



MALMESBURY and DISTRICT GARDEN CLUB

September/October 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

Our begonias and petunias have been magnificent. I wish I could say the same for the geraniums which have been a disappointment. Any tips on geranium growing them would be welcome.

This summer has passed in a flash. I look forward to our September 11th meeting and hope to see

you all there. The nights are drawing in and will continue until the 21st December, the shortest day of the year. Then we look forward to Spring.

I hope you will join us at the Harvest Supper in October, more details elsewhere in the Newsletter.

Ellie Church – Chair

HARVEST SUPPER

Saturday 28 October 2017

Provided there is sufficient interest we propose to have our annual Harvest Supper again this year. The cost will remain at £7.50 per head – payable in advance please. The format will be a 2-course meal followed by tea/coffee and entertainment. The venue will be Charlton Village Hall where there is ample parking.

To make a reservation you can: -

- Post your details (& payment) in the Club box in the E & S shop, High Street, Malmesbury
- Telephone me on 01666 510490 (leave a message if no reply)
- Email me at ellie352@btinternet.com
- Text me on 07909764187
- Give your details to a committee member

We hope to see a good attendance.



Ellie

MEETINGS – EVENTS – ACTIVITIES

Monday 11 September 2017

7.30pm in the Charlton Village Hall

‘Pruning shrubs and trees’

Richard Cripps

Saturday 28 October 2017

Charlton Village Hall

HARVEST SUPPER

THE SUMMER SHOW



The 2017 Show (Photo: Allison Humphries)

Like the circus – all bustle and haste – then it's all over for another year. With the difficult weather we really were not sure if we would have much of a show, but thankfully on the day we had a fine display of the skill of our green-fingered members. 23 people put in a total of 131 entries. I really want to thank each and every one who made the effort to bring something from their garden and take part in our show – it must have been very difficult getting exhibits ready in the wet conditions. I'm sure you will all appreciate the work that your committee and friends put into our

annual show. I especially want to thank the judges, Mrs Bayliss and Mr Matthews. Both had to go on to judge at other shows and we are grateful that they give their time to help us. Visitors to the show see twenty tables set out, covered in crisp white paper – they are not to know that half of these tables are dirty old doors which we have had to store and haul to the hall and then back into storage for another year – thanks to good friends in the club. Mr Ron Bartholomew gives us a new design for our prize cards each year: a full set has to be printed for every class in the show in anticipation that we will get exhibits in each class – we plan for and hope that every class will have several exhibits. The work has to be done, and although we were pleased when we saw all the exhibits on display, we would have liked a few more. But the visitors saw all the space filled up; the stewards had set out the exhibits so that they filled all the available space. Finally my thanks to the ladies who kept the tea flowing and the ladies who sold a full book of raffle tickets!

Derek



Tasks for September/October



- Continue to spray roses
- Take Hybrid Tea and Floribunda rose cuttings
- Prepare ground for new rose beds
- Continue to dead head perennial plants
- Spray Michaelmas Daisies against mildew
- Prune back flowering shrubs i.e., Weigela, Philadelphus, Senecio etc.
- Sow Sweet Peas in pots and place in frame
- Sow hardy annuals—Nigella, Godetia, Candytuft
- Place prepared Hyacinths in bowls for Christmas
- Sprinkle 2oz per sq yard of bone meal around perennials and shrubs
- Plant Wallflowers, Polyanthus, Bellis and Pansies for spring flowering
- Sow lettuces—Arctic King or Winter Density
- Spray brassica against caterpillar and whitefly
- Plant out spring cabbage plants
- Store main carrot crops
- Order fruit trees and bushes
- Cut out old fruiting raspberry canes
- Prune blackcurrant bushes
- Pick apples and pears for storing
- Spray outdoor peach and nectarine against peach leaf curl



FROM THE GARDEN by KEITH

Winter tubs and baskets

I hope my piece on tubs and hanging baskets in the March newsletter gave you a few ideas for a wonderful display all through the summer. With the fast approaching colder evenings, it's time to think of changing the planting for the coming autumn and winter.

