



ChiFRA AGE CONCERN NEWSLETTER

April 2026

Welcome to ChiFRA's Spring newsletter. We hope you might find some items here that interest you as members. The group would welcome any feedback or suggestions regarding things people would like to see included in this newsletter that you can't pick up from the website or Facebook page.

ARE YOU ALL TIE'D UP?

If you're one of the many folk with *residencia* who needed a TIE card after Brexit, and were given a temporary card for 5 years, it will be due for renewal just about now – if you haven't already done it.

The original application necessitated a journey to the Immigration Department in Cadiz, but for a renewal you can go to the local police office in your municipality.

The process may seem daunting, but is actually fairly straightforward. You need to down-load and complete the appropriate EX form which really only asks for your name, address and NIE number. You can ignore the sections which request details of your representative if you're doing it yourself.

You also have to download a Tasa 790-012 form in order to pay the fee, which you can do at your bank, or by credit transfer.

Then you can follow the links to make an appointment at your local police office. You need to have your existing TIE, and a passport type photograph. Your fingerprints will be taken, and you'll be given a receipt together with a batch number so that you can check when your TIE card is ready for collection. You'll also get a slip of paper telling you to access the website IMMIGRATION APPOINTMENT, and Google will direct to:

<https://sede.administracionespublicas.gob.es/pagina/index/directorio/icplusplus/language/en> Here you might encounter a problem. The website has a button marked "Access to the Procedure", but it doesn't always work.

Use this one instead:

<https://icp.administracionelectronica.gob.es/icplusplus/index.html>

DIARY OF A SURVIVOR

Of all the wild flowers, the most extravagant we see is the Bermuda buttercup. Pull a flower stem out of the plant, chew the soft end, and you will see why the Spanish call it *Vinagreta*. This year it is particularly lavish, possibly because of the rainfall, and the hills and roadsides have great swathes of their vibrant yellow flowers. Some areas show no green at all, just a solid carpet of blossom.



Hopefully the rain will have triggered some other wild flowers to put on a good show. The ones to look for are *Suegras* turning whole fields purple, *Suya* (red clover) in great mats along the motorways, and this year if you like asphodels, you are in for a treat. In the 20 years or so we have been here, I have never seen them in the abundance I can see along roadsides. The small ones you see along the roadside are the 'Summer asphodel', and the taller ones are the 'White asphodel'



Possibly my favourite is the common *Centaury*. A clumsy name for a (to me) particularly beautiful plant. It is a vigorous shade of pink. A very pink pink if you know what I mean. I don't think I have seen one any distance from the inhospitable roadsides where precious little grows. Sometimes in clumps, sometimes scattered, the larger dense clumps are incredibly eye catching. While the English name is clumsy, their Spanish name is downright insulting. It's *Hiel de la tierra* or 'Bile of the earth.' Screw it. I love them, insulting name or no.



In the garden, it is looking as if we are done with the winter rains, and now the heat of the spring sun is upon us. Potted plants already need watering regularly, aggressively so when the wind blows, stripping water out of plant, pot and soil alike. I have to dig out the rest of the sweet potatoes as I will be planting this year's plants out ere long, and this year some of the sweet potato's territory is being ceded to tomatoes. Thanks to Lesley's suggestions, I bought some tomato seeds to grow, they are called *Noire de Crème*, and are allegedly particularly tasty. I'm also growing some sweet cherry tomatoes as I find these more to my taste than bigger fruit. An interesting thing to note, both chillies and tomatoes share the same characteristic, they like their friends around them when they germinate. As I am now sticking to the Hot wax chillies (I found the *jalapeño* uncooperative, poor yield and prone to black crack disease) I

save the seeds from the best plants by the hundred, and plant them by the hundred in wide shallow pots where the soil is only 3" deep. Literally hundreds, I put four to five hundred seeds in an 8" diameter pot, and I get stunning rates of germination, with most of them all the same size when I start to prick them out. Now when you are paying for commercial tomato seeds, you simply can't afford to pot seeds that lavishly. So, to get a good result I get a pencil and poke a shallow hole into the soil in a shallow pot and drop half a dozen seeds into that. If I want more, I poke more holes and put 6 or so seeds into each one. Germinating in close proximity with other seeds seems to spur them to germinate at the same time and give a nice little clump of plants that are all pretty much the same size.

