



# MALMESBURY GARDEN CLUB

March *NEWSLETTER* 2011

[www.malmesburygardenclub.org.uk](http://www.malmesburygardenclub.org.uk)

Chairman - Ron Peel

Secretary - Ellie Church

## *Jottings From The Chair*

A recent study by the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardens says that allotment holders can save almost £1,400 a year by growing their own fruit and vegetables. This would equate to about £26 from an average family's weekly shopping bill. The saving takes account of rent, buying seeds and fertiliser. The study shows the average holder spends two hundred hours on their plots, including relaxation and talking to other holders. There are approximately 330,000 allotments in Britain with 100,000 people on waiting lists \*



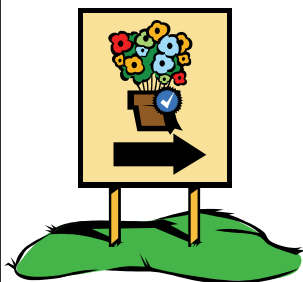
If only the good life were that easy; early snow and late floods can delay planting, carrot fly moves in, lettuces do well but tend to bulk at the same time, etc.

I recently received from Dobies a letter saying that they had once again been named 'Best Buy Seed Supplier' in the October 2010 'Which?' survey. A seed supplier survey in the November edition of BBC Gardeners World magazine also found that 'Dobies consistently showed best value for money in our comparisons'.

\*(As Michael Caine used to say 'Not many people know that'.)

*Ron Peel*

### **MALMESBURY GARDEN CLUB'S ANNUAL PLANT SALE and CAKE STALL IN THE MARKET CROSS ON SATURDAY 28<sup>th</sup> MAY**



In the March 2010 news letter I used the slogan "If you can grow it we can sell it". Well I am pleased to say we did. The move to the Market Cross was a real success and by 11.30 we had literally sold all our produce, i.e. plants, cakes and spaces on our raffle board.

But even with our treasurer keeping a tight rein on the club's expenses, the club ended the year with a small loss on its accounts. Therefore, as this is the club's main source of income, I am hoping our members can show more support again this year. As usual we will need:

Annuals, Perennials, Climbers, Grasses, Herbs, Shrubs Vegetables and a large variety of Bedding Plants

To all the Ladies & Gents who like baking, if you could make and donate a cake for Pam's table it will all help to swell the club's funds .



Thank you for all your support. It is much appreciated!

*Graham Rees—Plant Sale Organiser*

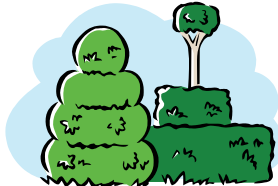
# MEETINGS-EVENTS-ACTIVITIES

## March Meeting Monday 14th March

7:30 pm in the Charlton Village Hall

“Box, Yew and Topiary”  
ROGER TURNER

Roger is a lecturer on plants and gardens and is also an architect and garden designer. He has written several books of gardening. Roger has talked to us before on Lust and Loveliness in the Garden, Euphorbias and also The Naked Gardener (a bare patch and no ideas).



## April Meeting

Monday 11th April

7:30 pm in the Charlton Village Hall

“Some Less Usual Vegetables”  
VALERIE BROOKS

Valerie has given talks to the club previously on Madeira, the Island of Flowers and on Gardens in Scotland. For this talk she turns her attention to some less usual vegetables for our gardens.



## Somerfords Garden Club Trips

The Somerfords Garden Club have spaces on the following trips which they have arranged and have extended an invitation to our Club. The two trips are:-

1. Day trip to Malvern Spring Show on Saturday, 14th May. The cost including entry is £27. Full payment required on booking. Coach can pick up in Malmesbury by arrangement.
2. Tour of Shropshire between Friday 24th and Tuesday 28th June based at the Telford Park hotel (3\*). Full itinerary of visits (admission to 8 venues included in price). Cost is £319 per person in a twin/double room; £369 for a single room. This is a very brief précis of a two page document. £50 deposit on booking with the balance by 15th April. Coach can pick up in Malmesbury by arrangement.

For fuller details or to make a booking please contact David Sheath by telephone 01249 720017 or by email [davidmsheath@btinternet.com](mailto:davidmsheath@btinternet.com)

## Request for Feedback on Potential Malmesbury Garden Club Outings in 2011



### Proposal

Share cars, share cost of fuel.  
Agreed mileage rate to be set.

