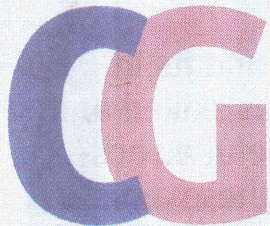




COG-ED1-S2



“ Waterlogged plants look very similar to plants that have dried up due to lack of water; they will generally turn yellow and wilt

“ Other counties have a focal point, a county facility that they can be proud of. Cornwall deserves the same as everybody else. Let's hope the council makes the bold decision

# GARDENING



I've had a special request. As he does every now and again, Ben, who I hand my article into every week to make sure I haven't made too many grammatical mistakes, has asked me to give him some advice to sort out his waterlogged garden.

I think this one is something affecting a lot of people at the moment BECAUSE IT WON'T STOP RAINING!

When we first started planting the garden at Eden (yes, I've been here that long) I worked with a chap who would come in every morning and tell me how many days it had rained consecutively. I think it was the wettest winter on record at the time, but this year must be getting close.

Waterlogged soil is a problem for gardeners because, unless your plants are bog plants, they are not adapted to cope when the soil is saturated. The necessary air spaces in the soil are filled with water and plant roots literally drown.

There are two ways of tackling the problem: short-term and long-term. In the short term, keep off the soil while it's saturated, as this will help avoid compaction, which will only make the problem worse. Remove damaged shoots and dead plants. Waterlogged plants actually look very similar to plants that have dried up due to lack of water; they will generally turn yellow and wilt over. The big difference is they will rot and be a host to diseases, unlike dry, shrivelled plants.

Long-term, you need to find somewhere for water to go. This can be done either by installing drainage or digging out a ditch or seasonal pond at the lowest part of the garden to catch surplus water and give you a water feature. Once you have worked out a way of stopping a persistent flooding problem, the soil structure and drainage you are left with will need to be improved through cultivation. Do this by digging in a good amount of grit to add drainage and green manure to add structure and life back into the soil.

If you do have a naturally damp garden and are thinking of putting down any hardstanding, choose permeable surfaces when laying drives, paths and patios to allow rain to soak in, otherwise the water will just flood off on the soil around, making it even damper.

And if all else fails, choose trees and plants that are well suited to wetter soils. Why fight a losing battle?

» Julie Kendall is the lead horticulturist at the Eden Project at Bodelva



# ANNIE VERNON

In Cornwall, we're proud of our home-grown products. At the risk of sounding like Donald Trump, we know we make the best ice cream, crimp the finest pasties and brew some great beer. Buttermilk export their fudge all over the world and Davidstow Cheddar pops up in London supermarkets.

But there are some things we can do better. And that's why I'm proud to be supporting the final bid to get the Stadium for Cornwall off the ground – possibly the final attempt to make this happen in my lifetime. The energy, business plan and most of the money are there. The final piece of the puzzle is for Cornwall Council to invest in the facility to get spades in the ground.

Let's get things straight. Nobody wants a white elephant; nobody wants a facility that is the preserve of one rugby club. If that were the case, I wouldn't support it. The only kind of stadium that I am in favour of is one that works for all of Cornwall, and the plan that the stadium partners have come up with is one that marries education, business and sport – very similar to what's been achieved up the A30 at Sandy Park in Exeter, but in Cornwall we will do more for schools and grassroots sport. The aim is to deliver 3,000 more active people within ten years, use the stadium for 122 days every year of local and community sport and direct tens of thousands of pounds to grassroots sport, charities and community groups per year.

These figures are still being finalised, so aren't set in stone, but the Cornish Pirates' and Truro City's use will be a small part of the pie. In addition, the stadium will be accessed by age-group football and rugby, schools from up and down the county, concerts and events, as well as ongoing sports provision to young people and the elderly. In Cornwall, there are nearly 100,000 people aged over 65 and the 65-to-69 age group has grown by a third in the last decade. At the stadium we are determined to cater to the specific needs of older people – in sport and leisure.

If there's something you feel strongly that the stadium should cater for, get in touch! It's a facility for all of Cornwall.

My earliest sporting memory is watching the All Blacks play South West England at the Recreation Ground, Redruth, in October 1993. It is a hazy memory but I remember the crowd flooding the pitch at the final whistle. Final score: 19-15 to New Zealand. Anybody watch the Rugby World Cup? Did you travel to the pool matches played in Gloucester and Exeter? That could happen in Truro. Wouldn't it be great to have sporting moments like that down here in Cornwall?

And we can have them, with an investment from the council that will pay huge dividends for decades and generations to come. Other counties have a focal point, a county facility that they can be proud of. Cornwall deserves the same as everybody else.

Let's hope the council make the bold decision when they vote on this in April.

» Annie Vernon is a former Olympic rower and native of North Cornwall



# SHERYLL MURRAY

I would like to congratulate my constituency staff for the fantastic display they put together in celebration of the centenary of women over 30 getting the vote. It is with pride that I serve under a female Prime Minister and I am proud that she is the second female Prime Minister. We are still looking to the Labour Party to follow the Conservative lead and select their first female leader.

I was pleased to pledge to reduce the use of plastic in all my offices, as have my colleagues Scott Mann and Steve Double. In the late 1990s, when I was secretary of the Looe Fishermen's Protection Association, Looe fishermen led the way by bringing all plastic they caught in their nets ashore for disposal by the Harbour Commissioners.

I was really pleased to meet St Stephens Primary School from Saltash in Parliament. It is a long way to for such small children to travel, and they told me they left at 4am.

Many, like me, will have enjoyed the fantastic Grade I-listed landscape of Mount Edgumbe Country Park. I am calling on all Cornwall councillors in South East Cornwall to insist Cornwall Council honours the budget funding of £112,000 per annum until 2021. This will give time to build outside funding streams which will put Mount Edgumbe on a firm footing and retain free access for all.

I attended the memorial service for my friend Surgeon-Captain Richard Jolly OBE held at the HMS Raleigh training establishment in Torpoint. It was good to see so many people celebrating a truly remarkable man. He was a Royal Navy medical officer who served in the 1982 Falklands war and was decorated by both the British and Argentine governments. He lived in Crafthole. My thoughts are with his wife, Sue.

I was pleased to unveil a new pair of binoculars at the National Coastwatch Institute look-out at Polruan and then join them afterwards for a cup of coffee and a lovely scone. The powerful binoculars can see 20 miles on a clear day, which unfortunately it wasn't. The £4,000 cost is a large investment for the voluntary organisation, which relies on donations. Currently 50 NCI stations are manned by over 2,000 volunteers giving around a quarter of a million hours providing eyes and ears along the coast.

It was a real pleasure to join Torpoint mayor Lambert Keise for a Valentine's Ball in the council chamber. A lot of money was raised for Cancer Research and I would particularly like to thank the many businesses and individuals who donated raffle and auction gifts. I would like to also recognise town clerk Chris Harris and his deputy Milly Southworth for all the work they did organising the event.

» Sheryll Murray is the Conservative MP for South East Cornwall and her column appears every three weeks

