

The Notice Board

What's On locally

South West Shropshire gardening club has an interesting-sounding talk by Paul Hands on native fruits and the making of spoons. The meeting is on February 24th at Lydbury North village hall, commencing at 7.30pm

Snowdrops and other early bulbs at The Weir garden, Herefordshire. Open Wednesdays to Sundays inclusive, 9am -4pm

Attingham Park near Shrewsbury also has snowdrops to see, and is also open 9am -4pm every day

Finally on the snowdrop trail, Berrington Hall has open days every week-end in February. Opening times are from 11 am to 4pm, when you may well find the snowdrops and other early bulbs waiting for you.

Saturday February 27th sees the seed swap on the TVEG stall at Knighton Farmers' Market. You can swap seeds or, for a small payment, buy them instead. A seed and plant swap will follow in April.



"Keep your faith in beautiful things;
in the sun when it is hidden,
in the Spring when it is gone."

Roy R. Gibson

In memoriam

Lilian Thomas

We are deeply sorry to report the death of Lilian, one of the founders of our club, who passed away just prior to Christmas, at home with her family present. She had been poorly for some time but was always keen to hear what was going on at the club, and enjoyed receiving the monthly newsletter. When the club was formed it was Lilian, with sister Ruby, who organised so many lovely social occasions to secure a healthy bank balance for a successful club to continue. Our thoughts are with Ruby and the family at this sad time.

Bereavement cards were sent to Ruby, and to Vera Mckay, on behalf of you all, and a donation made to Perennial, the Gardeners' Royal Benevolent Fund, in memory of both Alf and Lilian.

COME LITTLE LEAVES

by George Cooper

**"Come, little leaves," said the wind one day,
"Come over the meadows with me, and play;
Put on your dresses of red and gold;
Summer is gone, and the days grow cold."**



**Soon as the leaves heard the wind's loud call,
Down they came fluttering, one and all;
Over the brown fields they danced and flew,
Singing the soft little songs they knew.**



**"Cricket, good-bye, we've been friends so long;
Little brook, sing us your farewell song-
Say you're sorry to see us go;
Ah! you are sorry, right well we know.**

**"Dear little lambs, in your fleecy fold,
Mother will keep you from harm and cold;
Fondly we've watched you in vale and glade;
Say, will you dream of our loving shade?"**

**Dancing and whirling the little leaves went;
Winter had called them and they were content-
Soon fast asleep in their earthy beds,
The snow laid a soft mantle over their heads.**



George Cooper, poet and lyricist

Born: May 14, 1840, New York City.
Died: 1927, probably New York City.

Cooper was described by one hymnologist as 'a writer of poems and magazine articles', while discussing Cooper's one known hymn. Nothing is known of George Cooper's early life, but both before, during, and after the American Civil War, he was a prolific poet and lyricist.

Cooper wrote words for the music of many composers. His life became so intimately involved with the life of Stephen Collins Foster that most information on Cooper is only available in various Foster biographies. One paragraph sample follows:

In 1862 Stephen Collins Foster met George Cooper in a neighborhood saloon [in New York City] and struck up a friendship. They formed a partnership in which they collaborated on 23 [sic] (9) songs between 1862 and 1864, several being published after Foster's death. Foster called Cooper the "left wing of the song factory", and most of their songs were sold outright to any takers with no royalties.

HANNAH TAYLOR'S FAVOURITE FLOWER

Tucking Mill Valley

A while ago I lived in Camborne, and one of my favourite places to take the girls was Tucking Mill valley.

This is a regenerated mine, possibly copper or tin knowing the area. Anyway, having trundled down through the old heaps to the bottom, we would walk along the red river (so called because the minerals from the mines turned the water red) and right at the end was the pond.

When you first saw it there was nothing but pale green spikes pointing skywards. You'd see yellow, but only out of the corner of your eye. Then as you got closer, you'd see bright sunny tongues sticking out. Around the corner not only would the tongues be sticking out but eyes would be crossed in a certain jocular way, laughing at the amazement of such a beautiful sight, unexpected in a heap of a place. I'd watch the dragon and damsel flies, talk incessantly about the reflections, and the girls would snore away. It made me feel peaceful as well.

The photograph was taken quite a few years later and doesn't really do justice to the initial sight of the pond.



Alpines and Alpine gardening

Alpine gardening can be a little addictive, in terms of the hold it has on its admirers (and their purses !), but it is a wonderful and rewarding area of interest for those with small gardens and enough time to enjoy the (usually) small plants close-up. One of our members who had a great interest in alpines is seeking other members who might be interested in attending the occasional meeting, or even week-ends away. If you think you might be interested, please let Marilyn know on 01547 528842, email:marilynetippett@hotmail.com, and she will pass the details on.

The February garden: tasks and ideas

Aren't snow drops wonderful? One day there is no sign of them in the garden, perhaps hidden underneath the snow, and then the next time you go out there they are, about to burst into flower or at the very least in bud. They bring such hope to the gardener, especially after the cold and snowy winter we are currently enduring. If you worry about them flowering unseen in or garden under the snow, why not dig up a small clump and bring them indoors? They look good in a teacup or small pot topped with moss, and once they have finished flowering they can go outside again. Snowdrops need splitting up regularly if you want to have lots in your garden. The best time to do this is immediately after flowering; move 2 or 3 bulbs to another part of the garden. A little bonemeal when replanting helps, unless of course you have foxes who will dig for the dead body they can

All the usual advice about cleaning out cupboards and old seeds, scrubbing pots and labels still holds good for February, and don't forget your winter pruning if like me you have been unable to get out into the garden to do this in January. Don't prune on a night where frost is forecast, and burn all prunings if you can. It is also easy to forget to clean your secateurs. White spirit or methylated spirit will clean them well, or even bleach if it is washed off well afterwards. Dirty secateurs spread disease from one plant to another very readily.

Some early seeds can be started off now, especially if you believe we will have a good spring or have shelter for early plants in the garden. Try garlic (we are a bit late for this but there is still time to plant now), broad beans, sweet peas, onions from seed, sunflowers and some early carrots can all be started off towards the middle of the month in this part of the world.

Christmas up-date

Little did I think that when I asked my husband to proof-read the December edition of the newsletter that he would be taking such a keen interest in its contents! Excitedly rustling through my Christmas stocking, what should I find but (almost) everything I had hoped to see, as laid out neatly for "Father Christmas" in my December article. Clearly Father Christmas was feeling especially generous this year, but I must remember that requests are sometimes answered in the most unexpected way. A big thank-you to Santa for his generosity in 2009

from
Marilyn

Plant Profile: Daphne Bholua

Originating in the eastern Himalayas, *Daphne bholua* forms an upright growing evergreen shrub with leathery mid-green oval leaves. It can grow to a good size eventually, but this will take many, many years so don't worry about planting it in your garden.

It will thrive on any fertile free draining soils provided they are not too dry and preferably not too acidic. It is a good shrub for the small garden because it is quite slow growing and flowers during the late winter when most other plants are dormant.

Like other daphnes, this one dislikes being transplanted so plant it as young as you can and avoid pruning if at all possible as this is another of its dislikes.

Good varieties to try include Jacqueline Postill, which has a very heady fragrance and is in flower in January or early February locally (have a look for it in the Dingle garden, near Welshpool where the scent alone will show you where it is sited).

Darjeeling is also good, with flowers which are more white than the pink/mauve tinge of the flowers of Jacqueline Postill.

Sir Peter Smithers has even darker flowers, but may be harder to find unless you contact a specialist nursery.