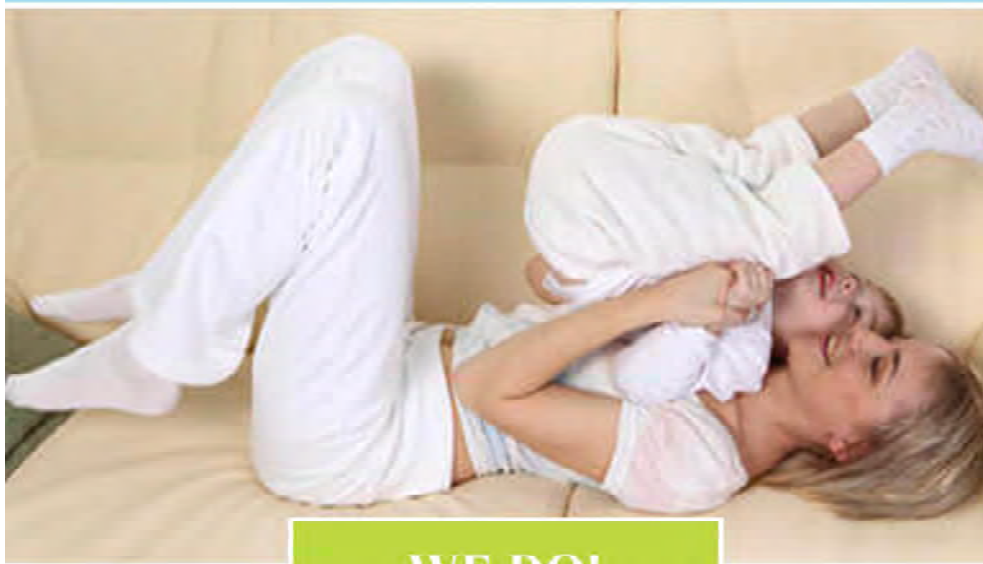


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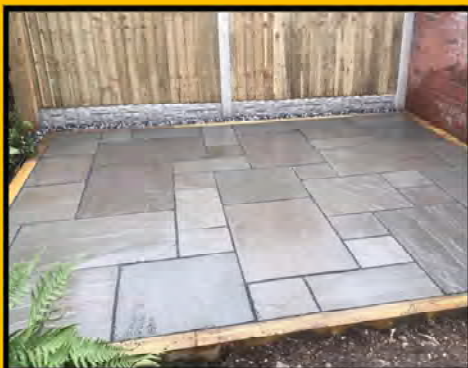


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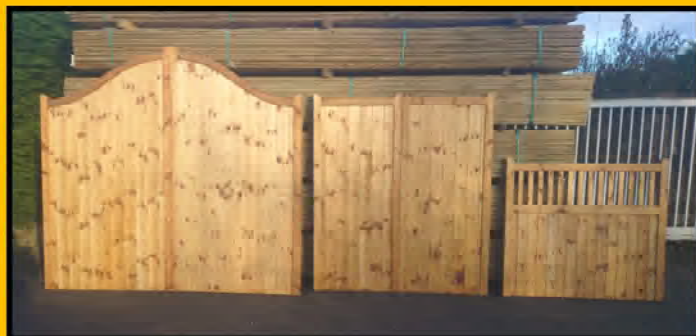


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Inside this month

- 4 Home - Choosing A Sofa**
- 10 What's That Number?**
- 14 Wordsearch**
- 16 Puzzle Page**
- 18 Motoring - Is The New Renault Clio The Hatchback To Beat**
- 26 Crossword**
- 30 Children's Page**
- 36 Finance - Money For Nothing Cashback Sites**
- 38 Home - Gorgeous Glass**
- 42 Recipe - Spring Lamb Stew**
- 44 Gardening - A Time For Looking Up And A Time For Looking Down**
- 48 Baking - Apple, Amaretti and Marzipan Crumble with Amaretto Custard**
- 50 Tech - You're The Voice**
- 53 Community**
- 56 Solutions**
- 62 Index**

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Choosing a sofa

By Katherine Sorrell



The ideal sofa is comfortable and made to last for years. We outline how to make the right choice.

Sofas are a key element in any living room, as they are the focal point, the largest item and sometimes the most eye-catching, providing the colours, textures and patterns with which everything else is coordinated. So, how can you ensure that you're choosing a sofa that's attractive, durable and value for money?

The right size and shape

Don't crowd the room with an overly grand sofa, or choose one that's so tiny it gets lost. Dimensions depend on how many people will need to fit on it, plus what suits you in terms of support: the seat depth and back height should allow you to be neither too slumped nor too upright. If you like to sit upright with good support, choose a high back with not too deep a seat and firm cushions; those who like to sink in will prefer a deeper-seated model with low arms and softer cushions.

How long will it last?

