



HARDINGTON GARDEN CLUB

NEWSLETTER APRIL 2021

CLUB NEWS

Hello everyone. We hope you are all enjoying a little more freedom to see family and friends, with the easing of lockdown restrictions. While adhering to the new guidelines, the committee had a very successful meeting on the 29th March discussing the programme and membership for 2021.

Attached to the newsletter is a programme of events which has been arranged by Ali Trickett and we hope we will see you all at some point during the year.

The committee decided to roll forward membership for those who paid at the beginning of 2020, and agreed that this year's membership fee for any re-joining or new members will be £10 as we will not have a full year's programme.

Membership cards will be available for collection from Andy and Kate at Winyards before or on Plant Sale day. Membership will allow entry to the discount shopping evening at Castle Gardens on the 20th May and gives you 10% off garden-related purchases at Groves Nurseries at any time of the year.

Plant Sale 15th or 22nd May (tba)

The club's first event will be the Plant Sale. Please note the change of date. We have changed it from the 8th of May as a few valued members of the club will be away on that date.

The sale will follow the same format as last year with stalls at various locations around the village and will be weather dependant. So far we have locations at Rachel Moulden, Bishops Lane; Ali Trickett, The High Street; Pauline Grassam, The High Street; Annie Mollett, Moor Lane and ourselves on Penn Lane with Rosie Richards' and Jacqui & Tim Watkins' contributions added to one of these. We are hoping that Kate Best, if she has enough plants available at the time, will also have a stall somewhere in the village.

Please let us know if you will have any spare plants available to add to one of the above locations or if you would like to host a stall.

We would like to make the event as successful as last year.

We decided to give the majority of money donated for plants at the sale to charity. 75% of the proceeds will be shared between the top two charities voted for by members from this list of five:

The Lords Larder, Ferne Animal Sanctuary, St Margaret's Hospice, The Air Ambulance or Yeovil Hospital. Please let us know your choices.

The remaining 25% will go to Hardington Garden Club funds to help towards future visiting speakers.

If you would like to have a stall please contact Kate & Andy and we can email the guidelines for hosting, and posters about social distancing.

Kate & Andy

UNUSUAL SEEDS

I have always enjoyed growing plants from seed. Not just flowers and vegetables for the garden, but more unusual things just to see if they would germinate and grow. Over the years I have tried many things with varying levels of success.

I think most of us have tried growing an avocado plant from the stone. My best attempt reached about two metres tall before succumbing to too much attention from a friend, looking after my plants while we were on holiday!

They seem to germinate very well in the compost bin as I often find them when I come to spread the compost onto the garden.

Trees are always fun to grow from seed and the squirrels certainly help with that. I currently have two oaks and one walnut tree growing in pots, plus a hazel they planted in just the right spot in the garden. I have also grown Araucaria Araucaria, the monkey puzzle tree, from seed. The seeds are quite large and pointed at one end, which one could imagine, if they fell from the tree into soft enough ground, could plant themselves! Last summer, on our one visit to Bristol to visit family, I found two seeds on the pavement from an overhanging monkey puzzle so, of course, they are in pots to see if they will grow.

My other tree success is with the Norway Spruce or Christmas tree. About twenty years ago I visited a Christmas Tree grower to buy our festive tree and he gave me a bag of the fir cones. These were kept with the Christmas decorations and gradually over the years they dried out enough to release their seeds, which naturally I planted! I now have one tree in the garden which is about three metres tall, and one I have kept contained in a large pot which it doesn't seem to mind, and keeps it at a manageable size.

Wisteria is also interesting to grow from seed though one is always advised that the plants take years to reach flowering stage. However, having harvested some large pods from my daughter-in-law's plant I decided to give them a try. The pods were left in the utility room to dry out and eventually, after several weeks, we heard loud cracking sounds and one morning I came into the room to find large, flat, round, brown Smartie-like seeds all over the floor. The pods had cracked open and twisted, sending the seeds flying out. Some were duly planted and germinated very well.

Writing this, it occurs to me that I haven't tried growing the citrus family in recent years so perhaps my next experiment will be with lemons, limes and oranges.

Rachel Moulden

AN EARLY LESSON

This winter has been very long and we have all been looking forward to Spring and longer days for ages, and now they are here we are still feeling unseasonably cold. However, it is still lovely to be able to get out and about and, if we can keep out of the cold wind, the sun has got quite a lot of warmth in it.

