



MALMESBURY GARDEN CLUB

November *NEWSLETTER* 2011

www.malmesburygardenclub.org.uk

Chairman - Ron Peel

Secretary - Ellie Church

Jottings From The Chair

Dobies catalogues have arrived and are available at meeting or from the address given below. Orders are required by the end of November. Discounts will not be available after that date.

Ron Peel
'Derry Hill', Milbourne Lane,
Malmesbury,
SN16 9JQ



The main discount available will depend on the size of the order. The main discount is on **PACKETED** flower and vegetable seeds. Bulbs, fruit, plants, onion sets, potatoes and sundries are 10% discount only, regardless of the order total. *Ron Peel*

Reminder from Graham: Now that the 2012 Dobies catalogue are available, I thought it would be an ideal time to remind you of the plant sale next May. If you can order that extra packet of seeds (you will get the full club discount provided you order before the end of November) and grow some extra plants for the sale, it will help to keep the club in the black as this is the main source of income for the club. Thank you.

BANK HOLIDAY SHOW

My thanks to all who gave their time and expertise to make our Club Show a success. The work put in to prepare for a show is quite enormous, the printing of schedules, prize cards, certificates, posters, benching cards and all the paperwork to record the results - my sincere thanks to all who helped. We only have the Town Hall for a very limited, but very expensive time, and it is thanks to the members who transport the extra tables from the farm up into the exhibition hall and transform them into spotless white rows, all neatly divided out to receive the entries.

Of course without our judges we would not have a show - they give their time to the club on a busy bank holiday and are really only seen by our members who steward for them.

So as you can see the work and the expense of putting on a show is huge whether have just a few entries or are suddenly overwhelmed with exhibits at the last moment !

This is what the show is all about - our members and friends of the club bringing in their exhibits to let us enjoy them. This year was the last that Mr Les Howells, was to compete in. The club has always been fortunate to have a showman like Les who can shown us how well flowers and vegetables can be grown no matter what the season. When Les accepted his awards, he thanked the Club for all the work we do in putting on such a fine show and he made a plea to you all - which your committee heartily endorse - " You must be in it to win it !"

There were many other competitors who won prizes with their exhibits. Sandra Anderson won cups for her baking and preserves, whilst Gladys Tidy was a winner yet again with her knitting. Although the Floral Arrangement classes had been reduced due to a fall off in support over the last few years, Stephanie Whatley showed that the quality was still there with her clever arrangement of flowers. Young Miss Faye O'Reilly won two awards for her miniature garden - a future garden designer here! After posing with Graham Rees to have my picture taken for the newspaper, the editor decided to dump us old fogies in favour of young George Lockett and his amazing mouse he had made from a carrot and put George's picture on the front page.

Have I forgotten to thank anybody ? - yes of course I must have. Thanks to the ladies who 'manned' the entrance, and those who organised the raffle and Louise's 'tea and cake' team who ran a very smart 'cafe' and also kept our busy treasurer lubricated. And to those who cleared everything away in record time - a great thank -you.

Derek

MEETINGS-EVENTS-ACTIVITIES

November Meeting
Monday 14th November
7:30 pm in the Charlton Village Hall

“Roses”
THOMAS SANDAY



A talk on the care, history, cultivation and pruning of roses. Thomas is a retired managing director of John Sanday (ROSES) Ltd. He grew up on a rose nursery and is a keen practical rose grower.

December Meeting
Monday 12th December
7:30 pm in the Charlton Village Hall

Annual General Meeting

After a short, formal meeting to conduct the business of the Club, the AGM will include the ever enlightening horticultural quiz (organized by Derek Tilney) and a social gathering with refreshments.

The necessary paperwork for the AGM is being distributed with this newsletter, including the Chairman’s report. Copies of the certified accounts should be available to members at the meeting. As we prepare for the coming year, this is a great opportunity to voice your opinions; all inputs are welcome.

January Meeting
Monday 9th January
7:30 pm in the Charlton Village Hall

“Besoms and Gypsy Flowers”
CARL SADLER



In addition to a talk on the given subject, Carl will make a trug as he was unable to make one at the talk he gave us last February.



Dates for Additional Meetings in 2012

- February 13th ANDREW DOLMAN — “Off the Beaten Track—Hidden Gems”
- March 12th DUNCAN COOMBES — “Bulbs for a Colourful Spring Display”
- April 16th GEORGE HARGREAVES— “The Great Plant Hunters and their Introductions”

North Wiltshire Villages Flower Club



Club members have been invited to attend the Christmas Open Meeting that will be held at the Sundial Theatre, Cirencester College, GL7 1XA on November 16th. The doors will be opening at 6:45pm and the event will start at 7:30pm. Ian Buxton, a National Demonstrator, will be demonstrating “Christmas Comes”, so we will be able to see fabulous floral art created before our eyes. Refreshments will be available and music and chat will round off the evening. Contact

Jenny Payne, 01666 577 455,
Drenna Ruddy, 01666 860 467 or
Helen Curtis on 01666 860 870

to obtain tickets which are on sale for £9.