Generally, more expensive sofas are more durable and comfortable. Traditional upholstery has a solid hardwood frame plus webbing, coiled-steel springs and hand-stitched hair-and-fibre stuffing. More common is foam filling, of varying quality. Cushions will have variations of foam, polyester fibre and down, going from firm to very soft.

This convivial corner sofa suits the size and shape of the room. Ferdinand large corner sofa in natural plain pistachio, £4,525, arloandjacob.com.

Gather as many details as possible, then remove your shoes and try a variety of sofas out. Bounce gently on the seat and lean heavily on the back – you shouldn't feel the frame digging into you and it should only 'give' a little. Ensure cushions aren't floppy, overstuffed or with overly tight covers, and all seams should be straight, evenly stitched and not puckered.

Choosing fabric

The right upholstery fabric will enhance your sofa or armchair, complement the room and wear well. It's generally advised to match smaller patterns with smaller furniture, using large patterns only on bigger pieces. A small, flat fabric swatch looks very different to a piece of furniture so, if possible, request a 'returnable' sample to place in situ. Some fabrics have a 'nap', which can alter the colour depending on the angle, so check this.

The Martindale Test gives a 'rub count' that measures fabric durability. For general domestic use, the count should be 15,000 to 25,000. Heavy, smooth and closely woven fabrics are usually the most hard-wearing. Stain treatment protects against accidental spills and removable washable covers are ideal if you have children or pets.

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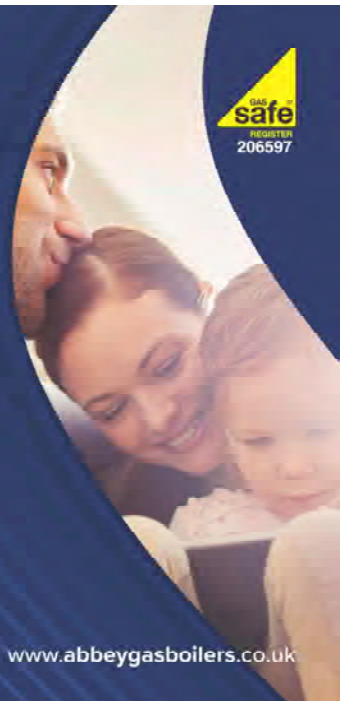
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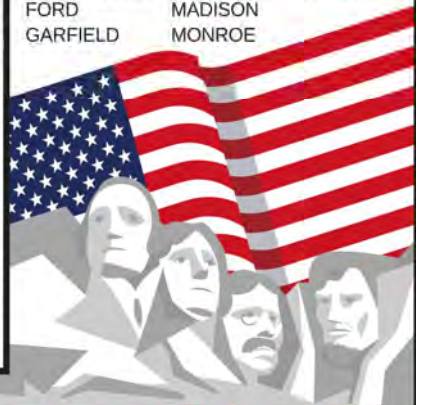


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3 words

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2 words

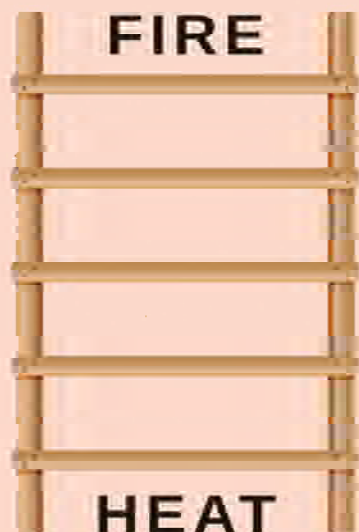
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FIRST DRIVE:

IS THE NEW RENAULT CLIO THE HATCHBACK TO BEAT?



Renault has made changes to its popular Clio and Jack Evans has assessed their impact.

What is it?

The well-known Renault Clio has provided reliable, relatively low-cost transport for years. But things aren't quite as easy for this popular French hatch as they once were, due to the rise of the SUV and crossover, plus price, with Dacia and MG providing cars that undercut most of the market.

What's new?

This latest Clio uses the same CMF-B platform as the previous car, but the exterior design is far sharper and inside there's more technology. A range-topping 'Esprit Alpine' trim level has also been added for the first time.

What's under the bonnet?

The Clio will be available with a 'standard' petrol engine or – as tested – a hybrid setup, pairing two electric motors with a four-cylinder 1.6-litre petrol engine. With 143bhp and 144Nm of torque, it's efficient rather than powerful. Renault claims up to 67.4mpg, low emissions of 96g/km CO₂, and that you can travel on electric power for up to 80 per cent of the time while city driving.

0-60mph takes 9.1 seconds, with a top speed of 112mph.

What's it like to drive?

The steering is light but accurate, while the powertrain has pleasant immediacy from the electric motors. It feels brisk and the six-speed gearbox is smooth.

However, there's tyre roar at speed and wind noise too. At slower speeds, the Clio is unsettled by larger bumps.