### Where?

- Great Chalford Manor and Gardens
- Iford Manor and Peto Gardens
- Rodbourne Gardens

### Interested?

Please speak to Ellie (Secretary) at a meeting or telephone 01666 510490

## Subscriptions

A reminder that annual subscriptions are outstanding. The cost remains at £7 per member. Payment can be made at the remaining monthly talks (March and April); by placing in the Club post box in the E & S hardware store; or by post to Redlands, West End, Brinkworth, Chippenham, SN15 5DA. Registration form on page 5.

If you wish to receive your membership card urgently please enclose a stamped, self addressed envelope. To take advantage of discounts offered by the named retail outlets ensure that you produce your membership card before your goods are “scanned” at the checkout.

Thanks Sean O'Shea



# Out of Favour?

By Keith



## Comments from the garden....

It's always the case that you can prune and train a plant for years and then for no reason it gives up. Having been a feature for 20 years or more, suddenly it is gone and you have to begin all over again. Overall, this is not as bad as it sounds. Newly raised plants will sometimes have a better scent, more vibrant colours and a longer flowering period.

## Gladioli

Correct me if I am wrong, but it seems that very few people grow gladioli these days. It is one of the old cottage garden flowers alongside lupins, hollyhocks and delphiniums. It could be that their requirement to be lifted for the winter, dried off, kept frost free and re-planted the following spring is a discouragement. Saying that, a good 5" covering of bark once they are cut down would protect the corms. Dame Edna Everage always had a bunch, for a short time, as she would say hello possums and throw them into the audience.



(telegraph.co.uk)

As with a lot of plants, many new varieties and colours have been produced over the years. They vary in height from 18" to 4ft. The large flowering Dutch gladioli have an amazing colour range from white through to reds, oranges, blues, mauves and yellow green varieties, with a height of 4ft. If you prefer a shorter variety, the Dutch butterfly gladioli would suit you better. Again it has a wide variety of colours to choose from and they are more suitable for decorative purposes in the home. They will reach a height of 30". A new strain of semi dwarf hybrid gladioli are now available only growing to a height of 2ft. This variety flowers the entire length of the flower shoot at the same time and it also has a good colour range.

All the above varieties need lifting in the autumn and then dried off. However there are a couple of varieties that can be left in the ground if you have a sheltered spot. Although it has a smaller range of colours, the early flowering gladioli Nanus has very good colour combinations, reaching a height of 18". The only hardy gladioli I know of is *G. byzantinus*, a wine coloured variety with a narrow white stripe. It

flowers during May, June at a height of 2ft. I have listed below some of the popular varieties of each group:

### Large Dutch Gladioli

Peter Pears-apricot/salmon  
Jessica-salmon/rose  
Priscilla-rose/cream blotch  
Advance-red/white vein  
Topaz-orange/red centre  
Royal Dutch-violet/white blotch  
Home Coming-white/purple tip  
Green Star-lime/green



### Dutch Butterfly

Jackpot-salmon orange/yellow heart  
Spring Green-greenish yellow/red marks  
Violetta-deep purple/white veins

### Semi Dwarf Varieties

Flevo Amico-purple pink/white centre  
Smile-lemon yellow/red centre  
Zippora-pale pink/white

### Early Dwarf Nanus

Claudia-red/yellow striped throat  
Elvira-pale pink/red blotches  
Nymph-white/red blotches

Planting of all varieties should commence from March to the end of May for continuous flowering.

## Keith's Choice Plants *Persicaria*

Also known as Tovar "Painters Palette", syn as *Polygonum virginianum*. A very unusual plant with green and gold variegated foliage and brown markings. Flowers are greenish/white and tinted pink. It flowers late summer/autumn with a height of 4ft.

## No Disease Please

**Gladiolus Corm Rot:** ridged brown markings appear on the corm. Other bulbs may also be affected. When growing, the leaves will show signs of yellow striping and then die. A fungus is the cause. Dispose of infected plants, dust with sulphur when in storage and plant on a new site each year.

## *Pests Paradise*

**Gladiolus Thrips:** The foliage develops small black spots. The flowers are also discoloured and may fail to open. The sap feeding thrip, which is brownish black or pale yellow when young, can be found in the flower bud and on the lower part of the leaves. Spray with bug clear as directed in the evenings. They are more troublesome in hot dry summers.

