

Clatford Valley Gardening Club

Affiliated to the Royal Horticultural Society

Meetings are held on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 7.30pm

Upper Clatford Village Hall

www.clatfordvalleygardeningclub.co.uk

January 2026

Dear Members,

As I am sitting writing this it is absolutely pouring down, not the weather for gardening. There are a few signs of better things to come however, with snowdrops in flower and daffodils poking up through the soil. At least when it does stop raining the soil should be nice and soft and make weeding easier.

I hope that you are all going to join us for another year, as we have a good programme planned and are already thinking about a garden visit. You can see the programme later in the Newsletter.

Last year's committee have all agreed to stand for another year so I would like to thank them for that, as they have all done an excellent job. It would be nice to have some new blood with a thought for the future. Please give it a thought.

Jenny.

Subscriptions

Just a reminder that subscriptions are due for 2026. Thankfully we have managed to keep them at £20 for another year.

Please could you pay by cash and place it in a sealed envelope with your name on. The reason we ask for cash is that the bank now charges us when cheques are used.

Thanks.

Recipe

Mexican Chicken Stew.

Serves 4.

Ingredients.

- Four boneless, skinless, chicken breasts.
- 2 x 400g chopped tomatoes.
- 400g can pinto beans, drained and rinsed.
- 1 onion sliced.
- 2 red peppers, deseeded and chopped into large chunks.
- 3 tbsp chipotle paste
- 1 tbsp olive oil.
- 140g long grain rice.
- Small bunch of coriander, chopped.
- Juice 1 lime.
- 1 tbsp sugar.
- Natural yogurt.

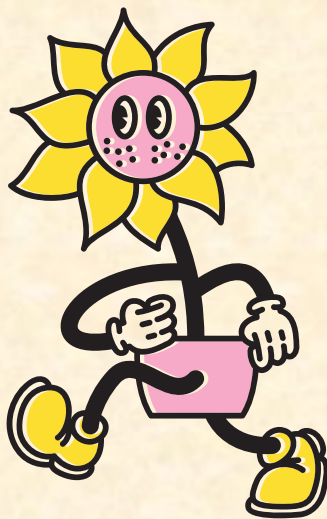


Method.

1. Heat the oil in a deep, frying pan and fry the onion and peppers for a few minutes until softened. Stir in the chipotle paste followed by the tomatoes.
2. Add the chicken breast, with up to a tomato can of water to cover them, and gently simmer, turning occasionally for 20 minutes or until the chicken is cooked.
3. Bring a large pan of water to boil. Add the rice and cook for 12 to 15 minutes until tender, adding the beans for the final minute. Drain well and stir in the chopped coriander and lemon juice. Check for seasoning then cover to keep warm.
4. Lift the chicken out onto a board and shred each breast using two forks.
5. Stir back into the tomato sauce with the sugar and seasoning.
6. Serve with the rice and a dollop of coriander on the side.

CLATFORD VALLEY GARDENING CLUB PROGRAMME 2026

28 January	Peter Moore	Buddleias
25 February	The Hawk Conservancy	Its a Good Day to Fly a Kite
25 March	Stuart Pocock	Roses
22 April	Michael Harvey	A Rose Garden Paradise Mottisfont
27 May	Steve Oates	Birds in Your Garden
24 June	John Trim	Vegetables All Year Round
22 July	Social Evening	
26 August	Barry Clarke	Hilliers Winter Garden
23 September	Pauline Weeks	Hardy Geraniums – Where and Why
28 October	AGM	



THE MAGNOLIA



Magnolias are some of the best loved flowering shrubs and trees. They grow well on fertile, heavy soil and the deciduous varieties love clay. Some dislike alkaline soil but may succeed if you condition the soil well. They also like good drainage and respond to feeding.

Deciduous magnolias flower in spring, so frost and wind can damage their exotic, delicate blooms. The smaller flowered varieties are more weather tolerant. *Magnolia grandiflora*, which is evergreen, flowers in summer, but can take a few years to produce its waxy, lemon-scented blooms.