How does it look?

The look is sharper and there have been plenty of tweaks to distinguish it from the car it replaces.

The new signature lighting setup gives a distinctive 'face', while brushed-satin chrome accents create a more premium feel. Techno or Esprit Alpine trim levels include an F1-inspired 'aerofoil' style diffuser beneath the front grille.

What's it like inside?

Up front, the view is nicely unobstructed with good visibility, but rear space is a little tight, though there's a decent amount of headroom for this size and shape of car.

To help boost its green credentials, the Clio now has no leather inside, with surfaces coated in a fabric made from bio-sourced and polyester fibres. There's a usable 254 litres of boot space.

What's the spec like?

The Clio is now available from £17,795 for the entry-level petrol version, making it one of the cheapest cars currently available in the UK. Equipment levels are good, with a full suite of driver assistance systems, alloy wheels and full LED headlights. Both Android Auto and Apple CarPlay are included.

Top-notch Esprit Alpine models get 17-inch diamond-cut alloy wheels, Alpine badges and a larger 9.3-inch infotainment display. This increases the price to £20,595 for the petrol model or £24,095 for the hybrid.

Verdict

This is a hefty revision of a successful original. The 'new' Clio feels improved due to its in-car technology, while the hybrid version should prove cheap to run. It's smooth to drive.

At its new base price, the new Clio feels good value, particularly considering the amount of standard features. But it feels a little too compromised in terms of space at higher spec levels.



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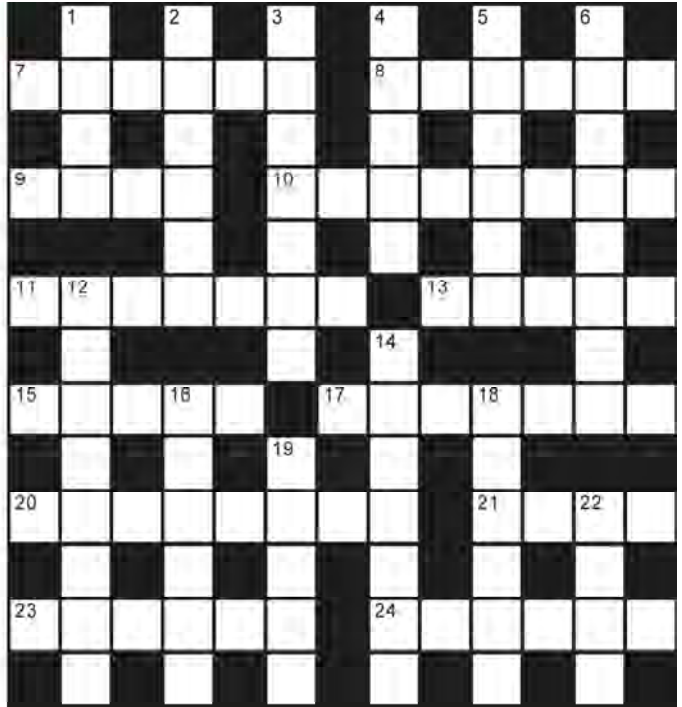
Quick Crossword

Across

- 7 Sight (6)
 8 Female relative (6)
 9 Largest continent (4)
 10 Fit and healthy (8)
 11 Beetles, ants etc (7)
 13 Animal furs (5)
 15 Invoices (5)
 17 Considers (7)
 20 Taking small bites (8)
 21 Solely (4)
 23 Distributed (6)
 24 A capital city (6)

Down

- 1 Fasteners (4)
 2 Buccaneer (6)
 3 Young children (7)
 4 Sailing boat (5)
 5 Involuntary action (6)
 6 Menacing (8)
 12 Loudest (8)
 14 Harshly (7)
 16 Hard work (6)
 18 Drenches (6)
 19 Feathered friends? (5)
 22 Stolen goods (4)



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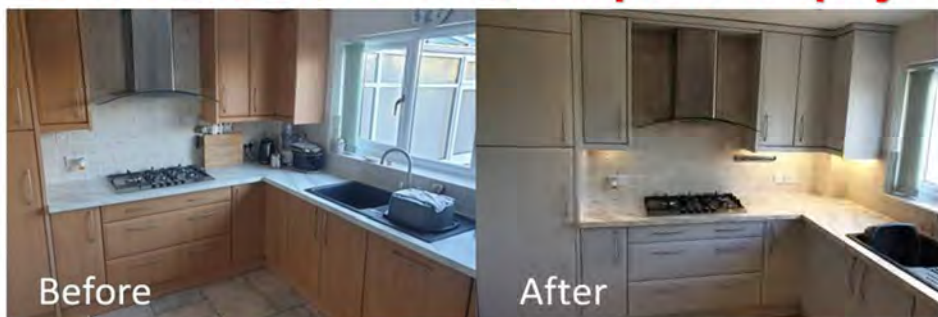
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Children's Puzzle Page

Animal Grid

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RABBIT



LAMB



BUTTERFLY



CHICK

When do monkeys fall from the sky?
During Ape-ri! showers.