Getting plants going and preparing for the plant sale has been a labour of love and a case of two steps forward and three back. We had some great young courgettes, nasturtiums and cucumbers going under cover in the polytunnel and one really cold blast one night killed them all. Mice have eaten other tender young plants and we are feeling a bit despondent. However, in the way of gardening, we will pick ourselves up and start again. I just hope we have plenty of plants to sell in May.

It isn't all doom and gloom though as we are already eating radishes, lettuces, spinach and spring greens from the polytunnel. Our sweet peas are now being acclimatised and the broad beans are growing well. Carrots, tomatoes, sunflowers and chard are coming on and we are hopeful that, as soon as things warm up a bit, it will be all systems go.

Ali

BEST BUY COMPOSTS FOR CONTAINERS

This year's Gardening Which? Results for growing Pelargoniums and Potatoes in pots. (See February's newsletter for the Best Compost for Sowing Seeds and Raising Young plants)

Best Buys with Peat

- Thompson & Morgan Incredicompost (score 79%, peat content 80%, 70 litre bags by mail order £14.99 = 21p per litre (plus delivery) (This scored 84% for sowing seeds).
- Levington Multi Purpose Compost with added John Innes (score 75%, peat content 40%) 40 litre £4.99 = 12p per litre from garden centres

Best Buys Peat-Free

- Homebase Peat Free Multi-purpose Compost - score 74%, 50 litre bags £5.25 = 11p per litre.
- Melcourt SylvaGrow Multi-purpose (score 70%,) 50 litre bags from garden centres £7.99 = 16p per litre. (This scored 88% for raising young plants).

Hence, two Peat-free composts have scored well enough to be Best Buys and the conclusion was that these are good enough to use for growing pots of bedding plants. (In fact the Homebase Multi-purpose compost with 50% peat did less well with a score of 71%, than its peat-free compost listed above.)

Reformulated Composts

Manufacturers of composts continue to trial different mixes to reduce peat content, but peat-free ingredients, such as wood fibre and coir, don't have the same ability to hold moisture. Some also prevent certain nutrients from being available to your plants, while others contain too much. Creating the right mix requires extensive trials.

Due to these formulation changes, a large number of composts on sale in 2020 have been replaced and not tested.

Rosemary Richards

APRIL ANGSTS AND ARRIVALS

As Ali's experience shows, we gardeners should be guided by the weather rather than the book. We have had frost, fog, sun, snow, sun, hail, sun, frost and some lovely sunsets!

What a contrast from this time last year in the first lockdown. One way to handle variable weather is successional sowing. Many seeds are really cheap, so wasting a few isn't a big deal. Sowing some seeds into pots or modules under cover, whether in a greenhouse or cold frame, every two weeks will ensure some are ready to plant out when the weather is right.

I have delayed direct sowing of crops like carrots though horticultural fleece would help if the weather is cold. I have netting over my February-sown broad beans and mange-tout to keep the mice away. This has a side effect of reducing wind speed and improves the micro-climate. The plants are growing well and look healthy and cosy under their covering.

Potatoes will benefit from planting in mid-April if the weather dictates rather than a month earlier. You'll still get a crop and a better one than you would by planting in frozen ground at the 'correct' time.

My greenhouse is rather small and full up with tender plants over-wintering. I have squeezed in a couple of boxes to get some dahlias started into growth. So all my seeds are being grown in the conservatory. Most germinated, but then stopped growing! It's getting warmer in there on sunny days but the cold nights are slowing everything down. I hope there will be plenty to prick out and pot on soon, but it looks as if hardening off and planting out are many weeks away. We have to be patient this year!

Tadpoles are emerging now and the first four ducklings arrived last week but were picked off, one by one, over four days. There are so many crows and magpies around, and a fox walked brazenly around the pond one evening. I watched a moorhen pick up a discarded duck-egg-shell from the lawn and carry it back to the pond edge where it seemed to enjoy eating the remains of the egg. Bizarre.

One lonely swallow has sat on the wires for over two weeks waiting for his mates to come back. We had four nests last year with three broods each so I hope it's

just the northerly winds which are delaying the others. Derek made a lot more nest boxes this year including one with the right sized hole for the wood pecker who had "extended" the hole in one of the existing boxes last year. Obviously this was not his idea of a 'Des Res' as the pecker has chosen to expand the hole in another bird box again! The garden is full of blackbirds, tits, greenfinches, sparrows and robins collecting nesting material and the pied wagtails have rebuilt their usual nest under the solar panels.

