

The Notice Board

Monthly Garden Fairs and Plant Sales

To be held on Tuesdays from 9pm until 3am

At the Corn Square, Leominster

9th March - 13th April - 11th May - 8th June

Brobury House Gardens, near Brobury, Herefordshire, are open all year, 7 days a week from 10am to 5pm. They have some lovely bulb displays alongside the river in Spring. Well worth a visit.

Admission costs are as follows: Adults £3.00 Children £1.00

Dogs on leads welcome

South West Shropshire garden club have as their next speaker David Walker, whose subject will be "Tiptoe through the tulips". He will be speaking at their meeting to be held on March 24th at Lydbury North Village hall, commencing 7.30pm.

Open Gardens 2010

This year the club will be supporting the Serendipity programme by opening gardens in the Upper Teme Valley on Sunday 30th May 2010, from 2pm to 6pm. We are fortunate to have 8 gardens already signed up to open, and special thanks are due to all those club members and others who are willing to open for us. Once again, if you have some spare seedlings after potting up this year, please save them for us to sell at the plant stall. You can bring them along to a meeting for us to look after if necessary, or ring Marilyn on 015487 528842 and she will pick them up from you. All plants are suitable for this May opening-vegetables, flowers, shrubs and pot plants, so please support the increasing costs of the club and help us out this year. Money raised on the plant stall goes to the club, & on admittance will go to the Knighton First Responders



**"The March wind roars
Like a lion in the sky,
And makes us shiver
As he passes by. Author unknown**

We'll gather lilacs

Member Josephine Brick writes about favourite flowers

Although a fairly new member of the Teme Valley Gardeners' Club I have already had great enjoyment from my membership, and found the idea of "flowers that bring back memories" especially poignant. As I sit in the window overlooking the snowy scene my memories return to childhood days on the family farm and the second World War. Winters must have been much the same as this year, with snow and frosts, but the Summer and autumn seasons always seemed just lovely. But were they really? I had three sisters serving in the forces and I well remember the excitement when one or other was due home on leave, sporting very smart uniforms of Army khaki or Air Force blue. So many brass buttons-I was quite jealous!

All our neighbours were interested in the comings and goings and one, who was a special friend of the family, had a particularly lovely garden containing several lilac trees of different shades. He often visited (especially when my sisters were at home for some reason!) with armfuls of lilac, and the house would always smell so wonderful. I can still imagine that smell today, just at the thought of it.

When my late husband and I arrived as newly-weds at our first home in Penybont Road we were given a sweet little lilac tree by a kind Felindre lady. I recall being so excited at having my very own lilac tree, and we planted it in prime position on the edge of the lawn so that everyone could admire it. This was followed by several other lilac trees over the years, including one from Percy Thrower's Garden Centre in Shrewsbury. The great man himself served us and called it "Heavenly Blue"; it was beautiful tree with a wonderful feathery leaf and I would really like to find another one if anyone out there could help?

With regard to Rosemary's poem (January and February issues of the noticeboard), I do recollect this poem from my school days and remember being the Fairy Red dressed in crepe paper, performing something which was called "The Rainbow Fairies". My lines were:

I am the little fairy red
I paint the cherries hue
I paint the glowing sunset
And the holly berries too

I do not know who was the author; it may have been the headmistress, who was, I believe, an English graduate. All such wonderful memories. As to my favourite flower, I really do not know. Last year it was a patch of harebells on a hill near me. I struggled up to look at them as often as I could, so perhaps the colour blue has something to do with it.

CAKES needed

For our Open Gardens event on May 30th we will need cakes to sell in the tea room. Please help us by providing a cake-every sort will be useful and you can sign up at the next meeting.

Thank - you in advance, *The Committee*

February 2010 meeting report

Jobs for life are a thing of the past - but not for Nick Coull, it seems. Nick and his father run Bucknell Nursery, a six-acre site which began as an estate nursery in the fifties, growing conifers to meet the post-war need to restock 5,000 acres of woodland. One way to develop a love of plants and trees is to do what Nick did in his childhood and teens: weed and water plants for pocket-money; and since then, he has been thoroughly contented with his adopted career. With his father, he has seen the requirement for conifers fall away to be replaced by a demand for ornamental trees and shrubs, fruit trees, and trees both as game crops for pheasants, for example, and for the regeneration of hedgerows. Orchards removed 20 to 30 years ago are being restored and new ones created and allotments enable gardeners to provide more cheaply for their families in a period of economic downturn – as well as being very satisfying and lots of fun! You can't go wrong, Nick told us, with varieties of native trees and shrubs, ideally between two feet and three feet high, because they are hardy – given that here we suffer from cold winds and poor soil – easy to plant, and can be purchased in numbers. Tree guards, a popular seller from Nick's point of view, protect a young tree's bark from those dear little bundles of fur with razor-sharp teeth. Nick chronicled for us a typical growing year with all its seasonal activities and chores – quite a workload for a small family business! Mechanisation has helped but since Nick and his father are determined to sell plants and trees that will thrive at affordable prices, they cannot spend on equipment in the same carefree way as larger organisations. Still, Nick wouldn't exchange his life for any other; though whether his children, still young, will join him in the family business and take it to another generation is, as they say, in the lap of the gods....

