

The Notice Board

Plants, and seeds, needed

Most members will know that in the Spring and Summer months we have a seed box (exchange or purchase) and a plant stall (wo)manned by Audrey Fox. Any funds raised by Audrey's efforts go to Gardeners' Club funds, so please try and have a look each month - you may be surprised by what you can find and all are at very reasonable prices compared with the local garden centres and nurseries.

This year we shall again be selling plants at the Open Gardens event in July. If you are splitting up your plants, please put one on one side for this event-we can arrange to look after them for you if you have no room to keep them until July. People do like to buy plants that are in flower, and they look good on the table, so don't forget to pot up some of your late-flowering annuals for us. All plants need to be well-labeled, and if your plant is not going to be in flower in late July, a small photo on the front of the pot or the seed packet will help to sell it for us.

Thanks to all members in advance for support of this event and our usual plant stall.



Sweet **April** showers
Do spring May flowers

Thomas Tusser

Gardeners' Club treasurer retires

Ron Clugston, who has been our Treasurer for the last few years and who, as many of you will be aware, has been ill recently, is retiring from his post and from the committee this year. He had already decided to retire before his recent ill health, but will continue to come along to meetings and join in club events. Ron is the quiet gentleman who unobtrusively deals with all of our monetary problems and gets the accounts ready for each annual audit. Because he is quiet, you may not realise how much his good work has been appreciated by all of his fellow committee members over the years. To know that we can carry on organising events and trips, safe in the knowledge that our funds are well looked-after is a great relief to all the committee, & we should like to thank Ron for his positive good husbandry whilst he has been Treasurer. We wish him much-improved health in the future, and lots more time to spend with his birds (of the feathered variety!) If you like dealing with money and would like to join the committee as its new Treasurer, please make yourself known to any committee member - you will be truly welcome!

Meeting report: March 2009

Some talks, like Jim Almond's in March, are so wide-ranging that they hardly lend themselves to succinct reporting; but common threads were Jim's obvious love of plants and growing, and his irrepressible desire to share that love with us – with great success, judging by the spontaneous applause at the end!

Helped by a vast collection of slides, Jim began by advising on the tending and pruning of climbers such as the clematis, the most adaptable and easily trained of all the climbers and exemplified by Clematis Montana, Clematis Elva and Clematis Jackmannii. Other climbers mentioned were codonopsis and the "pretty bindweeds"; Jim also strongly recommends the Chilean GloryVine. Then Jim moved on to other favourite garden plants, enthusing about crocuses, snowdrops, cyclamens and hellebores and gradually working his way on through the flowering year and into the autumn with the aster, for example, with its strong, disease-resistant varieties such as Little Carlow, a 'must' if you want to attract insects and butterflies!

Of the two muscaris in the March competition, Marilyn Tippett's scored maximum points and Brenda Morgan's was the runner-up. One suspects that those two little muscaris had led fairly sheltered lives prior to the 9 March!

TRIPS



Our evening meeting on the 8th June will be to the Whimble nurseries, not too far from Whitton. The cost will be £4.50, to include tea and cake. Whimble specialise in hardy perennials which are well-suited to our local climate and usually grown on the nursery itself. There is also a small garden on site and a short walk which leads to a viewing platform with wonderful views of the surrounding countryside. Members will need to arrange to travel with friends or ask for help with a lift to minimise the number of cars travelling.

In August we are going to visit a fairly newly-renovated garden close to the Severn Bridge. The Dewstow garden has many water features and grottoes, and was hidden under rubble for 60 years before its recent rediscovery. Much praised by gardening magazines and writers, this will be a visit not to miss! More details will follow and there will be a sign-up sheet at a Gardeners' Club meeting. This will be an all-day trip by coach with lunch included.

AGM : May 2009

There will be a Ploughman's Supper provided at a cost of £2.50 pp, so please sign up for this at the April meeting. Excellent value as always, and prepared by Avril and other Gardeners' Club members.



Knighton Open Gardens 2009

Would you, or any Knighton gardeners you know, like to join other gardeners in Knighton and open a garden in July on the afternoons of the 18th and 19th in aid of the Air Ambulance and the Serendipity Festival? If so, please give Marilyn Tippett a ring on 01547 528842 for more information, or speak to her at one of our meetings. All gardens are welcome to join in the event, be they large or small, mostly flowers or mostly vegetables. If two days are too many, you could open for one of the two days. Refreshments will be provided in one of the Knighton gardens, and there is no need to collect any money as the entrance will be via programmes bought in advance. Everyone really appreciated the event last year, and nearly all of the gardens which took part will be open again this year, so come and join us and help raise some money for a good cause. The Gardeners' Club will keep the money made from refreshments and plants, so if you are dividing your perennials at the moment or sowing seeds, do save some for our plant stall. You can bring them along to any Club meeting and we will take care of them for you, but please have them ready to sell and in pots with a clear label.