### *Plants to enjoy in March/April*

*Anemone blanda, Magnolia stellata, Osmanthus x burkwoodii, Bergenia, Clematis alpina, Iris danfordiae, Brunnera macrophylla, Tulips in variety, Pulmonaria.*

### *.....Tasks for March/April.....*

- Plant out early sown sweet peas
- Cut back winter flowering heathers
- Cut back autumn flowering shrubs, fuchsias, buddlejas, etc.
- Sow half hardy annuals
- Prune bedding roses, hybrid teas and floribundas
- Spray roses against black spot
- Spray fruit trees with spring spray
- Put slug bait around tender plants, delphiniums etc.
- Complete planting of lilies
- Apply general fertilizer to the borders
- Sow under cloches early carrots and lettuce
- Sow herbs under glass: Basil, Coriander, etc.
- Plant onion sets, potatoes
- Sow wrinkled peas
- Sow late summer cabbage and leeks
- For April: sow brussels sprouts, kale, etc.

## *From the Vegetable Plot*

*By Keith*

### **Salad Days**



For many years I always grew Webbs Wonderful Lettuce and the winter lettuce Arctic King. There were others worth growing like Iceberg and Tom Thumb, but nothing like the selection we have today. Where to start! All the vegetable catalogues now say your salad will look better if you add the colourful leaves of the many lettuces that are now available. Let's look and see. The Radicchio lettuce 'Palla Rossa' produces red and white leaves with a slight bitter taste. Yugoslavian red lettuce, a reddish tinged butter head variety, and of course many cos varieties are available. Cut and come again mixtures are also readily available in a number of varieties. Bright and spicy salad leaves include pak choy, mizuna, Greek cress and mustard red frills. If you prefer a less strong taste, the continental salad could be the one for you. It contains romaine lettuce, frisee, lolla rossa and lambs lettuce. The herby salad is one I prefer containing green lettuce, salad rocket, Greek cress and chicory. The French and Italian mixtures are also worth a try. They contain a mixture of many leaves including basil, salad bowl, red ribbed dandelion, chicory and various lettuce leaves. Newer varieties are always being produced, salad leaves Niche mixed is one I am trying this year. It contains leaf radish, leaf carrot, kale red russian, red amaranth, golden purslane and salad burnet.

### **New Season**

The time has come to start sowing seeds in cloches or frames. Early lettuce, carrots, radish, peas, beetroot, spring onion and potatoes can all be planted or sown. The greenhouse if you have heat or a propagator also comes into play. A number of vegetables can be started including leeks, parsley, basil, courgette, peppers, chilli, broad beans, dwarf french beans and runner beans. The last two varieties mentioned are best sown in April. I like to get ahead a bit so I also sow spinach and swiss chard in 3" pots, 5 seeds per pot. Also some brassicas can be sown in strips 8 seeds per strip. This will be the first sowing of cauliflower, green sprouting and cabbage. A second sowing of these and other brassica varieties will be sown later on, thereby keeping a continual supply in the garden. I also start my onion sets off in seed trays. By giving the onion set a root system the birds will not be able to pull them out of the ground. Good luck.



*Keith*



## Bulletin Board



### Would you like to receive your Newsletter via Email?



Just email me at [info@malmesburygardenclub.org.uk](mailto:info@malmesburygardenclub.org.uk) and I will add your name to the mailing list.

*Editor*

( If you do receive your newsletter via email, and you are planning on changing your email address, please let me know and I can make sure there is no disruption to your newsletter deliveries. )

### Mark your Diaries

The Harvest Supper will be held on the 21st of October this year. Make note of the date so you will not miss it!



## Membership Form

### MALMESBURY GARDEN CLUB

Subscriptions for 2011 are now due and can be paid at meetings or direct to Mr. Sean O'Shea, Redlands, West End, Brinkworth, Chippenham, SN15 5DA or The Club Post Box, E & S Hardware, High Street, Malmesbury.  
PLEASE SECURE CASH/CHEQUE IN AN ENVELOPE WITH THIS FORM

Enclosed £7.00 single membership       £14.00 double membership

(Mr) (Mrs) (Miss) (Ms):.....Tel No.....

(Mr) (Mrs) (Miss) (Ms).....

Address:.....

.....  
email address.....