What did the tree say when it first saw spring?
What a re-leaf!

Spring Wordfit

- BEES
- BLOOM
- BLOSSOM
- BUDS
- BUGS
- BULBS
- BUTTERFLY
- CHICK
- DAFFODIL
- EGG
- FROG
- LAMB
- NEST
- PICNIC
- SEEDS
- SHOWERS
- SPRING



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As the cost-of-living spirals and more of our children struggle to get a footing on the property ladder it is now more important than ever to plan our family's inheritance. The team at Sanctuary Tax & Trust explain how many families find themselves victims of avoidable losses and why simply writing a will does not guarantee our family will inherit as we wish.

For the vast majority of people, we spend all our lives working to build up wealth, through property, savings and pensions we look at providing financial security for our families and when our final day arrives, we hope these assets will pass to the people we care about the most, partners, children, relatives and friends. Traditionally, people have chosen wills to document their wishes and while writing a will is important, it does not provide any protection for the assets within it.

Considerations when planning Inheritance

Care Fees – As we live longer the likelihood of needing care becomes greater and under the government's changes to the social care act should the need for care arise, we could see our asset taken down to just £23,250. The new assessment process will see everybody with property and saving over a combined value of £100,000 being required to pay for their care.

Relationship Failure – When passing assets purely through a will we see many leaving their assets to their children but not giving consideration to what would happen if one of their children was to divorce. This can lead to a child seeing half of their inheritance in the hands of an ex-partner and in the event of early bereavement this can lead to grandchildren being disinherited.

Inheritance Tax – The current IHT framework can be complex and unknowingly people can leave their children and even grandchildren with an Inheritance tax issue.

Probate – The cost of probate has risen dramatically over the last few years, and it can be a lengthy and drawn-out process. On average, with a will, probate will typically take 6 – 12 months to complete, without a will it could take up to 2 years.

Its Never the Wrong Time To Do The Right Thing – While people appreciate that inheritance planning is important many will delay seeking the correct advice. By putting off today what we can do tomorrow we run the risk of running out of time or, in the event of an illness, seeing our options being dramatically reduced.

Why Sanctuary Tax & Trust Services?

With over 20 years of experience in Estate and Inheritance planning we have helped families in the area protect their assets and plan their inheritance in the most cost-effective way. While the individual family's circumstance may vary, the one constant is that each family aims to provide the maximum amount of inheritance possible without the stress of complexed legal jargon.



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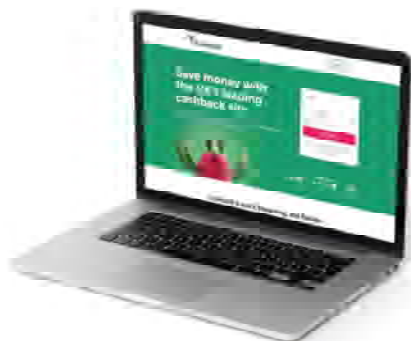
With cashback cards, you use them for your everyday spending and, in return, you get cashback or points that you can turn into vouchers, money off at various shops or even cash.

Amex offers the best deals for higher spenders, or consider a Chase current account, where you'll earn 1% back on everything you spend with most retailers.

Asda and John Lewis have cards that give you extra points when you shop directly with them, although you'll also see a lower credit for shopping elsewhere.

Cashback services

There are many cashback services, where you sign in to the site and visit the retailer's link to qualify. One of the best known is **TopCashBack.co.uk**, where – at the time of writing – there's up to 21% cashback on a Shark vacuum, up to 16.5% at Currys, and up to 12% from ASDA home and electricals.



The companies offer different deals to different sites, so it's worth signing up for more than one – **Quidco**, **KidStart** and **Complete Savings** are worth looking at, although with the latter it's 'invite only' – you'll see a pop-up invite after shopping at eBay, Argos, Trainline etc.

It's particularly important to be aware of the terms before paying for any premium cashback. For example, **Complete Savings** is £15 per month, and they give more money back than most, with between 10% and 20% back. You only need to make one purchase a month of any amount to claim your membership fee back – but if you forget, it will cost you.

Understand the downsides

Because the cashback relies on retailers tracking you online or in-store, if the link or connection doesn't work or something else happens, the cashback provider doesn't get its money from the retailer. And if they don't get it, they can't pay it to you, although thankfully it's fairly rare.

Don't expect to get money in a hurry either. Many cashback deals take some time to go through: the retailer needs to track the incoming link (or your card number, for in-store deals), tell the cashback site about it and then that transaction needs to be processed. Many cashback sites will have a payment threshold and won't pay out until you exceed it, even once they've been paid.