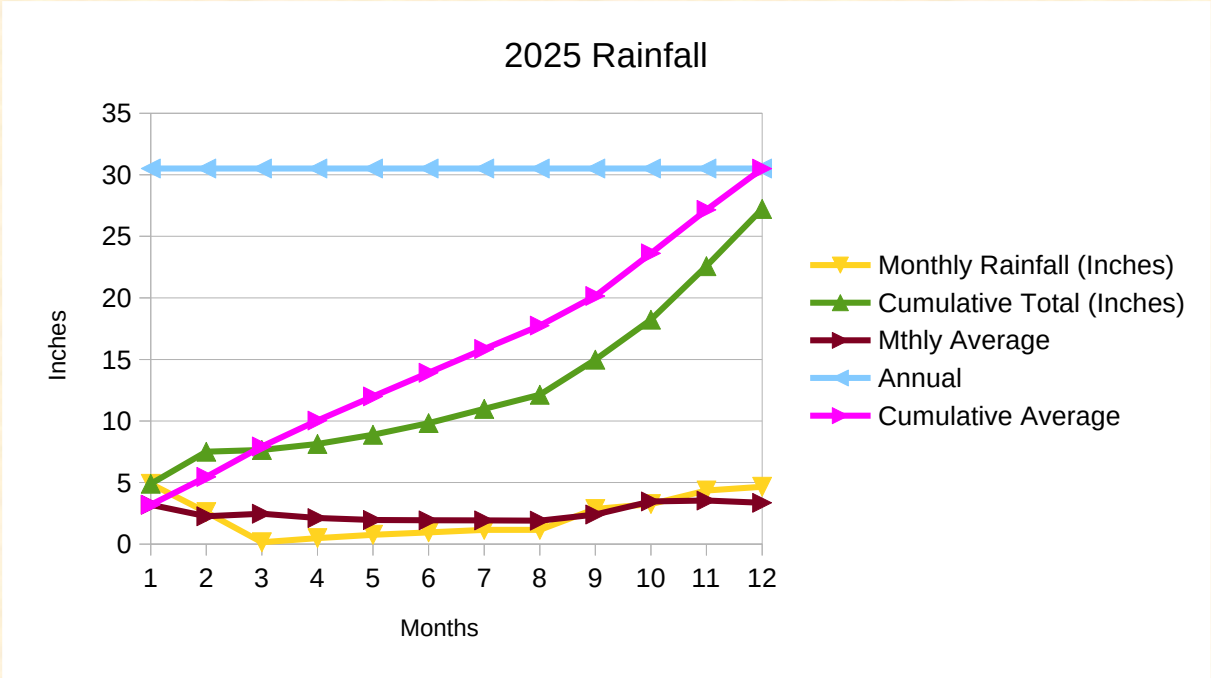
It can be trained as a large wall shrub but young shoots need to be tied in as they grow.

Prune deciduous magnolias after flowering, but only if absolutely necessary and prune evergreen magnolias in early spring before growth commences.

Contributed by Lesley

RAINFALL 2025

Year	Month	Monthly Rainfall (Inches)	Cumulative Total (Inches)	Mthly Average
2025	1	4.9	4.90	3.19
2025	2	2.60	7.50	2.26
2025	3	0.15	7.65	2.47
2025	4	0.48	8.13	2.11
2025	5	0.75	8.88	1.95
2025	6	0.95	9.83	1.93
2025	7	1.15	10.98	1.92
2025	8	1.15	12.13	1.90
2025	9	2.85	14.98	2.40
2025	10	3.25	18.23	3.47
2025	11	4.35	22.58	3.54
2025	12	4.65	27.23	3.35



October 2025

October began warmer than average but wet, with heavy rain across northern Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland on the 1st. Rain spread further south over the following days, with the first storm of the 2025/2026 season, Storm Amy, arriving on the 3rd. Amy brought strong winds and heavy rain across Scotland and Northern Ireland. The storm brought 50 to 75mm of rainfall to some areas, and gale-force winds across northern parts of the country. The rain eased in the second week of October with high pressure moving in. This brought “anticyclonic gloom” – settled conditions with persistent cloud. Rain approached the west again on the 18th, extending across the UK on the 19th, with some heavy showers in the southwest. The 22nd saw heavy persistent rain and strong winds along the south coast of the UK. The remainder of the month saw unsettled conditions persist, with temperatures below average for most.

