



MALMESBURY and DISTRICT GARDEN CLUB

Nov/Dec NEWSLETTER 2016

www.malmesburygardenclub.org.uk

Chair and Secretary – Ellie Church

Contributions for the Newsletter should be sent to the Editor: argoodall1952@hotmail.co.uk



JOTTINGS FROM THE CHAIR

The sure sign that winter is on its way, British summer time ends.

We enjoyed the Harvest Supper on 22 October, all made possible by a team of members. Special thanks to Graham Rees, Sean O'Shea, Margaret Medland, Louise Williams, Derek Tilney – my roses are beautiful. A very big thank you to Gail Hughes who made the floral decorations and to Ann Rees who was my very able co-pilot. The evening ended with John Hughes entertaining us all with piano music and there was also a duet by Gail and John. Thank you both. John will you keep next year free so we can book you again? Also thanks to all the members who came and made the evening a success.

Just a reminder that the AGM is in December. We shall hold the meeting followed by refreshments and a club social evening. I hope as many members as possible will attend.

Ellie Church – Chairperson

Time to think about next year

The November Newsletter is published and the Dobies seed catalogue has been distributed, so it's an ideal time to remind you that the **2017 Plant Sale**

is on **SATURDAY 27 MAY 2017**

So please order those few extra seeds to grow on and make the sale a financial success.

Graham Rees, Plant Sale Organiser



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 ½ 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.

MEETINGS - EVENTS - ACTIVITIES

<p>Monday 14 November 2016 7.30pm in the Charlton Village Hall <i>'Easy Alpines and Low-growing Perennials'</i> Julie Ritchie</p> <p>Julie has run a nursery specialising in perennials and alpines for over 25 years and for 10 years has grown all the plants peat-free. The experience of growing and propagating these plants is shared through her talks and demonstrations.</p>	<p>Monday 12 December 2016 7.30pm in the Charlton Village Hall</p> <p><i>Annual General Meeting</i></p> <p>Followed by refreshments and a Social Evening</p>
<p>Monday 9 January 2017 7.30pm in the Charlton Village Hall <i>'Lacock Abbey'</i> Sue Carter</p> <p>Sue Carter is Head Gardener at the National Trust's Lacock Abbey.</p>	

Notes from Derek

Show review



The committee discussed the recent Show and there are a few suggestions we will be looking at to improve next year's show. One thing we were agreed on was to make an

award in each section for the competitor gaining the most 'points' in that section – we will still have the awards for the best exhibit in each section – we hope this will be an incentive to the members who work hard to bring along several entries. We also discussed ideas to encourage children to enjoy gardening – more of this later. Thanks to all who took part and those who helped with this year's show.

Monthly talks

We have had two very different, but really interesting talks this autumn. Not only did John Mason give a 'hands on' talk on Container Gardening but he introduced us to 'Jack's Magic', a fantastic potting compost – you must try it! (Available at Homebase, Chippenham.) John also gave a lovely plant to our raffle and many members went home with bargain specimen plants. The Basics of Bonsai by Geoff Hobson was another 'hands on' evening – he certainly opened our eyes to the growing of these little trees. Geoff brought along a 70-year specimen Bonsai tree and filled two tables with a diverse collection of amazing trees.

Personally I was very surprised that there weren't more members at these meetings – I didn't know what to expect from these talks but I really enjoyed them both and I can honestly say that I have always learnt something interesting and new at every Garden Club talk.

Halloween

I have had a lot of fun growing pumpkins for some of my little friends. I chose 'Mammoth' from the Club's Dobies seed catalogue. As the pumpkins grew bigger I slipped a wooden board under each fruit to keep it off the ground and I lightly scratched a child's name on each fruit. What started as a little scratch grew to become a raised 'scab' a few millimetres wide. I could hardly lift the biggest pumpkin and my little friends had to take it home in a wheelchair!



