



MALMESBURY GARDEN CLUB

January *NEWSLETTER* 2012

www.malmesburygardenclub.org.uk

Chairman - Ron Peel

Secretary - Ellie Church

Jottings From The Chair

Twenty one members attended the A.G.M. The official business was completed in ten minutes. We then listened to an interesting talk by Ann Lodwick on making apple juice, and sampled some. This was followed by a quiz organized by Derek, and some excellent refreshments.



The Dobies order was sent recently. The number ordering was marginally down, but the total order easily entitled us to get the maximum discount. Thank you for sending them in on time.

On behalf of the committee, may I wish everybody a happy and successful gardening New Year.

Ron Peel

Look on the bright side !

2012 - How times flies - another new year and time for new resolutions - this year I'm going to resolve to label everything as I plant it - no more trusting to memory.

It won't be long before your committee will be looking at the show arrangements and deciding which classes are in and which are out. Over the years I have visited many shows to pick up new ideas and I am pleased to hear that other clubs have introduced classes from our schedule.

The most amazing show I ever visited was the Miner's Show at Risca in Gwent which used to be held back in the 70's, when coal was king. The hall was no bigger than ours but the vegetable section was huge. The stage was piled high with prizes - there was a new cooker for the winner in the baking section! I think every shop in the district gave a prize, I doubt if it paid to refuse, the miners were a tough lot!

This year I went to see my old uncle Tom at Widecombe - this was the 161st year the fair had been held in the village and it was great to see old Tom on his mare. I hoped to get some ideas for new classes in the Horticultural Tent but I was disappointed to see how few classes there were - just three classes for flowers which included a class for any single flower ! The Home Produce entries were not up to the standard of the entries in our show - but they did have a beer tent which we don't (yet).

With all the gloomy forecasts for 2012 perhaps it will be the year when many folks will be staying close to home - so let's resolve to make that extra effort to put on a great show in Malmesbury for the August Bank Holiday !

Wishing you all the very best - Derek.

MEETINGS-EVENTS-ACTIVITIES

January Meeting

Monday 9th January

7:30 pm in the Charlton Village Hall

“Besoms and Gypsy Flowers”
CARL SADLER



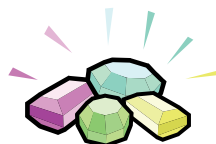
In addition to a talk on the given subject, Carl will make a trug as he was unable to make one at the talk he gave us last February.

February Meeting

Monday 13th February

7:30 pm in the Charlton Village Hall

“Off the Beaten Track—Hidden Gems”
ANDREW TOLMAN



Andrew is a member of our club. He will be talking to us about secret, less well known gardens, mostly from the south of the country.

March Meeting

Monday 12th March

7:30 pm in the Charlton Village Hall

“Bulbs for a Colourful Spring Display”
DUNCAN COOMBS

Duncan is a lecturer in horticulture at Pershore College. He is a keen photographer, traveller and gardener.

April Meeting

Monday 16th April

7:30 pm in the Charlton Village Hall

“The Great Plant Hunters and their Introductions”
GEORGE HARGREAVES

George is a keen amateur gardener and photographer.

Subscription Time Again

Your annual subscription becomes due on 1st. January. The cost has again been frozen at £7.00 per member. Please find a subscription form on the last page of this newsletter. Payment can be made at either

- forthcoming talks
- by placing in the club post box at the rear of the E & S shop in the High Street (just beyond the counter)
- by posting to me at Redlands, West End, Brinkworth, Chippenham, SN15 5DA.

Thank you *Sean O'Shea*



Bulletin Board



Can you Spare a Sod?

I have been approached by a member who wishes to find some ground to cultivate for the growing of vegetables. If anyone has some spare garden or allotment space please let me know and I will introduce you to the member concerned.

Sean O'Shea (tel. 01666 510490;
email seanoshea490@btinternet.com)

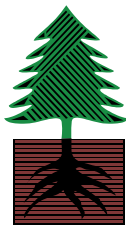
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and I will add your name to the
mailing list.

Editor

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Dwarf Conifers

By Keith

Comments from the garden....

I trust you all had a restful time over Christmas and with all those presents, a new garden fork, garden gift vouchers and the latest footwear for the garden, you are all set up for the coming season. Good luck.

Dwarf Conifers

In the May/June 2011 newsletter, I wrote about flowering plants for the rockery, but I did not mention dwarf conifers. These are a must as they give form and a little height to an otherwise fairly flat area. The varieties mentioned in this article are slow growing and I note the approximate size after ten years.

Over the years, hundreds of varieties have been raised all with different shapes and colours. *Chamaecyparis obtusa* 'Nana Lutea', is a golden yellow variety that eventually forms a pyramidal bush, ht 18" to 24". *C. lawsoniana* 'Pygmaea Argentea' is another good form with foliage that is bluish green and creamy white, ht 12 to 18". The *Cupressus cypress* 'Pygmaea' has scale like foliage eventually forming a round bush, ht 6 to 8". The *Thuja plicata* 'Rogersii' makes a rounded bush with yellow green foliage, ht 12 to 18".

There are many more of the above varieties also in different colours, some spreading low on the ground. The *Tsuga* (hemlock) *canadensis* 'Minuta' forms a globe shaped bush with deep green spines, ht 4-6".

Not all conifers are evergreen. There are a number of deciduous conifers, including *Taxodium*, *Metasequoia*, *Ginkgo* and *Larix*. All of these have good tall and dwarf varieties. The *Cryptomeria* or Japanese cedar has a variety, *C. japonica* 'Spiralis', with unusual rope like branches that have light green leaves, ht 18-24".

