

The Notice Board

What's On Locally

The Mid Wales Arts Centre at Caersws has an exhibition running from Saturday 1st October to Sunday 30th October 2011. Open from 11am to 5pm, the show has landscape art in the sculpture park, which is why it appears here when many gardens are shutting for the Winter.

The Banks Family are hosting a 'Celebration of Apples' at Hergest Croft on Saturday 15th October and Sunday 16th Oct 2011 from 10.30 - 4.30pm. There will be a range of nurseries selling unusual plants, and craft stalls. Special Events will include apple displays by RHS Wisley, Frank P Matthews and Marcher Apple Network, apple identification & tasting, local apple products, demonstrations of cultivation, and talks on the heritage of apples. See the spectacular Autumn colour in the gardens at the same time. RHS members and children free, adults £6.

On Sunday October 16th, Knucklas Community Land Project celebrates Apple Day at the Community Orchard. If it's as much fun as last year you won't want to miss the competitions, apple pressing, cakes and lots of information about the progress of the orchard and apples in general. This is a part of the nationwide celebration of Apple Day, founded by the charity Common Ground in 1990.

Saturday and Sunday October 15th and 16th sees a Cider making festival in Hereford at the cider museum, which will also have information on Marcher apple varieties, and ideas for planting local, cider and other apples.

Powis Castle gardens remain open in October every day but Tuesdays, from 11am to 4.30pm, last admission 45 minutes before closing.



The stillness of
October gold
Went out
like beauty
from a face.

In memory of Betty Morris

Many of us were saddened by the death of Betty on September 13th following a short illness. Betty had for many years been a much valued member of our gardening club, and she greatly looked forward to our meetings, enjoying the company and taking part in the monthly competitions. Her small garden was full of interest and colour, carefully planned to look good in each season; a place of tranquility where she was able to sit and relax with her needlework. Several of our members attended her funeral service at St Edward's church, and Betty's grand-daughter spoke of a much-loved Gran who loved her garden. The hymns chosen for the service included All Things Bright and Beautiful, Morning Has Broken, and a CD of Katherine Jenkins singing Time to Say Goodbye was played as the cortege left the church for the internment in the new cemetery, where her husband Ken rests.

Jean Price

The speaker at the September meeting of the garden club was Kim Hurst accompanied by husband Rob. I don't know what Kim charged for their visit but she was worth every penny. As Avril said in her vote of thanks afterwards, oh dear, now she must dig up her garden and start all over again.

The Hursts developed a business as The Cottage Herbery of Tenbury Wells which has been growing organically since 1976. They specialise in cottage garden plants and herbs for cutting and for showing. They have won gold at Chelsea and Kim is now a judge of edibles at these shows. They will be showing at the Malvern Show in the edible garden display. As well as displaying show gardens themselves they are able to provide plants in season in top condition for others to use in their show gardens.

The talk was principally about growing cottage plants and herbs for cutting so we heard how to grow for maximum production of blooms, especially on long, strong stems. There were also a great variety of herbs which were good in displays not only for their leaves and flowers but in some cases their magnificent seed heads. With each plant described, and shown on the screen, we were told the best conditions for growing to achieve the best results. Some needed wet ground, some dry. For those awkward plants that wanted wet ground in summer, but rotted in the same soil in winter, then the answer was to place a layer of grit in the planting hole below the roots to see them through the winter. And for those annuals, eg poppies, that were at risk of going over while actually on show, so long as the judging was over, then a few seed pods were acceptable.

Kim is available to provide displays for special occasions. Advice for taking cuttings for particular events is to cut long stemmed flowers two days before needed and ensure that the stalks take up plenty of water before they are put in oasis. Some of the herbs, ie edibles, are too soft stemmed and so cannot be used in oasis. She described how she would make small table displays for wedding receptions at which herbs were included.

Only one variety of annual sweet pea is grown at the Herbery, *Lathyrus odoratus* 'Cuponi', a very dark lustrous purple, fragrant naturally. A bunch of these, in water, was passed around the meeting for our inspection. The original of this plant was discovered growing wild and was subsequently used to develop the rich choice of sweet peas now grown.

Plants with variegated leaves are as important as flowers to add to the effect. The whole evening was full of good advice not only for flower arrangers but for all of us who want colourful displays in our gardens not just in summer but throughout the year. After all, for people who exhibit at shows throughout the year, there has to be worthy plants at their peak throughout the year.