Grow your own

Each autumn the garden centres are full of pots of chrysanthemums, ball-shaped masses of blooms – all very tempting. If you grow them in your garden and not in a pot, they would easily grow three or four times the garden centre size. Look online at Woolmans Plants and select from the Tapestry Collection. You will not need a greenhouse to grow on these plants but just remember to protect them from slugs and not to plant them too close together – they will grow!

Derek



FROM THE GARDEN by KEITH

Comments from the garden

I have noticed that the berries on the cotoneaste, pyracantha and other berrying plants have not yet been eaten by birds. Does this mean we are going to get a mild winter?

Roses

Many years ago I removed the roses from four small beds with grass paths between them and a sundial in the middle. The roses were not doing very well and I was told they had been there for about thirty years. The area of grass between the old rose beds was large enough to create four new beds. This was done and they are still going well today. I have found that trying to plant new roses where old ones have been does not work, no matter how and what you plant them with. So the rule is: dig a hole in a place that has not had roses in it, big enough to spread the rose roots, mixing a long-term fertiliser with the soil from the hole. Fork the bottom of the hole, adding some farmyard manure or compost before placing the rose in the hole and refilling. Firm the area around the rose remembering not to plant the rose deeper than the grafted rootstock. Give a hard prune in March and protect from rabbits if necessary (they love the new shoots). A ring of galvanised chicken wire around your rose, about 18" high, will protect it. There are a number of rose fertilisers on the market which should be applied at about 2oz per square yard from March onwards.



There are hundreds of roses to choose from these days and many different groups. I will stick with the well-established hybrid tea rose, of which

there have been many new varieties added over the years. I will list those I have grown and found well worth growing in a bed or on their own.

- H.T. var. Nostalgie, a combination of creamy white and cherry red fragrant blooms, ht 80cm.

- H.T. var. Ruby wedding, a deep red fragrant rose, more vigorous than most.
- H.T. var. Lovers' meeting, orange flowers with bronze-green foliage, very fragrant with a profusion of blooms.

I can't finish without mentioning a few old and well-established hybrid tea roses.

- H.T. var. Pascali, pure white, well scented and a strong grower.
- H.T. var. Dutch gold, large and deep golden yellow with good scent.
- H.T. var. Prima ballerina, buds open to rich rose pink, a vigorous grower with good scent.

Nearly all roses have problems with mildew, rust and black spot. Giving a spray with a rose fungicide before the leaves emerge and again at two week intervals will help stop your roses from, in the worst case, dropping all their leaves.

Keith's choice plant

Azalea var. Persil: as the variety implies, white with an orange flare. A deciduous variety producing hundreds of flowers on bare branches followed by bright green leaves. Spring flowering. Plant in lime free soil.



Pests' Paradise

Rose leaf-rolling sawfly: in late spring/early summer rose leaves become tightly rolled, hang down and are slowly eaten by pale green caterpillars. The rolling effect is brought about by a chemical injection by the female sawfly. Early spraying is recommended. Use a recommended insecticide which will also control aphids.

Plants to enjoy in November/December

Erica (heather), Amelanchier, Jasminum nudiflorum (winter jasmine), Narcissus var. paper white, Iris unguicularis, Mahonia, Arbutus unedo (strawberry tree), Sorbus (mountain ash), Chimonanthus (winter sweet).



FROM THE VEGETABLE PLOT by KEITH

Comments from the veg plot: reflections

Just as I promised in the July newsletter, an update on my glassless greenhouse. It has an aluminium frame, 20ft x 8ft, and on finding out the cost of glass I decided to go down another route. The greenhouse is split 12ft one end with a doorway



