



Aughton & Ormskirk U3A

GARDENING GROUP NEWSLETTER

February/March 2019

Welcome to this issue of the Gardening Groups newsletter which we hope you will find of interest. We have meetings organised for both February and March with what we believe will be interesting speakers on topics that will interest you, details are as follows. Full details of all meetings can be seen on the U3A website

Wednesday 13th February 2019

2pm St Michael's Church Hall

Topic: *"Miracle Planter"*

Speaker: Anthony Broughton

Wednesday 13th March 2019

Topic: *"Holker Hall – The Park and Gardens"*

Speaker: Steve Halliwell

We look forward to welcoming you to the U3A Gardening Group Meetings.

HARROGATE
SPRING FLOWER SHOW

25-28 April 2019

Book before 16 April and save £2.50 per ticket



The Right Secateurs for the Job



Secateurs are a type of pruner used for tackling stems that are less than 23mm in diameter. They are the garden hand tool that gets the most use when pruning shrubs, cutting down herbaceous borders, deadheading and even cutting flowers for the house or harvesting some fruiting crops.

Types of secateurs

Bypass secateurs have two blades that pass each other, with a cutting action similar to scissor blades. The blades can get into tighter spaces, to cut near a bud or to cut side-shoots back to the main stem. Bypass secateurs are the type you are most likely to come across, but if you have a lot of woody, hard stems to cut then it is worth considering anvil secateurs as a second pair.

Anvil secateurs have one blade sharpened on both sides and a flat metal or plastic block to make the cut against. Anvil secateurs will cut through woody stems with less effort than bypass secateurs, but the cutting block can get in the way of cutting in tight corners.

Some models have a ratchet cutting action, where a cut is made in several small steps. This is a useful feature if you have a weak grip, as each cut takes less effort, but it is slower.

If you are using an anvil pruner for most of your pruning needs – you are using the wrong tool.

Anvil pruners work similar to a knife where a blade is pushed through the plant material onto a cutting board, ie the anvil.

Bypass pruners work more like scissors where two blades pass by each other. At first glance there does not seem to be much of a difference between these tools, but the difference is significant. Anvil pruners tend to crush soft plant tissue. When you use a bypass pruner correctly, you will do almost no damage to the plant.

You should always prune very close to a bud with the anvil pruner there is a risk that the bud or the tissue around the bud sits on the anvil and gets damaged during the cut. Using bypass pruners, you can hold the pruners so that none of it touches the bud during the cutting process.

JOBS FOR FEBRUARY

- 1) Prune wisteria now, cutting back summer side-shoots to 2 or 3 buds.
- 2) Cut back shrubs, such as cornus and salix cultivars (grown for their colourful winter stems), down to their bases.
- 3) Prune summer-flowering clematis towards the end of the month, before active growth begins. For advice on the best way to do it, check our [clematis pruning guide](#).
- 4) Cut back the old foliage from [ornamental grasses](#) before growth begins. Clip them to within a few centimetres of the ground.

JOBS FOR MARCH

- 1) Lift and divide overgrown clumps of perennials
- 2) Mow the lawn on dry days (if needed)
- 3) Plant summer-flowering bulbs
- 4) Top dress containers with fresh compost
- 5) Plant shallots, onion sets and early potatoes
- 6) Treat sheds, fences and trellis with wood preservative
- 7) Finish pruning your roses and start spraying them with fungicide
- 8) Roses should be fed with a special rose feed or a balanced fertiliser as they