Finally, you'll sometimes find that price comparison sites such as PriceSpy or PriceRunner can uncover deals that'll save you more money than any cashback deal.

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By Katherine Sorrell

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Colour and light

- Because of its transparency, anything made from glass (unless in a very dark colour) always has a lighter, brighter feel than pieces with more visual 'weight'. This means you can add glass almost anywhere without it becoming overly dominant in the room. In fact, collections of coloured glass massed together can look incredibly impressive.
- For a spring-like feel, choose coloured glass in fresh, vivid tones such as pink, yellow, green and turquoise. If you prefer a more sophisticated, sultry look, you'll find glass in amber, smoke and darker shades that have wonderful appeal.
- If possible, try to display coloured glass in front of a window. The resulting sparkle and glow will enhance your room and create an eye-catching focal point.
- Don't just buy new. There's a great deal of vintage and antique coloured glass available in a range of styles and at all price points. Curating a collection can be incredibly satisfying. There's nothing like the thrill of chancing upon a beautiful piece, whether in a bricks-and-mortar shop or an online specialist.



Add a colourful touch in any room using bud vases in a variety of colours. Ideal for spring flowers. Coloured glass bud vases. £7.99. gingeray.co.uk.



This hand-blown, double glass shade was inspired by the 1980s and bold, pop colours. La Redoute Interieurs Kinoko coloured glass ceiling light. £115. laredoute.co.uk



Organise your jewellery and trinkets in these glass storage boxes. Each one is handmade, with an antique brass edge. Coloured glass boxes, £35, heavenlyhomesandgardens.co.uk.



Delicate and pretty, this colourful candle holder would make a beautiful centrepiece or a delightful display. Blue and green glass candle holder, £38, roseandgrey.co.uk.



Add some pizzazz to your juices or cocktails with this vividly coloured glass jug. Mila Jug, £40. oka.com.



The striped finish and wavy edges of this large bowl make a real talking point, and the vibrant turquoise is ideal for lovers of bold colours. Large Venetian bowl, £180, joannawood.com.



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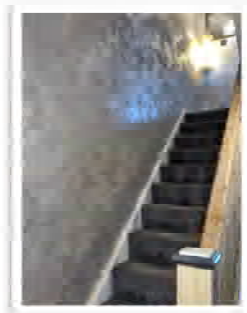
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Seasonal fare

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Serves 6 Preparation time 20-25 minutes Cooking time 1 hour 30 minutes

A hearty all-in-one dish, this stew can be cooled and kept in the refrigerator for up to 24 hours, then reheated slowly until piping hot. Perfect for supper on a chilly spring evening!

Ingredients

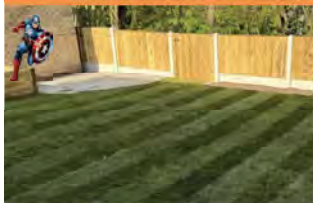
- 1kg lean boneless lamb shoulder, cubed
- 2 bay leaves
- 4 sprigs fresh thyme
- 1 onion, peeled and cut into quarters
- 1 leek, roughly chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, peeled and crushed
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1.2l cold water
- 200g baby carrots, scraped, and halved if large
- 200g baby turnips, scraped, and quartered if large
- 200g baby onions or shallots, peeled
- 200g baby or small leeks, halved
- 200ml white wine (dry or medium)
- 200ml good, hot lamb stock
- 200g dwarf or French beans, trimmed
- 200g frozen peas or petit pois
- 2 tbsp freshly chopped flat-leaf parsley or chervil

1. Place the lamb into a large pan with the bay leaves, thyme, onion, leek, garlic, seasoning and water, to cover.
2. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat and simmer over a low heat for 1 hour, skimming regularly, if required. Remove from the heat and cool slightly.
3. Transfer the lamb to a large, ovenproof casserole dish and strain the vegetable liquor over the lamb. Discard the vegetables and herbs.
4. Add the baby carrots, turnips, onions or shallots, leeks, white wine and lamb stock. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat and simmer for 15 minutes.
5. Add the dwarf or French beans and cook for a further 3-4 minutes, then add the frozen peas or petit pois and cook for a further 2 minutes, or until the vegetables are cooked.
6. Season and garnish with the herbs and serve with plenty of crusty bread to soak up the juices.



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A time for *looking up* and *looking down*

by Caroline Knight

There's no doubt that spring is here, even though April can bring extremes of weather. It's not unusual to have snow during this period, but hot sunshine is also possible. The UK has in the past seen temperatures of almost 30°C in this month, which is hotter than most summer days. One thing's certain – the weather is unlikely to stay the same for long. This means, if it's freezing, it won't keep you away from the garden for long. But if it's hot, make the most of it.

