

# Into the garden

## March's quiet turning point

March is the moment the garden shifts from whisper to murmur – subtle, but full of promise. Light strengthens, buds swell, and those bare branches you've been side-eyeing all winter start to show signs of life. The soil may still feel a little cool to the touch, but the whole garden is stretching, waking and plotting its comeback – and so are we.

### Dates for your diary

#### **Cornwall Garden Society Spring Flower Show – Royal Cornwall Showground: 28 & 29 March**

Often called the “Chelsea of the West”, this vibrant two-day show brings together dazzling floral displays, specialist nurseries, artisan stalls and lively talks. It's a brilliant spring warm-up: colourful, friendly and full of inspiration before the growing season hits full stride. [cornwallgardensociety.org.uk](http://cornwallgardensociety.org.uk)

#### **Rare Plant Fair – The Bishop's Palace, Wells: Sunday 15 March**

Set within 14 acres of historic gardens, this fair is a treasure hunt for plant lovers. Expect unusual perennials, collector's gems and knowledgeable growers happy to steer you towards something you never knew you needed. A peaceful wander, a beautiful setting, and plenty of temptations for your borders. [rareplantfair.co.uk](http://rareplantfair.co.uk)

#### **Plant Hunters' Fair – Arley Hall & Gardens, Cheshire: Sunday 22nd March**

Perfect for gardeners who enjoy something a little different. This fair gathers independent nurseries offering hardy, reliable and sometimes delightfully eccentric plants. Explore the stalls, stroll the landscaped grounds, and come away with a few finds to kick-start your spring planting. [planthuntersfairs.co.uk](http://planthuntersfairs.co.uk)



### Did you know?

- Bumblebee queens appear in March – hungry, large and determined. A patch of pulmonaria is like rolling out the red carpet for them.
- Frogs begin spawning now, and a single clump can hold up to 4,000 eggs. Nature is not subtle.
- Early cherry blossom can open as soon as the temperature hits 12°C – proof that even a modest warm spell can set off fireworks.



## ALAN'S ALMANAC: MARCH IN THE GARDEN & ALLOTMENT

Meet Alan Coxon: food and heritage expert, curator of projects from *Roaming the Paths* to *Alan's Almanac*, and now *Platinum's* very own gardening voice. With a passion for the land and a gift for unearthing timeless wisdom, Alan is our guide through the gardening year – sharing know-how, inspiration and a few winks of humour along the way. Find out more at [roaming-the-paths.co.uk](http://roaming-the-paths.co.uk) and [alans-almanac.co.uk](http://alans-almanac.co.uk).

March loves to keep you guessing – one moment it's flirting with summer, the next it's reminding you it's not quite done with winter. It's a month for watching the weather like a hawk and choosing your moment wisely. And when conditions finally behave, that's your cue to roll up your sleeves and turn those winter daydreams into reality.

● **Flower power.** March flicks the switch and the garden wakes up: daffodils trumpet, forsythia blazes yellow, and everything feels slightly more optimistic. Feed bulbs now for next year's energy, deadhead daffs but leave the foliage, and prune forsythia once its show is over.

● **Give the chop the chop.** Bird-nesting season begins, so hedge cutters and chainsaws go on holiday. Light shrub pruning is fine – just check for feathered tenants before you start.

● **In the greenhouse.** Seedlings will soon need pricking out, and March is prime time for sowing veg and summer bedding. Watch those temperature swings – a greenhouse can shift from freezer to sauna in hours, so ventilation is everything.

● **Love the lawn.** Now's the moment to revive tired patches: loosen the soil, scatter seed and top with compost or sand. It keeps moisture in, birds out, and fresh growth follows quickly.

● **The hungry gap.** Sprouting broccoli is the hero of early spring – pick often and it keeps on giving. Freeze the extra, share it around, or whip up a soup that tastes like spring in a bowl.

● **Divide and conquer.** Perennials like hostas, delphiniums and geraniums are ready for dividing. Lift, split and replant with compost and bonemeal, then trade your spares – the best way to grow your collection for free.

● **Pest patrol.** As new growth appears, so do slugs and snails. Keep things clean, inspect seedlings and try a night-time torch patrol. Beer traps work brilliantly – and give you a handy excuse for a trip to the pub.

Don't be lulled into thinking winter's packed its bags just yet. Enjoy the sunshine when it shows up but hold off on sowing until the soil properly warms – a little patience now saves a lot of repeat planting later.



**ALAN'S TOP TIP**  
Give weeds a tiny round of applause. Early weeds, like dead nettles, celandine and ground ivy, are lifelines for wildlife, offering nectar when little else is about. Leave the dandelions for now – bees adore them – and let the forget-me-nots stay to deliver April's soft blue haze.

**OLD LORE REMINDER**  
'A dry March and a wet May? Fill barns and gardens all the way.' Old weather lore insists that March's breezy, drying days are good luck for growers – so don't curse that brisk wind just yet.

### BOOK OF THE MONTH

*The New Romantic Garden: Classic Inspiration, Modern Mood* by Jo Thompson



(Rizzoli International Publications)

This book is a celebration of lush planting and atmospheric design that feels both timeless and refreshingly modern. Through 30 beautifully crafted gardens, Thompson shows how romance in gardening isn't about frills, but about mood, movement and planting with heart as well as purpose. It's a feast of ideas for anyone looking to bring softness, structure and a touch of dreaminess to their outdoor space – and an irresistible companion for March, when the garden itself is just beginning to lean back into beauty.

WORDS: EMMA COXON, ALAN COXON. IMAGES: SHUTTERSTOCK, ALAN COXON