Temperatures were above average for October, although not record-breaking. The UK overall saw temperatures provisionally 0.7°C above average, with Scotland and Northern Ireland slightly warmer. The month started with above average temperatures, shifting to average temperatures mid-month and then ending with below average temperatures. Rainfall was slightly below average for the UK, provisionally 99% of the long-term average rainfall, but there was some regional variation. Northern Ireland was much wetter than average, provisionally recording 136% of the average October rainfall, while parts of England were much drier. County Fermanagh provisionally saw 162% of the average rainfall, while Northamptonshire saw only 60% of the average rainfall. Sunshine hours were well below average across the UK, which provisionally recorded just 63.3 hours (69% of the average). It was the UK’s third dullest October on record, with just 1960 and 1968 duller. Wales and Northern Ireland saw their second dullest October on record – Northern Ireland was particularly dull, provisionally seeing just 41% of the average sunshine hours.

November 2025

November started on a warm note, with temperatures widely above average and in some areas 6-7°C above average on the 4th and 5th.

However, it was also a wet start to the month as frontal systems brought bands of rain across the country, occasionally heavy. The 14th saw exceptionally heavy rain across central and southern England as well as parts of Northern Ireland as Storm Claudia, named by the Spanish Meteorological Service, swept through. Temperatures dropped following Claudia associated with a northerly influx of Arctic Maritime air. There were some hard frosts with the daily minimum temperature on 21st falling to -12.6°C at Tomintoul, Moray; notable although not exceptional for this stage in November. Wintry showers in a northerly flow also led to some weather impacts, particularly across the North York Moors where lying snow made conditions on roads extremely difficult. Temperatures recovered during the last few days, with the month closing as mild, westerly and very wet Atlantic weather systems resumed. Overall, November has been characterised by some very variable weather and large temperature swings. For example, in contrast to -12.6°C at Tomintoul on the 21st, the daily minimum fell to only 14.8°C at Chivenor, Devon on the 5th.

The monthly statistics for November are unremarkable, with the provisional mean temperature 0.7°C above the 1991-2020 average. The UK was wetter than average with 131% of the average November rainfall. A large area extending from the Midlands to Lincolnshire and East Riding of Yorkshire was particularly wet with over 200% of normal rainfall. For example, Lincolnshire had 212% of the 1991-2020 average rainfall - provisionally the wettest November in a series from 1836 and marginally wetter than November 2019. Overall, the UK recorded near-average sunshine hours. Northern Scotland was particularly dull, averaging only around an hour per day at several stations (for example Loch Glascarnoch, Highland recorded 20.3 hours for the month).

December 2025

December was wet and warm as low pressure brought unsettled conditions and frontal systems across the country. The 8th and 9th saw persistent and occasionally heavy rainfall across the country as Storm Bram arrived, with western and northern areas the worst affected. Western areas also saw strong winds, with some severe gale force winds. The weather remained wet following Bram, with bands of frontal rain crossing the country. The

unsettled conditions continued until the 24th, when high pressure arrived over the UK. This brought strong easterly winds to some parts of the southwest and freezing temperatures to many, with frosts and freezing fog especially in northern areas. Conditions remained clear, sunny and cool for most of the UK over the final week of December.

By the 16th, the UK overall had provisionally recorded 75% of the average monthly rainfall, and several counties including West Glamorgan and Cornwall had recorded over 100% of their average December rainfall. The second half of December was drier, resulting in only slightly above average rainfall for the month overall. England (114% of average) and Wales (115% of average) were wetter, but Scotland (88% of average) and Northern Ireland (83% of average) were much drier. The month began with above average temperatures for the first three weeks, before turning colder than average for the final week. Although provisionally 1.6°C warmer than average, this was not record-breaking. Sunshine duration was slightly above average for the UK overall, which recorded 108% of the long-term average sunshine duration. Wales was particularly sunny, seeing 126% of average sunshine hours.

Contributed by Wilson/Met office

If you are able to contribute to the Newsletter we would be most grateful. Have you been to a nice garden or discovered an interesting plant? If so tell the rest of us about it. Please send copy to Wilson Carson at lwilsoncarson@btinternet.com

We need contributions of recipes. If you have a favourite one please send it to Jenny or Wilson Carson at the following:

Jenny – meiosis41@aol.com. Wilson – lwilsoncarson@btinternet.com.