In the past the usual planting of bulbs, polyanthus, pansies and wallflowers have always been colourful come the spring, but all through the late autumn and winter months there is not a lot to look at. Mixing these with evergreen plants will give a more colourful look during the cold



winter months. What do I mean? Evergreen means something that keeps its leaf all through the year. This does not mean just a green leaf: there are silver-leaved, variegated-leaved and purple- and yellow-leaved plants. They also come bushy, upright and trailing. If planted well, with a few bulbs, polyanthus and pansies, they will give a more colourful look through the winter period. You can purchase all these plants from most nurseries in small pots. Fill your tubs and baskets right up, but remember no growth will happen in the cold winter months so very little root will be produced. Come the beginning of spring, feed your plants until it's time to put in the summer bedding. When it is time to remove the winter evergreen plants, pot them up, give a light pruning and you can use them again the following winter. Before potting them up, prune off half of the root: this means you can re-pot them in the same pots, and it will still give the roots space to grow during the coming summer. Sounds a bit drastic? I was once taken to an orchid nursery and shown how to pot the plants. I was shocked to see a large orchid taken out of its pot and a wood saw used to cut off half of its root before being pulled apart.

Here are some evergreen plants you could use: *Vinca* (periwinkle) – both variegated and green-leaved varieties, trailing, blue flowers; *Ajuga*

(bugle) – purple leaves, semi-trailing, blue/purple flowers; *Festuca glauca* – blue grass; *Erica* (heather) – both green and yellow-leaved varieties, flowers in variety; *Lamium* (deadnettle) – silver or green-leaved varieties, semi-trailing, pink, white or yellow flowers; *Hedera* (ivy) – silver, yellow or green leaves, trailing; Dwarf conifers – yellow, green and blue foliage, upright or spreading.

Mix in amongst these plants: polyanthus, *Bellis* (daisy), pansy, wallflowers, *Myosotis* (forget-me-nots), and dwarf bulbs in variety.

Keith's choice plant

Gaultheria (partridge berry), var. procumbens: a dwarf growing shrub. Foliage turns from dark green to brownish red in the autumn, red berries are produced from September onwards. Another one for the tub or basket.



No disease please

Honey fungus: becoming more widespread, honey fungus attacks a wide range of trees, shrubs, woody climbers and hedging plants. Plants may die quite rapidly or take several years. Affected plants develop a creamy white fungal sheet sandwiched between the bark and the woody tissue beneath. This sheet smells strongly of mushrooms. The fungus also produces black fungal strands, called rhizomorphs, which consist of a cord-like structure that is tough and withstands extreme temperatures. They move very slowly through the ground thereby infecting surrounding plants. Remove affected plants, including the roots, if possible. There is no known cure that I am aware of. Not all plants are susceptible to honey fungus. If planting again in the same place, do some research first, otherwise leave area unplanted for several years.

Plants to enjoy in September/October

Skimmia japonica, *Daphne mezereum*, *Jasminum nudiflorum*, *Ceratostigma plumbaginoides* (hardy plumbago), *Tricyrtis* (Japanese toad lily).



FROM THE VEGETABLE PLOT by KEITH

Comments from the veg plot

A very challenging season – one minute very dry, the next wet, then dry again. Sowing seeds had to be timed or you had to sow again.

Potatoes

Mid September is the time I remove my main crop potatoes. Desiree is the variety I have grown for many years, the reasons being that they are a red potato so are clear of slugs, they also grow to a good size and store well. I have to say that whatever red potato I grow, early or late, they never seem to have a slug problem even in wet weather. Alongside Desiree, for a few years now I have been growing a new main crop potato I had not heard of called Sarpo. Again it is a red potato. The two varieties I have tried are Sarpo mira and Sarpo axona. One thing about these two varieties is that they are reported to be blight resistant, and



heavy yields should be expected from both. This year I am trying two new Sarpo varieties, new to me that is, called Sarpo Blue Danube and Sarpo kifli. Blue Danube has outer skin of a blue/red colour and is also known as the blue Sarpo. Again it has good late blight resistance and a high dry matter content, so is perfect for roasting, chipping and baking. S. kifli is an early main crop variety with white outer skin, a salad potato, again with good blight resistance. I have yet to dig these new varieties so I will let you know in the next newsletter how they all performed.

Seasonal activities

As already mentioned, mid September is a good time to lift your main crop potatoes. If blight affects your haulms (leaves) earlier than this, then lift immediately as the disease will affect the potato within weeks. An early crop of mild onions can be had in early summer next year if you sow the variety Senshyu yellow globe now. This variety is a good, hardy over-wintering onion. When germinated, thin to about 8 inches.

Spray brassicas against caterpillars, and watch out for aphids (whitefly) on curly kale. I have grown marigolds beneath my plants as aphids do not like the smell and it does seem to have helped a little.