Mary Comer

The Hardy Plant Society: Herefordshire & Mid-Wales Group

Saturday 10th April 2010 at 2.00 pm. Bartestree Village Hall, Nr. Hereford

Talk by Keith Wiley. Wildside – taking naturalistic planting to a new level'

Visitors welcome admission £5 – Group members free

Plant Stalls – Teas – Book Stall. For further information phone 01544 267327

The garden 'Wildside' will be featured on Channel 4 TV on Thursday 8th April

"Since 2004 Keith and Ros Wiley have created from a bare field a 'dazzling new garden...the perfect showcase for his radical and exciting ideas on planting (The Garden, Feb.2008) which in time will surely change the perception of future gardeners'. In this talk Keith follows the development of the garden from its modest beginnings and shows how they are attempting to make the garden look good every month of the year."

"Keith Wiley was head gardener at the Garden House in Devon for 25 years, until in 2004, he and his wife Ros bought a 4 acre cider apple orchard and created a new garden. With the aid of a mini digger he sculptured the site into hills, canyons, pools and dry river valleys, creating the maximum range of habitats for plants, which in this garden come first. Keith Wiley has been described as the man who pioneered the style dubbed 'New Naturalism'. His inspiration coming from his own observations of natural landscapes elsewhere; by the world's deserts, coasts, mountains and woodlands. He has distilled the essence of these landscapes into a single garden with breathtaking success. Keith Wiley is described by Stephen Lacey as 'One of the most gifted artist-plantmen in the Country'. He also describes 'Wildside' as a tour de force."

The March garden: tasks and ideas

We are still waiting for our very late Spring as I write this article, and so the usual advice in garden books must be ignored and ones' own intuition used. A worrying time! It is probably fine to get on with seed sowing now, provided you can maintain good temperatures in the evenings and night time as well as during the day. Equable temperatures are what seeds enjoy, so if you have a place which is warm in the day but freezing at night, wait a while or find a better spot.

One of the benefits of this long Spring is that we have been able to enjoy the snowdrops for a longer period than normal. It is fine to move snowdrops before they come into flower (I have done this very successfully this year) or when they have finished, and indeed when they are dormant if you can recall where you

put them! The only time not to move them is when they are in full flower, but then why would you want to do that? Divide the bulbs carefully, planting up 2 or more bulbs in new situations so that they can spread around the garden. Snowdrops are not very happy in pots for long, so keep them in open ground if you can.

Many of you will have lost shrubs, which would normally be hardy but have not been able to stand the recent very low temperatures. Don't completely give up on them until later on in the Spring, but if you are sure that something has died, then now is the time to look out for a replacement. One might be tempted to play safe with the replacement, but part of the joy of gardening is to try out new things, so by all means be careful but do enjoy yourself. Why not try growing something more unusual from seed? Cheaper but still allowing for a bit of fun!

New vegetable varieties

Flower sprout: bred by crossing curly kale with brussels sprout, it has a sprout-like plant habit, a tall stem with little purple and green rosettes forming all the way up to a frilly-leaved top. The purple colour intensifies as the weather turns colder.

Flower Sprout is extremely winter-hardy

Broad Bean Listra: this small seeded bean is an early maturing variety, producing a superb crop of small, tasty pale green beans. It performs well even when sown quite late.

Carrot resistafly: does what it says! An early Nantes-type carrot with good resistance to carrot fly

Greek cress: Vigorous, spicy and fast growing, suitable for growing indoors throughout the year.

Plant Profile: Saintpaulia *(African violet)*

The Saintpaulia belongs to the Gesneriaceae family. Contrary to what many people think it is not related to the violet, but it is related to the Gloxinia (*Sinningia Speciosa*). The Saintpaulia is named after Baron Walter von Saint Paul St. Claire. He discovered the African Violet in the Usambara mountains in Tanzania towards the end of the nineteenth century. The original variety is *Saintpaulia ionantha*, which has dark blue/purplish flowers. The current range of plants has been developed from crossing *ionantha* and *confusa* species and is huge, with ruffled, double and single flowers in a huge range of colours. In cultivation, they need good light (but not direct sunlight) so no South-facing

+windowsills. They must be watered from the bottom of the pot with tepid water, as getting water on their leaves or in the crown of the plant may lead to rotting of leaves and flowers. Good varieties to try include Delft (semi double deep blue), Green Machine (white with a green edge) and Smooch Me (semi double rose pink). Miniatures are tiny but fun, and good examples are Jolly Fire (semi double red) and Optimara Rose (single pink)