It's a great month for gardeners and there's no time to waste now that things are stirring underfoot. But before you make haste towards the greenhouse, the kitchen garden or the garden shed, don't forget to stop and stare. We need to enjoy the beauties of spring before they fade, and that includes bluebells, which should be inhaled and appreciated. The UK is home to

more than half of all the bluebells in the entire world. They favour ancient woods, but you can plant them in your garden

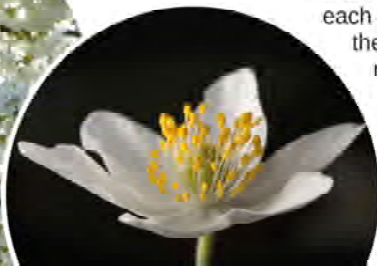
too. Give them a slightly shady spot in moist but well-draining soil and

be sure to choose the native *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* variety rather than the rather invasive Spanish bluebell, *Hyacinthoides hispanica*. Remember that the bulb is poisonous – these plants were said to have been used by 13th-century monks in the treatment of leprosy and they are currently being investigated for use within insect repellents.

Keep your eyes peeled for wood anemones too. *Anemone nemorosa* enjoys growing in the shade and shelter of deciduous trees, where their pure white, low-blooming flowers with golden anthers are as beautiful as just about any bloom you could wish to see.

Cultivated bulbs including tulips are magnificent and this bulb produces the widest range of colours of any other spring-flowering example. From the purest of whites to the darkest purple, there are tulips for every setting – including pots and containers. Not all tulips will come back each year. Although technically perennials,

they are often best treated as an annual and replaced. If you want to leave them in situ, be sure to give them feed and mulch, and leave the foliage to die down naturally after flowering so that the bulb energy stores are replenished.





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The spring flower that most people would never be without is the daffodil. They light up the month like sunshine. They all belong to the Narcissus genus, but we generally refer to those with larger trumpets as daffodils and the slightly smaller flowers as narcissi. Then there is the jonquil, which has clusters of small, fragrant daffodil-like flowers. Be prepared to leave the foliage for up to six weeks after flowering and don't be tempted to cut, tie or braid the leaves to make them look neater.

Flowering cherry blossom

Look up towards the treetops to enjoy the delights of flowering cherries this month. They herald the spring most delightfully. Some cherries are covered in blousy blossom during April, whilst others celebrate the season more subtly. Varieties such as Prunus 'Kanzan' produce pink fluffy clouds of double blossom, while P. 'Pink Perfection' is a slightly smaller version on which its delectable candyfloss flowers last slightly longer than most. Some regard ornamental cherries as 'one-trick-ponies' as the blossom is fleeting – but what a trick to have up your sleeve.

If you are considering planting a flowering cherry in the garden, bear in mind that the spread of most Prunus varieties is almost equal to the height. You need to allow room for the spread because if it is pruned too much, the shape will be distorted. Far better to consider one of the upright, fastigate varieties of spring-flowering cherry trees. Prunus 'Amanogawa' is a great one for small gardens because of its upright shape. Expect it to grow to a height of up to seven metres but with a spread of only two or three. If you look at your spring garden and feel it is bereft of colour, this is the perfect time to remedy the problem so that you'll have something much more joyful next year. Gardening is all about thinking ahead whilst enjoying the moment. Just remember that any trees or shrubs you plant now will need watering throughout the drier months ahead.



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Get ready to crumble!

Apple, amaretti & marzipan crumble with amaretto custard

Serves 6 Preparation time 25 minutes Cooking time 1 hour 10 minutes

A crumble for almond aficionados, this can be made in individual dishes for a dinner party and in one large one for a family supper. To get ahead, the crumble mix also freezes well for up to three months.

Ingredients

- 200g plain flour
- 50g ground almonds
- 1½ tsp ground cinnamon
- ¼ tsp fine salt
- 150g unsalted butter, diced
- 100g marzipan, diced into 1cm pieces
- 125g light muscovado sugar
- 50g amaretti biscuits, roughly crumbled
- 50g flaked almonds
- 800g Bramley apples, peeled, cored and roughly chopped (4 medium apples)
- 600g crisp eating apples, peeled, quartered, cored and sliced
- Finely grated zest and juice of a lemon

For the marzipan custard

- 500ml best-quality, bought fresh custard
- 50g marzipan, chopped
- 2 tbsp amaretto
- Vanilla ice cream or Greek yoghurt, to serve