The Sundial is on the Cirencester College site, on the outskirts of Cirencester, on the A419 Stroud Road (brown signed). Turn onto the 419, signed Stroud, and after approximately 200 yards turn right into the Cirencester College site and follow signs to the theatre. If you miss the right turn you will soon see the Royal Agricultural College entrance on your left in which case you have gone too far and need to retrace your steps. Free parking is available at the theatre.

Winter: Colour and Scent

By Keith

Comments from the garden....

For the first time in a long time I had a hedgehog in the garden. I called him prickles. He stayed for a few days then wandered off into the field behind my house. I once had several cows in the garden, I will not tell you what I called them.

Treats for Winter

I touched on winter flowering shrubs and plants in the Jan / Feb newsletter last year, but with so many plants to choose from, it's worth another mention.

With the days of light being very short it's a pleasant sight to see some colour in the garden from your



windows. The following combination is excellent for coordinating colours, especially in the winter. The shrub *Cornus stolonifera* (dogwood) has

bright yellow stems. At its base, plant *Iris unguicularis*, which has large fragrant lavender purple to deep violet blue flowers with a large patch of yellow on the inner petals, ht 30cm. Prune the *Cornus* to its base early spring.



Fragrance in the garden during winter is also pleasing. The shrub *Lonicera fragrantissima* (honeysuckle) is a popular choice. Its clusters of creamy white fragrant flowers are produced on bare branches in late winter. Plant this shrub near a doorway or terrace and prune after flowering. The Christmas box or *Sarcococca hookeriana* 'Purple Stem' has small white flowers tinted pink. It gives off a rich honey like scent. Plant out of the wind to intensify the scent. *Ribes laurifolium* (flowering currant) is a small growing shrub covered in late winter with clusters of greenish yellow flowers. The earliest flowering *Camellia* is *C. sasanqua* 'Crimson King'. It flowers late autumn through winter and can be in flower over Christmas. It has glossy green leaves with crimson red flowers. Plant in lime free soil, a tub or large pot would be good, and place in a sheltered spot out of early morning sun.

Abeliophyllum distichum (white forsythia) is a underrated shrub that flowers late winter / early spring. Its bare branches carry clusters of small white flowers which give off a almond scent. Should you want a little height, a good small tree for winter colour is *Prunus x subhirtella* 'Autumnalis Rosea'. This is a flowering cherry with clusters of semi-

double pink flowers that appear on bare branches from autumn to early spring. If you require a larger tree or spreading shrub, look no further than the *Cornus mas* or cornelian cherry. In winter its bare branches are covered with clusters of small yellow flowers, in late summer or early autumn it has bright red berries, ht 30ft.

Keith's Choice Plants

Aucuba japonica 'Gold Dust'

The spotted laurel has glossy green leaves spotted and splashed with golden yellow. It is a small bushy shrub that contrasts well with other winter plants, ht 3-5ft.

No Disease Please

Dogwood or *Cornus anthracnose*: Spots first develop on lower leaves and then spread upwards late spring or early summer. Canker can also appear on branches. A fungus is the cause. Prune out affected parts. *C. mas* and *C. stolonifera* are not affected by this disease.

Pests Paradise

Winter moth: Small holes are eaten into newly emerging spring foliage. Pale green caterpillars bind the leaf together with silk threads. Spray early spring with bug clear as directed.

Plants to enjoy in November/December



Iris unguicularis,
Jasminum nudiflorum,
Skimmia japonica,
Chimonanthus
(wintersweet), *Mahonia*,
Erica carnea (heather),
Ilex (holly), *Arbutus*
(strawberry tree).



.....Tasks for November/December.....

- Plant out roses
- Prune climbing roses
- Cut down herbaceous plants—fork in bonemeal
- Plant lilies—place sand beneath and plant at a 45° angle
- Cut down tall bedding roses by 1/2 to stop wind rock
- Divide herbaceous plants discarding centre
- Spray chrysanthemums against mildew
- Lift Gladioli and dry off in frost proof place
- Pinch out September grown Sweet Peas
- Plant fruit trees
- Spray all fruit trees with winter wash
- Plant Raspberry canes—try autumn fruiting Zeva
- Clear rotting Brassica leaves and other rotting vegetable matter
- Dig empty veg areas and leave rough over winter
- Complete planting of all spring flowering bulbs
- Regularly check stored bulbs and tubers
- Place mouse bait where necessary—protect from domestic animals
- Lag all outside taps or turn off where possible.



Reflections

I can only assume that everyone had a good year on their vegetable plot. In the Sep / Oct newsletter Ron Peel said he had a marvellous crop of runner bean 'Moonlight' a french runner bean cross. I must say the vegetable and fruit sections in the flower show were of a high quality as always. The dry start to the season was a problem especially with germination, but overall the growing season was a good one.

