



MALMESBURY and DISTRICT GARDEN CLUB

January/February NEWSLETTER 2017

www.malmesburygardenclub.org.uk

Chair and Secretary – Ellie Church

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



JOTTINGS FROM THE CHAIR

“Happy New Year” to all our members. We had a very sociable AGM with the business being completed promptly. I had the pleasure announcing that Ron Peel – our chairman until ill health intervened – will serve as our President. Both Ron and his wife Denise are now life members of the Club. We also welcomed Margaret Medland onto the committee.

We look forward to spring but, having found an old gardening book which details which seeds can be planted in January, I shall be trying my luck with the seeds. Maybe I could get some to give to the plant sale in May or even the show in July. If anyone has an excess of seedlings/plants, please bring them to the Garden Club meetings. We can either swap or negotiate a fee. It will be entirely up to you. The only rule will be: if your plants are left, please take them home again.

Ellie Church – Chair

Subscription news

Subscriptions for 2017 are now due. Please use the renewal notice at the back of this Newsletter.

Over several years the number of couples who are members of the club has declined substantially. We now have eight joint member accounts.

To encourage more joint members the committee have decided to reduce the cost of joint membership from £14 per year to £10.

We hope that this will encourage more couples to become members.

Sean O’Shea (Treasurer)



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 in late February

MEETINGS - EVENTS - ACTIVITIES

<p>Monday 9 January 2017 7.30pm in the Charlton Village Hall <i>'Lacock Abbey Gardens'</i> Sue Carter</p> <p>Sue is Head Gardener at the National Trust's Lacock Abbey. She is very keen on bees and is a good speaker.</p>	<p>Monday 13 February 2017 7.30pm in the Charlton Village Hall <i>'Garden Design'</i> Helena Griffiths</p> <p>Helena is a garden designer and a member of the North Wiltshire Flower Club. She has done work in Charlton.</p>
<p>Monday 13 March 2017 7.30pm in the Charlton Village Hall <i>'So you think you know Gladiolus'</i> Gill Hazell</p> <p>Gill has spoken to us before on sweet peas and unusual bulbs. She runs her own company, Great Western Gladiolus.</p>	<p>Monday 10 April 2017 7.30pm in the Charlton Village Hall <i>'Gardening with and for Wildlife'</i> Victoria Logue</p> <p>Victoria spoke to us in spring 2014 on 'Extending the flowering season without replacing all your plants'. She runs a small nursery selling interesting and unusual hardy herbaceous plants.</p>
<p>Saturday 27 May 2017 The Market Cross <i>Annual Plant Sale</i></p>	<p>July 2017 Charlton Village Hall <i>Annual OPEN SHOW</i></p>

SOME NOTES FROM DEREK

Show news

Your committee has decided that we would like to include in our Show a couple of competitions to attract and encourage young people. We realise that not all members have young children, but you may well know some and – who knows – they may find an interest in gardening as a result. We plan to include two classes – a garden made in a seed tray and an animal or creature made



from vegetables or fruits. We plan to duplicate these two competitions – for children under eight and for those up to twelve years of age. If we can encourage just a few youngsters we will be happy.

Another gardening club!

Malmesbury Primary School has several 'after school' activities – among them is a very healthy gardening club with 120 members – not bad out of a school with 450 pupils. Your committee has agreed to supply these children with some Giant Sunflower seeds. We have included a quantity of seeds in our Club seed order and, for about £10, we will be able to supply 120 packets containing five sunflower seeds in each envelope. How the school decide to use them we leave entirely to them. We just hope the children have fun with the sunflowers and later on we will tell the school about our Show and we may well have planted another kind of seed.

(I had the opportunity of visiting this school recently and can quite understand why they have an Ofsted rating of 'Outstanding'.)

Derek Tilney



FROM THE GARDEN by KEITH

Comments from the garden

With all the herbaceous plants cut down and the ground cleaned between them, it's a pleasing sight to see tulip, narcissi and other bulb tips poking through the surface of the soil.

Fragrance around your patio

Hopefully everyone has somewhere outside to sit and relax on warm days and evenings. With this in mind, the smell of fragrant plants will add a little more pleasure. Many different kinds of containers can be used to grow these plants. Night scented stock is a good one to start with. Sow the seed in March/April and lightly cover with soil. *Nicotiana* var. *affinis* (tobacco plant), a half hardy annual, is another good plant, medium tall with white tubular flowers and a heavy scent. Some other scented half hardy annuals to have in your containers include petunias, trailing surfinias (petunia), antirrhinums (snapdragon) and dwarf sweet peas. Should you have a trellis or wall nearby, the taller sweet peas have a wonderful range of scented varieties. Lilies are also good, with so many varieties to choose from, some growing to only a foot high and all with amazing colour and scent. Small to medium sized scented shrubs that you could plant in the ground



around your seating area include *Choisya ternate*, an evergreen shrub with white flowers; *Osmanthus burkwoodii*, an early flowering evergreen with white flowers

along arching branches; honeysuckle var. Goldflame, with pink/orange and yellow tubular scented flowers; and *Daphne x odora*, with sweetly scented pale pink flowers opening from purple buds. Lastly, should you have a slightly shaded area, *Philadelphus coronarius aureus* is a must. It has pale yellow leaves, followed by highly scented white flowers.

Keith's choice plant

Daphne var. mezereum rubra: winter-flowering, medium height, open shrub with fragrant pink flowers appearing along the upright growths, followed by pale green leaves and scarlet berries.