As you can see, the dwarf conifer range is vast, I have only mentioned a few. Nearly all nurseries have a good selection for you to choose from, they may not have the ones I have mentioned but they will have many worth a place in your rockery.



Keith's Choice Plants

Anaphalis triplinervis, or pearl everlasting

A low growing form with silver grey woolly foliage topped with hundreds of tiny pearl like flowers lasting well into the autumn., ht 18".

No Disease Please

Turf Snow Mound: Patches of grass turn brown eventually showing signs of a fluffy pale pink fungal growth. This fungal growth generally appears in the autumn and in mild winters. Keeping the grass aerated by spiking and scarifying and keeping off the grass in wet and snowy conditions will help prevent this condition.

Pests Paradise

Earthworms: Earthworms are not a pest, in fact they can be quite beneficial in the garden, but they can cause problems at times. Generally a good thing to have in the lawn, earthworms aerate the ground and pull down organic matter. However, if you have a certain type of worm in both the spring and autumn your lawn could be covered with worm casts which spoils the look of a fine lawn. The best approach is to scatter the casts with a besom broom or springbok rake before mowing.

Plants to enjoy in January/February

Daphne mezereum, *Crocus*, *Sempervivum* (houseleek), *Skimmia japonica*, *Garrya elliptica*, *Mahonia*, *Cornus mas*, *Iris reticulata*, *Galanthus* (snowdrop) *Jasminum nudiflorum*, *Muscari*, (grape hyacinth).



.....Tasks for January/February.....

- Continue to plant roses—weather permitting
- Examine roses for ‘wind rock’ and firm in
- Continue pruning climbing roses, honeysuckle, summer jasmine etc.
- Cut out canker on fruit trees and paint over with pruning compound
- Prune apple and pear trees, but not if frost persists
- Spray peach and nectarine against leaf curl with copper fungicide
- Continue spraying fruit bushes and trees with a winter wash
- Continue clearing herbaceous plant tops
- Cut down summer flowering clematis in February - check variety first!
- Prune back winter jasmine after flowering
- Examine all stored corms, bulbs and tubers
- Set up early potatoes in trays to sprout
- Sow early broad beans and wrinkled pea varieties
- Sow early carrots and parsley under frames
- Plant shallots late February



From the Vegetable Plot

By Keith

Herbs revisited

Over the years I have been asked to create areas for herbs, just a small corner of the garden, or larger areas with box edging that provides different sections for different herbs. Pots lend themselves readily to herbs and they can be placed closer to the kitchen. Most herbs are happy in pots, although some will need re-potting into larger pots; for example, bay and sage. There are obviously herbs which we all use at some time in the kitchen. These include parsley, mint, thyme, sage, tarragon and rosemary. Lovage can grow up to 6ft high and its leaves can be used before the seed heads form. This is a good plant for the back of your herb garden. Another tall herb is fennel. It can grow up to 6ft high and its foliage is feathery with small yellow seed heads on large umbels in late summer. The variety *F. purpureum* (bronze fennel) only grows to 3ft high and has bronze feathery foliage. I have grown both English and French tarragon (ht 3 ft.), the latter being the more popular. Unfortunately, it is also the more tender of the two. There are many forms of thyme which can be planted hanging over the edge of pots or on a low wall. Many varieties flower profusely in shades of pink and white. There is also a variety with green-gold leaves with pink and mauve flowers, ht 1ft. Sage comes in a number of varieties, *S. icterina* (golden sage), *S. latifolia* (broad leaved sage) and *S. tricolour* (purple red sage). Finally, always leave a space in your garden for the annual herb seeds such as coriander and dill.

Seasonal Activities

I feel we need a break at this time of year, so put up your feet and glance through the seed catalogues. I hope you got your Dobies orders in by the deadline. If you do feel the urge to get started, it is a good time to plant rhubarb. When planting, place well-rotted manure around and beneath the plant. Established rhubarb would also benefit from a good cover of manure or compost but do not cover the growing point or crown. Should you wish early pickings of rhubarb in mid- February, cover with an upturned dustbin, which we should all have spare now.



In February, weather permitting, sow early wrinkled peas and broad beans, also, if you have frames, an early sowing of carrots can be made. It is possible to plant an early crop of shallots, and should you wish to grow asparagus now is the time to order - two year old crowns are best. Continue to dig Jerusalem artichokes as required they make a wonderful soup if cream added. Early potatoes can now be set up to shoot in trays.

No Vegetable Nightmares

Parsnip Viruses: Leaves produce yellow bands or flecking. The foliage can be distorted, stunted and lacking growth. A number of viruses are the problem, most probably caused by aphids. Controlling aphid attacks should help the problem. Remove diseased leaves to prevent contaminating adjacent foliage.

Mint Beetle: Metallic round green beetles eat holes in leaves mid to late summer, the small black larvae also feed on the leaves. Infestations are generally small and removal by hand is the best remedy as they are easy to see.

Sprout Haters Nightmare



If you are not fond of this seasonal treat, we have bad news for you. The press has reported that this has been a bumper year for the production of sprouts. The are larger than ever and have ripened three weeks earlier than usual.

Due to the warmer weather this year the sprouts are particularly sweet and flavourful. So if you have not sampled these tasty treats of late it may be time to give them a try. Pass the sprouts!

Membership Form

MALMESBURY GARDEN CLUB

Subscriptions for 2012 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

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