As I said in the March newsletter I tried a new 'cut and come again' salad called 'Niche'. Its selection of leaves was a good one. I also tried some new carrots called 'Flyaway' and 'Resistaflly', both reputed to help ward off carrot fly. It seems to have been better, but not with late sowings. The beetroot variety 'Wodan' F1, again a new variety for me, was very good especially with germination. Not a woody variety, I did not thin out, thereby producing small baby roots. I grew two varieties of courgette, one each of 'Soleil' F1 (yellow) and 'Greenbush'. Both produced well with no problems. Something that cannot be said for my outdoor cucumbers - I chose the variety 'Masterpiece'. I think it must have been the weather, as last year I had so many I even gave some away at the flower show. Broad beans were a great success as were the sweet corn, the crop variety grown was 'Incredible' F1.

As mentioned in the May / June newsletter, I lost the entire crop of globe artichokes to the severe winter. In March I sowed in the propagator artichoke 'Green Globe' and so far I have picked 15 heads with still more to come from 8 plants. Also giving a fantastic crop were the indoor tomatoes: varieties grown were 'Feline' F1 and 'Sungold'. In total 15 plants were inter planted with basil, so no whitefly. The runner beans and climbing french beans cropped well but it seemed a very short time before they were over. A new pencil variety of dwarf french bean were tried this year called 'Allergria'. The beans were only 6mm thick and 4" long, a very good crop was realised.

All early sown brassica, cauliflower 'Gypsy' F1, green sprouting 'Belstar' F1 and cabbage 'Hispi' were all exceptional and, of course, early sowings need no spraying. Peas 'Hurst Green Shaft' were grown producing good pods, thankfully with no maggots. After the main caterpillar attack on the brassica bed containing brussels sprout, purple sprouting, savoy and a late crop of green sprouting, the plants are looking quite sturdy which is good considering I feel we could be in for another cold winter.

Seasonal Activities



Now is the time to clear the vegetable plot and incorporate by digging in some farmyard manure. However, do not use manure where you intend to plant carrots as this will cause them to split. Leave the ground roughly dug so as to let the frost break down the soil. Remove any yellow or dead leaves from the brassica bed, and continue to weed through overwintering vegetables and remove any that start to rot due to bad weather. Remove old raspberry canes and tie in the new. Clean up strawberry beds cutting back the foliage to the crown. Prune out a few old canes from blackcurrant bushes to encourage new canes, and spur-prune redcurrants as they produce fruit on the old canes. In addition, you can also remove the odd old cane to promote new ones. Cut out the long old fruiting canes of loganberry, tayberry and blackberry and tie in the new growth.

No Vegetable Nightmares Please.

Leek white tip: Leaf tips turn yellow and by late autumn this will progress down the stem which subsequently becomes papery and rots. A fungus is the cause. Remove affected plants and do not grow on same ground for five years.

Root aphids: Plants will be slow to grow and will sometimes wilt. A white powdery or fluffy wax is given off by the aphids thereby giving the roots a white coating. I have had success by watering around the affected plant a weak solution of Jeys fluid, but this is not always successful. If the plant has been infected too much it is best to remove it and give a stronger dose of Jeys fluid to the affected ground.

Finally, as the year comes to a close, may I take this opportunity to wish you all a very Happy Christmas.



Keith

And now for something completely different....

I joined the crowds at the Garden Centre across from Lacock on Sunday to buy a couple of large plastic shelf trays for our porch. I was surprised to find myself in a forest of plastic Christmas trees all blinking away in the gloom. Not daunted I headed for where I knew the trays were kept only to discover they had been moved. Deciding to seek help, I approached an intelligent looking manager who in turn consulted the oracle at the information desk and after looking at the computer, they told me they were very sorry but they hadn't any plastic shelf trays. As I milled around with the crowds in the 'Garden' centre looking at the budgies, the bunnies, the china ornaments, the organic meat and the jeans that stopped at 34" waist, I had my Livingstone moment - for to my delight, I discovered tucked away in a corner, a display of every size and shape of plastic pots and right bang in the front, a selection of shelf trays in a choice of sizes and colours ! If you should need a plastic shelf tray I suggest you get it before they are moved to make way for fireworks, or Easter eggs.

Derek



Bulletin Board



Invitation for Club Members from the Great British Gardens

Great British Gardens are delighted to host Graeme Mitchell, Managing Director of Brightwater Holidays, for an informative and light hearted talk about his experiences as a Garden Tour Operator, with slides from a colourful collection of gardens around the world.

Date: 1 December, 2011

Venue: Kings Arms Hotel Function Room (above the bar), Malmesbury High Street

Time: Doors open at 7pm, talk begins at 7.30pm

Refreshments: Free drink on arrival. Free teas and coffee, along with nibbles, will be available after the presentation (the bar in the function room will be open from 7pm to 9.30pm)

To reserve a free ticket please

- Visit our Office: The Great British Gardens Office is located adjacent to the Market Cross in Malmesbury
- Phone us on 01666 829390, or
- Email us at greatbritishgardens@yahoo.co.uk