1. Combine the flour, ground almonds, cinnamon and salt in a mixing bowl. Rub in the diced butter by hand until the mixture resembles coarse breadcrumbs. Rub in the marzipan, taking less care to break it down – some larger pieces can remain. Stir in 50g of the muscovado sugar with the crumbled amaretti biscuits, flaked almonds and lemon zest.
2. Alternatively, pulse the flour, ground almonds, cinnamon, salt and butter together in the small bowl of a food processor, adding 50g sugar for a final few pulses once the mixture resembles coarse breadcrumbs and stirring in the marzipan, amaretti, flaked almonds and lemon zest at the end. Either way, cover and chill the crumble mix for 20 minutes or up to 2 days.
3. Preheat the oven to 170°C, fan 150°C, gas mark 3. Combine the apples with the lemon juice to prevent browning. Tumble in the remaining muscovado sugar, distributing the two apple types evenly. Transfer to a medium-sized baking dish about 23cm diameter if round or about 20x25cm if not. Scatter the crumble over the fruit to cover completely.
4. Bake in the preheated oven for about 1 hour 10 minutes until golden, crisp and bubbling at the edges.
5. To flavour the custard, put it in a blender with the chopped marzipan and the Amaretto. Blend for a couple of minutes (this needs to be thorough), then, if your blender isn't supercharged, pass through a sieve to remove any small marzipan pieces.
6. Leave the crumble to settle for 10 minutes before serving with the marzipan custard (gently warmed through or cold) and vanilla ice cream, or with chilled Greek yoghurt as a simpler option.

Recipe extracted from Repertoire: The Best Vegetarian Recipes to Build a Modern Cook's Collection by Alice Hart, published by OH Editions, priced £27, with photography by Emma Lee



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YOU'RE THE VOICE

Whether you have an Apple HomePod, an Amazon Echo or a Google Home device, your voice-powered digital assistant can do all kinds of things without lifting a finger.

Turn it up

Your digital assistant can understand more specific controls, in addition to "turn it up" or "volume up." For example, you can say to Alexa, "Volume 7." Smart speakers can recognise percentages, too, so you can tell them to turn the music to 50% or 100% if you want to annoy the neighbours.

Specify song services

Each digital assistant has its preferred music service, such as Apple Music for Apple's Siri and Amazon Music from Alexa. To change that on Alexa devices, you'll need to install the Alexa Skill for that service; once you've done that, you can say, "Play Madonna on Spotify."

Ask for specific music

You can do more than just ask for an artist: you can say "Play new music by Taylor Swift" to get the most recent stuff, and on Alexa you can say "play the album this is from" or "play more songs from this album".

You can also use commands such as play or shuffle by album or artist, play track number 5, or play a specific genre of music, such as country or dance. We particularly like the command "play something I haven't heard in a while" on Echo devices. You can skip the "play" command for many services, so for example, "Alexa, Radio 2" works just as well as "Alexa, play Radio 2."

Play on multiple speakers

Many smart speakers, such as HomePods and Echo devices, can be paired or used for multi-room, which means they'll play the same music. To set that up, you'll need to go into the appropriate app: Google Home, Apple Home or Alexa. The process differs by app, but the principles are the same: for example, with Alexa, go to Devices, press the Plus icon and choose Combine Speakers. You can name your speaker groups, so in future, you can say things like "play Madonna in the living room"; "play Anthrax everywhere", or "Hey Siri, move this music to the bedroom."

Organise your life

Smart speakers also integrate tightly with your calendar and reminder apps. To set a reminder, simply tell your speaker to set a reminder for a particular date or time and then say what it is. If you use Apple's Reminders app on your phone, you can set up reminder lists in the app and then use them from your smart speaker: "Siri, add carrots to my shopping list." You can then check your shopping list in your phone's Reminders app.

Your speaker can also enter calendar events: say "Siri, schedule football practice every Monday at 5pm" or "Alexa, add an event to my calendar". To find out what's on, ask, "What's on my calendar?" or "What's on my schedule for today?"



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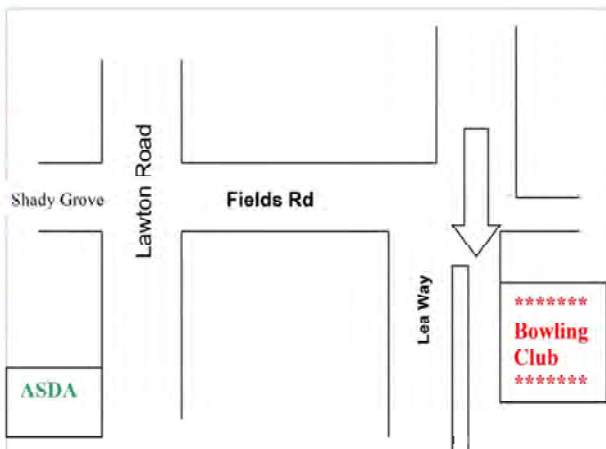
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6	9	5	7	1	4	8	2	3
3	4	7	8	5	2	6	1	9

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Across: 7 Vision, 8 Auntie, 9 Asia, 10 Athletic, 11 Insects, 13 Pelts, 15 Bills, 17 Ponders, 20 Nibbling, 21 Only, 23 Issued, 24 London.
Down: 1 Zips, 2 Pirate, 3 Infants, 4 Yacht, 5 Sneeze, 6 Sinister, 12 Noisiest, 14 Roughly, 16 Labour, 18 Drowns, 19 Birds, 22 Loot.