No Disease Please

Turf fairy rings: a spreading fungus producing one or more rings of lush grass, areas between the rings are dead or brown, or soil may be completely bare. Pale brown slender toadstools, each 4 to 10 cm tall, may develop in summer or autumn. No chemical control is available. Remove toadstools and



clippings from this area, or dig soil out to a depth of 1ft and renew with turf or grass seed.

Plants to enjoy in January/February

Daphne mezereum, crocus, *Pernettya*, *Galanthus* (snowdrop), *Iris reticulata*, *Garrya elliptica*, *Pyracantha*, *Muscari* (grape hyacinth), *Mahonia*.



FROM THE VEGETABLE PLOT by KEITH

Comments from the veg plot

I spoke to soon – my vegetable garden has been under 3” of water. This has happened before and all my winter vegetables were unaffected by the flooding.

Winter cabbage

This is one vegetable I always grow, although it is not everybody’s favourite. For years I grew winter savoy cabbage January king, which was always reliable, but these days I like to try new varieties when they appear. Not that we get temperatures of minus twenty, but should we do so the savoy variety Rigoletto F1 is the one to grow. One I have grown



with good results is savoy Noelle F1, which has good size heads with a good flavour. For several years now my choice of winter savoy cabbage has been

Tundra F1. This variety stands well, gives a good size cabbage and, with its white inner leaves, makes good coleslaw.

Some other winter savoy cabbages worth trying are: Tourmaline F1, September onwards; Ormskirk, November onwards; and Best of All, September onwards.

Winter cabbage will need netting to keep off the pigeons. Remove all rotting leaves and keep weed free.

Seasonal activities

It is a good and quiet time in the garden to order your vegetable seeds, if you have not already done so. The vegetable garden can be cold and uninviting at this time of year and, if it is waterlogged or frosted, it might be better to keep off the ground until it improves. Should we get a reasonable winter period there are a few things we can do. Continue to dig over any ground that has become vacant, dig in farmyard manure or compost if you have any.

Cover part of your rhubarb to give you some early pale pink sticks. A few slug pellets around your rhubarb will help with the problem. If you have cleaned the ground in your garden frames, now is the time to put on the frame tops to warm up the ground for early sowings. Should you have a warm place to sow early seeds, now is a good time to sow leek and onion seed if you are thinking of entering the garden show. Weather permitting, an early sowing of broad beans and wrinkled peas can be sown outside.

Keith’s choice vegetable

Carrot var. Eskimo F1: a frost tolerant variety, which can be left in the ground and dug up as you want them. A good length stump-rooted carrot with good top foliage, superb flavour and with good disease and pest tolerance.



No vegetable nightmares

Root mealybug: a problem found mostly in pot plants that results in lack of growth. Tiny 2mm long flat bugs cover themselves and the roots around them with a white waxy powder. Eradication is difficult: a solution of weak Jeyes fluid watered into the soil could help, but avoid wetting the foliage. If the problem persists, discard the infested plant.

Some vegetables to enjoy in January/February

Parsnips, brussels sprouts, curly kale, swede, spinach, leeks, turnips, Jerusalem artichokes, savoy cabbage.

From store: onions, shallots, potatoes, marrows, carrots, beetroot, celeriac, cooking apples.



Grow it . . . cook it . . . eat it . . . !

Recipes

Cheese and Onion Jackets from Ellie

Ingredients

Baking potato

Approx. 2 oz cheddar cheese, grated

One onion, finely chopped

Salt and pepper

Method

Preheat the oven to 180° C.

Scrub the potato and make a horizontal slit in the skin around it.

Cook the potato in the microwave for 6 mins. Then transfer it to the preheated oven for about 10 mins.

Remove from the oven and cut through along the horizontal slit, dividing it in half. Allow to cool.

Remove the potato flesh from the skins and mash it, adding $\frac{3}{4}$ of the cheese and the onion. Season with salt and pepper. Pile the mixture back into the potato skins and sprinkle the remaining cheese on the top. Return to the oven for approx. 10 – 15 mins.

Serve with a green salad

NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTOR SOUGHT

Are you someone who likes to stroll around Malmesbury? Due to the sad loss of the previous distributor, we are seeking a person to distribute about six copies of this Newsletter on six occasions per year in an area covering Gloucester Road, West Street, Gastons Road, Hudson Road and Pool Gastons Road.

If you would like to put your name forward please contact Sean O'Shea (telephone: 01666 510490, email: seanoshea490@btinternet.com) or any committee member.



Sean O'Shea

And finally



Well, if it slipped your mind to order some extra seeds from the Dobies catalogue to grow on for the Club's **Annual Plant Sale**, which is on **Saturday 27 May 2017**, just take your membership card to Nurdens' Malmesbury Garden Centre and you can still get a good deal on seeds.

*Graham Rees
Plant Sale Organiser*

Membership Subscriptions

Subscriptions for 2017 are now due and may be paid:-

- a) at monthly meetings
- b) by posting in the Club Post Box at the E & S Hardware Store in High Street, Malmesbury
- c) by posting to Sean O'Shea, Redlands, West End, Brinkworth, Chippenham SN15 5DA.

PLEASE SECURE CASH/CHEQUE IN AN ENVELOPE WITH THIS FORM.

Enclosed: **£7.00** (single membership) **£10.00** (joint membership)

Name.....

Address.....

Telephone number.....

Email address.....

Thank you
Sean O'Shea (Treasurer)