8ft at the other end. Every year I find my outdoor tomatoes, no matter how many times I spray them with fungicide, are obliterated – both leaf and tomato – by blight. So the 8ft end of the greenhouse had plastic frames made and attached to the aluminium roof. Under this I had 12 large pots of tomatoes; all performed well with no blight. The 12ft end of the greenhouse had slatted benches made for both sides. The entire greenhouse was then covered from the top of the bench on one side, over the roof and down to the top of the bench the other side, with greenhouse shade netting. Both ends were also covered. From the top of the bench to the ground all the way round, a windbreak was fixed. On the benches, because my vegetable garden is small, I grew melons, three different kinds of cucumbers, peppers, courgettes, strawberries in 5" pots and cut-and-come-again salad. The aluminium framework of the greenhouse was excellent for training the cucumbers, I just put a small piece of netting over the strawberries to stop the birds eating them. The crop was good, with only a fungal problem on the cucumbers. All crops performed well. One thing I must say: with no glass the growing season is shorter, although there is some slight protection from the shading, so some of the plants I grew had to wait until the beginning of June to be planted. The advantages are that with drip from rainfall I had a humid atmosphere and no red spider mite.

Seasonal activities

This is a quiet time of the year. Storing of some vegetables should now be complete – carrots, onions, shallots, potatoes, marrows and cooking apples, if you have room to store them. As late vegetables finish, clean up and dig over leaving the ground rough for the frost to break down. Winter vegetables, such as leeks, brussels sprouts,

savoy cabbage and spinach, should be kept weed free and any rotting leaves removed. There is nothing worse than the smell of rotting cabbage leaves. Should you grow Jerusalem artichokes, dig up a few and place in a pot or box of peat or sand; this can also be done with parsnips, swede, turnips and beetroot so, should the ground get frosted, you will have some in store. A few leeks can also be dug up. Trim the leaf and cut off half the root and place in a large pot or bucket, they will keep perfectly for a week or two should the weather be bad. I find that even the wife can go out and bring in the vegetables. Check your stored vegetables from time to time, one rotten potato in a bag will cause others around it to rot, onions also if going bad will cause the same problem.

Pruning of soft fruit bushes can begin now – gooseberries, currants, blueberries, loganberries and blackberries. Cut all foliage off strawberries in case any disease is present. Cut out all fruited canes of raspberries and tie in the new canes.

Keith's choice vegetable

Leek var. Crusader F1: a totally winter hardy variety which is also British-bred. Stems are long with dark green leaves. This variety is resistant to rust and white tip.



No vegetable nightmares

Leek rust: bright orange pustules (raised areas) are found on the leaves in mid to late autumn, outer leaves being worst affected. Leaves may yellow and die off. Remove and dispose of affected leaves. Avoid use of high nitrogen fertilisers, apply potash at planting time and space plants well apart to improve air circulation. Always plant leeks on a new piece of ground each year.

Some vegetables to enjoy in November/December

Jerusalem artichokes, leeks, brussels sprouts, spinach, parsnips, turnips, swede, savoy cabbage, curly kale, swiss chard (spinach beet), celeriac. From store: onions, potatoes, shallots, carrots, marrow

Recipe

Carrot and Coriander Soup

Ingredients

4 large carrots
1 large white onion
2oz (60g) butter
1 tbsp ground coriander

1 litre vegetable stock
Garam masala (to garnish)



Method

- Peel and chop the onion finely. Prepare and chop the carrots.
- Melt the butter and sauté the onions until transparent.
- Add the chopped carrots and sauté with the onions.
- When the carrots are glazed with butter add 1 litre of stock. Simmer until tender.
- The soup can be served as it is or blitzed in a blender/liquidiser.
- Garnish with garam masala and chopped fresh coriander and serve with a crusty roll.

Ellie

Editor's postscript

Deck the Halls



I confess that at this time of year I get a bit trigger-happy with the spray paint can. Anything from the garden or the hedgerows that can be used to decorate the house is gathered and squirted with gold or silver paint.

Holly with lots of bright berries is an obvious choice, but my garden produces an abundance of ivy, which can be trailed from vases or over picture frames and light fittings. Dried *Hydrangea* heads, pine cones, seed heads of poppy, *Sedum* and *Crocosmia*, dried tufts of fluffy lichen – all look beautiful sprayed gold and incorporated

into flower arrangements or made into festive wreaths.

Alison



We wish you a very happy Christmas and New Year

And we all look forward to a new gardening season in 2017