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'I was privileged to welcome people from all generations to celebrate on that day. It was heart warming to hear individual stories of how special the hall is to their families. This included Cynthia Dale who had many memories including the day the hall opened,' Margaret Blease-Bourne, Chair of the Organisational Committee told The Chronicle. 'We need people who have different skills and interests who can help and support on many levels. This can be regularly or occasionally, specifically or generally.'

The Hall, in the village of Church Lawton with its rich history, is a hidden treasure! The Organisational Committee are looking to develop the offer to the community. The original Trust Deed determined that the hall was a place for the community of the parish of Church Lawton which offer people a place for 'education, social activities and recreation'.

There are regular activities throughout the week including dancing, yoga, pilates, bowling and athletics for pre-school children. The hall is also available for hire for family occasions.

'We are proud of the use of the hall by local charities and are always looking for ways to engage the community as well as provide events for them. We have lots of ideas but need more help to make them a reality,' said Margaret.

As a charity, the Trustees depend on volunteers to help to raise funds and support the staff in running the hall. A small committee meet monthly but they need people who can help occasionally with specific skills. This could be help with events like the Indoor Table Top Sales and social events, to promote the hall or to help with the grounds and other odd job.

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Astro Aerials 21

Alarm Systems

Sonic Intruder System 35

Alloy Wheel Repairs

Elite Alloys 6

Architect

DMA 7

Wild Goose Architecture 17

Builders

SJF 11

Care Home

Blooming Good Care 10

Car Body Repair

Chips Away 9

Carpet/Upholstery Cleaning

Maids In Cheshire 1

Shaw Clean 35

Stainbusters 63

Chiroprapist

Margaret Rowlands 22

Computers / Web Design

Alsager Computers 52

Christopher Ford 9

Dog Groomer

The Dog House 8

Dog Walker

Alsager Doggy Walker 22

Dom Appliance Serv/ Rep

A B Domestic 7

Domestic Help

Linda's Helping Hands 24

Driveways/ Patios

C Jones Paving 23

CDM 25

Down To Earth 46

SB Griffiths 31

WLH Services 14

Electricians

Alsager Electricals 29

Cheshire East Electricals 23

D & D Electrical 41

NSM Electrical 6

Fencing / Gates

Cheshire Fences 26

Crewe & Nantwich Timber 2

Financial Advisor

Lyon & Co LLP 13

Sanctuary Tax & Trust 34

Flooring

Andy Jones 22

Funeral Directors/Planning

Golden Charter 24

Joseph Edwards 25

Furniture

Webb House 5

Garage Doors/Repairs

Ace Garage Doors 20

Gardeners

Advantage Garden Services 45

BGM 7

First Choice 15

Nantwich Lawns 27

One Man went to Mow 12

Steve Butters 8

Woodhall Garden Services 8

Garden Landscapers

Countrywide Landscape 41

Down To Earth Landscapes 46

Guttering

AJS Guttering 21

Handyman Services

Astro Handyman Services 21

Heating & Gas

Abbey Gas 8

Alsager Gas Services 52

GWS Heating & Plumbing 51

Health & wellbeing

Alsager Golf & Country Club 40

Congleton Hearing 49

Ridgways 32

Joiner

Phil Baddeley 7

Jewellers

Alexandra's 20

Kitchens

Cheshire Kitchen Respray 29

Lawncare

Lawnhopper 46

Locksmith

Lockrite Locksmith 31

Loft Installation

Acess4lofts 56

Mobile Hairdresser

Love Your Hair 21

Oven Cleaners

Oven Gleamers 17

Painter/Decorator

Grant Price 25

Mr Painter 22

P Allen 22

Pest Control

Advantage Pest Control 40

Places to Eat/Drink

Alsager G & C Club 40

Plasterers

DNA Plastering 17

M Horton 24

Plumbers

Abbey Gas 11

Davies & Daughter 23

GWS Plumbing 27

Property Cleaning

CDM 41

DB Smyth 31

Shaw clean 21

Property Maintenance

CRJ Property Services 43

Heartland 39

Homestyle 11

Roofing

Altitude Roofing 51

Cheshire Roof Care 43

G Dean Roofing 25

Securefit 35

Shed Merchants

Crewe & Nantwich Timber 2

Solicitors

Smith Partnership 19

Timber Merchants

Ashwood Timber 43

Crewe & Nantwich Timber 2

Tree care

AP Bell 11

Cheshire Tree Services 47

Doc Martin 46

Green Valley 3

Utilities

Utility Warehouse 37

Wills

Sanctuary Tax & Trust Ltd 14

Windows

Premier Windows 27

Window Repair Centre 64



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