Radnor Cottage, Clun : open for the NGS on Easter Tuesday, 14th April

Also, Radnor Valley Garden club would like to invite members to join them on a trip to the National Botanic Garden of Wales on Monday June 15th. Pick up is from Bowling Green Lane Knighton at 9am, returning at 6pm approximately. Cost £15 inclusive. If you are interested please contact Jill Martin, the club secretary, on 01544 350363.

Crossword puzzle answers

Across

4. Hebe
5. Foxwhelp
7. Jasmine
9. Lavender
10. Japonica
12. Heaven
14. Box
15. Catmint
16. Sloes
17. Rose
18. Compost
21. Quince
22. Rosemary
24. Worms
27. Rime

Across

29. Aster
30. Hybridising

Down

1. Monarda
2. Chrysanthemum
3. Glut
4. Hyssop
6. Pelargoniums
8. Hellebore
11. Ivy
13. Mistletoe
19. Plum
20. Turf
23. Mint
25. Rill
26. She
28. Maud

The April garden: tasks and ideas

After that lovely sunny and warm couple of weeks in March, we have of course seen a return to rather colder and more normal March - like weather at the end of that month and into early April. The winds have been very destructive in my garden, and it is a reminder to us to make sure that any structures are well-supported or tied down just as we make sure our taller plants are well supported in the ground. With these in mind, it is not too early to begin thinking of how you will support our tall-growing perennials this summer, as they are already growing strongly and will shoot up once the sun has some real warmth. Many garden centres sell strong wire hoops and link stakes which you can suit to the size of the plants you grow, and although these are expensive initially they will last and last - I have some which are 10 years old and still as good as new.

A more do-it-yourself method is to use the prunings of shrubs which are twiggy, hazel, willow frames or simply bamboo canes topped with a cork or commercial cane topper to avoid poking your eye out when bending to admire a flower! In the greenhouse, keep emerging seedlings covered with fleece or old net curtain on cold nights to avoid singeing by the frost. Take covers off promptly in the morning so that they grow strongly and get the most from any sunshine. Last year I tried for the first time using a length of guttering to sow beans, peas and saladings. Once emerged and hardened off, I moved them to the vegetable garden and slid the whole length into a shallow trench. It was a great success and I shall use the same methods this year, and perhaps extend its use to some flowers which resent root disturbance. You can sow several varieties in one length, so why not have a go this year and let us know how you get on?

Easter Ideas

Hampton Court gardens are open again at easter, and as well as the garden reopening are hosting an Easter event on the 11th, 12th and 13th April with lots of things for children as well as Local arts and crafts and a local food market. Plenty of live music and storytelling as well. On the 28th April, Hampton Court is also hosting the British Red Cross Spring Garden Fair - hopefully this one will not be washed out as last years' was!

Attingham Park in Shropshire and Powis Castle both have Easter Egg trails in the gardens for family visits.

Plant Profile : exochorda

Exochorda x macrantha "the Bride" is the most likely member of this family you will see for sale, although there are other members such as exochorda x giraldii var. Wilsonii. Originating from China and fully hardy in the U.K., this is a very beautiful small shrub with stunning white flowers which develop along the branches and open from small pearl-like buds, hence the name.

As early as March you will see the buds forming, and so be careful to site it away from known frost pockets which would spoil the flowers which unfold in April or early May, depending on the year.

Pruning exochorda is easy. They flower on wood made in the previous season, and so it is important that they are pruned annually immediately after flowering to ensure fresh growth for next

Spring.

Prune back any flowered branches by at least half, and then take out two or three of the older stems right down to the ground. This will ensure renewal of the shrub, and lots of good strong growth to both give good flower formation in the next season and renew the shrub's framework on a regular basis.

Exochorda is a wonderful sight in full flower, and very suitable for a small garden. New varieties such as Snow White, are being grown, so keep your eyes open for additions to the family.

If you have an exochorda in your garden you are sure to receive lots of compliments and be asked for cuttings, so be warned and have the secateurs to hand!