So the sweet potatoes will lose ground, but their towers will be repurposed for the tomatoes. One thing, though. The chilli and tomato seeds were all planted at the beginning of the year in a heated greenhouse. They have taken till now to germinate and grow to 3 inches. I planted out the chillies, only to have a percentage destroyed by the harsh winds which like black magic always seem to follow any delicate plants being planted out in the garden. The lesson here would seem to be that maybe planting them in November will give me bigger plants earlier in 2027

Next job on the horizon is going to be the compost heap. I think the old one is getting to the point of development where I strip off the top layer of un-rotted material and expose the goodies underneath. Pure black gold. All the avocados will get a generous top dressing, and then I will sieve and bag all that's left. Last time I did it with a hand held sieve, but now I am old enough to say "Screw that for a game of soldiers" and go the more mechanised route. I have seen the rotating sieves people use, but in the past when I lived in the UK and had a mass of compost to sieve, I came up with the idea of a cradle sieve, so I will be revisiting that invention on a smaller scale. The original was pretty massive and could take a large barrow-load at a time, so I will be

going for a lighter, more easily worked version. Hopefully I will be able to keep you informed of how we get on.

I am still on the learning curve with grafting avocados. The cleft graft just didn't work for me, the approach graft gave me a couple of nice young trees, and the graft while very lumpy to start with looks as though it will grow over well. However, having to keep the root scions attached to the main tree was awkward and a lot of work. The autumn bud grafts, all but 1 died because I took the tapes off too soon, but that one is putting out leaves and looking really good, so this year's grafts will be all bud grafts and we will hopefully get a good return of good, healthy grafted trees. Most of those will be Manolo's variety which holds great promise, but I am also sowing seed from his tree too. I planted one of his seeds last year, and it has grown faster than any of the others, and you would be excused for thinking it was a year older than it really is. Here's hoping. I re-potted it as a one year old birthday gift as it was drying out REALLY fast each time I watered it, and it turned out that the damn thing was pot-bound. Given it was in a largish pot to start with, that's impressive growth.



Finally violas. I do love these. Once they get established they are a year on year delight, going from strength to strength. Often the first year is pretty unimpressive, and come mid summer they die. However, they will have dropped seeds, which is why you always put the pot where you want more to grow. Those seeds will give a good show the next year, but it is the year after that that they really get into their stride.

Bill Wight

ARE YOU IN A CIVIL PARTNERSHIP?

If you and your partner have a CP in the UK, you should be aware that it doesn't have the status of a marriage in Spain.

When it comes to inheritance tax in Andalucia, spouses are exempt from inheritance tax, but no such exemption applies to a CP made outside Spain, so you could be liable to pay 40% of your inheritance in tax. To prevent this, you may wish to consider converting your CP to a marriage, and though this is not possible in Spain, it can be done in Gibraltar. You only have to stay for one night in Gibraltar, either before or after the ceremony. There is a very comprehensive guide here:

<https://www.gibraltar.gov.gi/uploads/files/marriages-civil-partnerships/CONVERSION-GUIDANCE-NOTES.pdf>

You may wish to consider having your marriage certificate apostilled and translated, to avoid potential problems later on.

DO YOU HAVE A PRE-PAID FUNERAL PLAN?

Some UK nationals resident in Spain, have made advance provision for funeral expenses by buying a plan from one of the companies based here who specifically targeted ex-pats. One such was ***Iberian Funeral Plans***, but unfortunately this particular business collapsed last year, leaving those who have invested without any means of recovering the funds that they've lost.

If you are one of those affected, unfortunately your chances of getting any recompense are remote. If you used a credit card to purchase your plan, you should seek help from your credit provider, although there is no guarantee of success

Not all funeral providers are tarred with the same brush, *Golden Leaves*, for example, being regulated by the FCA in the UK.

A REMINDER: WHAT TO DO IN AN EMERGENCY:

For police, fire, ambulance, phone **112**

For serious medical emergency, phone **061**

You don't need to enter +34 even if you are using a UK phone. Both numbers can provide services in English, either with a English-speaking staff, or with AI.

Don't forget you can call at your health centre without an appointment, or use the *Urgencias* service at La Longuera, available from 20.00 to 08.00 Mon-Fri, and during weekends and holidays. At other times Puerto Real Hospital operates a 24 hours *Urgencias* service

Be aware of the signs of a stroke. The mnemonic is 'FAST'

- F** Face may appear droopy
- A** Arms may be drooping
- S** Speech may be slurred
- T** Time counts. It is essential to minimise the delay before treatment.

It is advisable to have your blood pressure checked regularly. You can have this done free of charge at any pharmacy. High blood pressure is known as "the silent killer", as there may be no symptoms, and it can lead to a stroke.

Other useful phone numbers:

National Police:	091	Local Police:	092
Civil Guard:	062	Fire Services:	080 or 085
Road Emergencies:	011	Gender Violence:	016

For more information on when to use these numbers, see www.lodgerin.com/public/posts/emergency-phone-numbers-in-spain

...and a reminder where you can find ChiFRA:

Website: <https://chifra-ageconcern.com/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100071300016978>

Telephone: +34 634 31 52 89

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