the Caldbeck Transmitter area, here is my experience. Having suffered the same poor degree of reception, to the extent that the only Freeview reception we get is from the BBC (and of course the shopping channels) I made contact with the agency to enquire as to the cause.

I spoke with a nice lady, who's first reaction was to tell me my aerial was of poor quality and needed upgrading. I pointed out that the 'top of the range' super dooper, cats whiskers of an aerial was fitted two years ago and that reception was top quality until the Whitehaven and Copeland area went digital in 2007. Nice lady now changed tack, "which channels are you having trouble receiving?" She then proceeded to read out a list of exactly the channels that could not be received!

She advised me that I must be in the Caldbeck transmitter area and she opined that things would improve when the transmitter went digital (in 2010), dear me, what a pity, never mind. So, please do not go spending fortunes upgrading your aerial or even your TV until the work on the transmitter is completed and we can decide if the reception has improved enough to stay with Freeview, or look to the heavens (SKY) for a better service.

Wings, Skinburness

Dear Buzz,

With reference to the front page article in the Feb/March edition of our wonderful Buzz, relating to "Silloth Green do you use it?". Whilst I am aware from word on the street that not all homes received the leaflet in question, I am reliably informed some 1,300 copies were distributed around the town. It is however disappointing to learn that only 160 were returned all with valid suggestions. For this project to succeed we must have input from the residents of Silloth.

G. Wilkinson  
Mayor

## Poem

MAWBRAY - WOULD SUIT SHIP-SPOTTER  
by "Slightly Ancient Mariner!"

*Sitting by the sea shore, summing in the sand,  
I thought I saw a sailing ship, my word it did look grand.*

*It sailed upon the Solway tide, to Silloth it was bound,  
Her holds were full of sausages, she sailed without a sound.*

*I thought oh what a super site this is to have a home,  
To spot the sails of sea-borne skows, I'd have to make it known.*

*I'll place an ad. and word it right, "a house right by the watter",  
A home to suit that dying breed, the 'lesser seen ship-spotter'!*

*The ad. went in the papers and quite soon my phone rang hot,  
Salty Sam from Stockport said "That's sure some place you've got".*

*"I've read it once and read it twice, a home right by the sea,  
I would suit me fine to slip my hook, sounds just the spot for me".*

*"You see I've got a hobby now, I can no longer sail,  
My days of roamin' o'er the sea a searchin' for the whale".*

*"I've had to stop, it's time to drop my anchor from it's locker,  
I'm lookin' out to find a berth that suits an old ship-spotter".*

*I said "My son your ship's come in, I've got what you've been seeking,  
A sandy shore outside your door and a roof that's never leaking".*

*So off he sets, his heart is full, he's never felt so sunny,  
His sea-chest full of memories, his pockets full of money.*

*Six hours later he arrives, his radiator steaming,  
His foot's been pressed right to the floor, of Mawbray he was dreaming.*

*The weather's fair, the rain is warm, the summers never hotter,  
This really is the finest place to suit an old ship-spotter.*

*He views the plot, he thinks a lot, it's just the perfect place,  
The sea is rough, but not enough to cause his heart to race.*

*"Now let me see, twixt thee an' me this place is what I hanker,  
I ain't seen nuffin quite so good, I'm goin' to drop me anchor".*

*A deal is struck, I wish him luck, we share a tot o' rum,  
The old sea-dog feels right at home, no more will he feel glum.*

*And so my story draws to close, my pen sits on the blotter,  
A home now found for Salty Sam, that venerable ship-spotter.*

However all is not lost as this is only stage one of the bid and if successful much more resident related information will be gathered to go forward to stage two. The stage one bid must be submitted by the end of March with a response expected by the end of September, it may be later, then only then if successful the stage two bid must be put together.

Dear Buzz,

Have you seen the state of the recycling site at the Pines in Silloth. Allerdale have changed the type of skip that you put the plastic bottles in and it is now quite difficult for shorter people (my wife is 5' 2") to use it. Result is bottles all over the place.

Name and Address supplied



Booey Bee  
by  
Josh Arey  
from  
Holm Cultram Abbey School



Book Bee  
by  
Sophie Connolly from  
Holme St. Cuthbert School

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