If you like sowing broad beans for an early crop next spring, sow now; also winter lettuce. Now is a good time to plant a new strawberry bed; the first plant on the runners from your existing strawberries is always the best. I always put two plants together when planting, then you get a bigger crop the first year.



Storing vegetables can now begin, especially with carrots. Leaving carrots in the ground beyond early September could give you a bad carrot fly problem. Clear all areas as crops finish.

Keith's choice vegetable

Runner bean var. moonlight: A white-flowered variety, partly self-pollinating, heavy yields over a long period; a stringless variety that freezes well.

No vegetable nightmares

Potato blight: Brown patches develop on the leaves, usually after a shower of rain, any time from early July onwards. Lower leaves are affected first, spreading through the whole potato area. If left the potato itself will be affected, rotting away completely. Spray potato foliage from June onwards every 10 days with a fungicide. This spraying may not stop the problem, if affected dig up potatoes.

Some vegetables to enjoy in September/October

Salad leaves, radish, onions, runner beans, potatoes, dwarf French beans, celery, cabbage, beetroot, cucumbers, carrots, spinach, tomatoes, courgette, marrow, cauliflower, peas, Swiss chard (spinach beet), aubergines, chillies, fennel (bulb), shallots, peppers, young leeks, swede, turnip .

Sunday 3 September

BROADLEAS HOUSE GARDENS, Devizes, SN10 5JQ

Wednesday 13 September

HAZELBURY MANOR GARDENS, Wadswick, Box, SN13 8HX

Saturday 7 October

RIDLEYS CHEER, Mountain Bower, N Wraxall, Chippenham, SN14 7AJ



Recipe

Dorset Apple Cake

Ingredients

225g self-raising flour
2 tsp ground cinnamon
115g unsalted butter, diced and chilled, plus extra for greasing
115g light brown sugar
1 large egg, beaten
6-8 tbsp milk
225g Bramley or Granny Smith apples, peeled, cored and diced
100g sultana
2 tbsp demerara sugar (optional)



Method

1. Heat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan/gas 4. Grease and line a deep 20cm cake tin with baking parchment.
2. Mix the flour and cinnamon together in a large bowl. Add the butter and rub into the flour using your fingers, until it resembles fine breadcrumbs. Stir in the light brown sugar. Beat in the egg followed by 6-8 tbsp of milk – you want to achieve a smooth, thick batter.
3. Add the apples and sultanas and mix to combine. Scrape the batter into your prepared tin and gently level out. Sprinkle over the demerara sugar and bake in the oven for 30-40 minutes or until golden and a skewer inserted into the middle comes out clean.
4. Allow to cool in the tin for 15 minutes and then carefully turn out onto a wire rack to cool further. Best served still warm with a little custard.

Recipe from bbcgoodfood.com, October 2013

Some Dorset gardens . . . and one in Rutland

Earlier this summer I was fortunate to join a tour of gardens in Dorset (and one in Somerset) with the Gloucestershire Organic Gardening Group (GOGG). We were taken to some widely diverse gardens: the very architectural borders at Montacute House, the delightful Italianate gardens at Mapperton House, the lush informality at Upwey Wishing Well or Minterne House, the Sub-Tropical Gardens at Abbotsbury, and the



ornamental vegetable garden at Athelhampton Manor. Each one had its own unique character and one would be very hard-pressed

to pick a favourite. But perhaps the best kept 'secret' garden was the 8-acre Bennetts Water Gardens, just outside Weymouth. This series of lakes, created in the 1950s from disused claypits, holds a national and international collection of water lilies and is well worth a visit. On a late afternoon in July it was like stepping into one of Monet's vast paintings, complete with little bridges and dancing dragonflies.

The trouble with a tour like this is that one comes back buzzing with so many ideas that it is impossible to fit them into a 'normal'-sized garden, but that is where the next garden come in.



With the same group I also visited the late Geoff Hamilton's garden at Barnsdale in Rutland. Because it was created for the TV Gardeners' World audience, it is divided up into a series of bite-sized plots, each with a different theme. This is truly a

garden that one can take home and incorporate into one's own – whether you want Italian, or Japanese, or cottage-style, traditional or modern, or this super bug hotel/children's playhouse, there is a wealth of ideas and beautiful planting schemes to inspire . . . and a nursery where you can buy the plants!

Alison