Spring has sprung, if rather slowly. Hence, the Amelanchier, below, is holding onto its flowers for longer than is usual.

Rosie



LOCAL NEWS AND EVENTS



Outdoor dining at the Gardens Group has returned.
Booking is advised at each venue

The Apple Tree Restaurant at Brimsmore.

Telephone for booking: (01935) 403158

Monday to Saturday 9am to 6pm **Sunday** 10am to 4pm

Offering a breakfast menu, sandwiches and Panini's throughout the day and a reduced specials menu, along with a range of cakes and cream teas.

The Walled Garden Restaurant at Castle Gardens, Sherborne.

Telephone for booking: (01935) 814345

Monday to Saturday 9am to 5pm **Sunday** 10am to 4pm

On offer will be a breakfast and lunch menu, including sandwiches, salads and options like sausages with mustard mash, as well as a selection of cakes. Roast dinners will be served on Sundays.

The Engine Room Restaurant at Poundbury.

Telephone for booking (01305) 257251

Monday to Saturday 9am to 6pm (Food served 9am-4pm)

Sunday 10am to 4pm (Food served 10am-4pm)

They will have sandwiches, baps, pasties, soup, salads and more on offer throughout the week.

Plant Fairs

Yarlington House, Yarlington, Somerset, BA9 8DY



New date: Saturday 22nd May 2021 10am – 4pm

Admission: £5 - please have the correct money ready at the gate (beneficiary charity: Yarlington Village Hall)

The grounds around this attractive Georgian Manor House with Italian sunken garden, herbaceous borders and kitchen garden, make the perfect setting for the plant fair.

Due to Covid precautions, the nurseries and plant related stands, including gifts and plant supports, will be spread out around the grounds.

Entrance includes access to the gardens and the courtyard where there will be tea, coffee and cake on sale.

Mapperton House, Dorset



New date Sunday 6th June 2021 10am - 4pm

Admission to be confirmed with beneficial charity.

A large popular Plant Sale with over 30 specialist stands held in the grounds of Mapperton House which have been voted in the top 50 gardens of the UK. The house will be open for bookable tours; additional charges apply.

Please see plantfairs.co.uk website for any updates.

National Gardens Scheme

Please see their website ngs.org.uk for details on many gardens that are open for pre-bookable visits during the coming months including:

The Manor House, Beaminster

A 16 acre stunning parkland with a woodland walk, wildflower meadow and walled garden.

Gillans Nr Dorchester, Dorset

A hidden 5 acre garden set in a deep valley beside ponds and River Cerne. Spring bulbs and blossom with species magnolia and cornus, carpets of primroses around camellias and rhododendrons.

QUOTE from the wartime ***Dig for Victory Guide*** for April

“And although we shall be only too anxious to get on with arrears of clearing up; digging, seed sowing and planting, we shall find that “hasten slowly” is still sound advice when soil conditions are not right.”

Thank you to Rachel, Ali and our ever-reliable Secretaries for their contributions. Please send items - anything you like related to gardening: long, short or amusing by Monday May 10th to rosemary.richards@icloud.com

“ANYONE WHO THINKS GARDENING BEGINS IN THE SPRING AND ENDS IN THE FALL IS MISSING THE BEST PART OF THE WHOLE YEAR, FOR GARDENING BEGINS IN JANUARY WITH THE DREAM”

– Josephine Nuese



HARDINGTON GARDEN CLUB

Monthly meetings
East Coker Village Hall
East Coker
Yeovil BA22 9JJ

On the third Wednesday of the month
at 7.30pm
New members & guests always welcome

Vice Chairman

Rosemary Richards
 01935 862180
rosemary.richards@icloud.com

Joint Secretaries

Kate & Andy Palmer
 01935 863016
gardenclub@hardington.net

PROGRAMME 2021

<p>15 or 22 May Plant Sale:- Locations around the village</p>	<p>18 August T.B.A</p>
<p>20 May Discount shopping evening: Castle Gardens, Sherborne. 6.00pm</p>	<p>15 September Growing for climate change Mike Burks (East Coker)</p>
<p>June Social evening to be arranged</p>	<p>20 October Year round vegetable growing- Sally Nex (East Coker)</p>
<p>21 July Visit to the Bishops Palace, Wells. Arrive 11.00, tour at 11.30 (times to be confirmed). Own transport. Costs to be confirmed.</p>	<p>17 November East Coker hall not available</p>
	<p>15 December AGM and Quiz May be held in Hardington in November</p>