Rosemary Naylor *****

Marilyn Tippett writes about the **Australian Bluebell tree, or *Acnistus australis***, which is originally, probably, from Argentina and Bolivia. She has offered it to GC members through the seed and plant stall this year, and if you have one, here is some more information about how to grow and keep it this Winter.

A superb, rare and beautiful plant which, although in its natural habitat is an evergreen shrub, sown early in the UK it flowers the first year and can thus be treated as a half hardy annual. With us, it will not be evergreen unless kept indoors over the winter months. Fast growing, it is smothered over a long period with numerous, dangling, long-stalked, angel's trumpet-shaped blooms, each a couple of inches or so in length. In the mixture I grew, these may be rich lilac-blue or white, and cover the plants in Summer like tiny pixie hats. To see it is to want one, and friends will always be happy to have some saved seed if you get any. The plant is half-hardy in the UK in "normal" Winters, not that we have those any more, but can be kept over Winter in a frost-free place when it will start into growth late the following Spring. By late I do mean late-it may even be May before it shows signs of growth so do not despair and throw it out too early. I have had one grown outside for over 6 years in the Midlands, but have not been able to manage that here as I do not have an especially warm garden.

Acnistus may be grown in a large pot and kept there for several years, although if grown outside in a sheltered spot it has been known to grow to about 4' plus. A truly non-gardening friend to whom I gave one used to throw it onto her compost heap every Autumn and resurrect it each Spring-she was mortified this year when this treatment failed!

The October garden: tasks and ideas

October often feels like a new start rather than the end of something, and in some ways it is, as this is the time not only to tidy the garden after the Summer and start preparing for Winter, but also to think ahead for the new year that is to come and see what can be done in terms of planning. This is especially important when taking stock of annuals and vegetables, to see what did well or did not suit, and to consider if such things are worth trying again or are to be relegated to the “never again” heap.

Practical jobs abound of course, and one of the most irritating to me is the finding of a multitude of labels, often with no marking left, littering the ground where the birds have pulled them from their appointed place. Unless you can remember what they are for or where they belong, it is best just to collect them

up and wash then ready for reuse next year. After all, unless yours is a show garden, the chances of anyone examining your plant labels are low. It is worth marking small or vulnerable plants with a tall label or bamboo stick, to ensure that they do not get dug-over this Autumn, or dug up next year!

By now most of the tomatoes that are going to ripen will have done so and you can consider clearing out and cleaning out the greenhouse ready to accommodate plants needing a little protection from the frosts to come. It is well worth cleaning properly at this time of year so that fungus and bugs do not get tucked into corners and hibernate ready to leap onto your new plants in Spring. With the last two Winters in mind, it is also worth emptying water butts early and wrapping any vulnerable plants and pots just in case of an early frost or prolonged bad weather, when it is much harder to motivate oneself to carry out these tasks.

In memoriam

*Keith Ackerman
~who died recently after
being ill for some time*

Keith and Eileen have been stalwart members of the Gardeners' Club for many years before Keith's increasing deafness made it hard for him to continue to attend meetings. Always keen to support our activities, he was generous with his time and the garden, opening it on many occasions for the benefit of the Club and other local good causes. Keith was a keen and knowledgeable plantsman in his own garden, and was very generous with cuttings, plants and the various fruits of his and Eileen's labours over the years. Our thoughts are with Eileen at this difficult time.

Avril Hoyle

Speaker's Corner

Competition results. There were 9 entries in all, but we encourage you all to have a go, as you get 7 points just for entering! Geoff Duthie, club member, was the weigh master for the evening and did a splendid job, also contributing an entry. Unfortunately, this had to be disqualified after a foreign object was found inside the onion. After a committee discussion, he was awarded 7 points for an entry.

First place: Sheila Farrell, 11b 8ozs (see “knowing your onions” in this edition for how she did it!

Second place: Hannah Taylor, 15 ozs

Third place: Marilyn Tippet, 14 ozs

The garden shed

As Mr Duthie's foreign object was in fact a cannonball which he had found in his garden, this prompts me to ask what items you have found? Tell me at the meeting and I will allocate a small area in the Garden Shed and we can share all our finds and stories. Questions we try to answer for you about the plants we sell are given to the best of our knowledge and the books we have at hand; we apologise if we get it wrong. Can I ask members to give us more information about their donations? We sold £26.90 worth of plants and other goods last time. Please note that we can no longer offer plastic bags, so perhaps consider a box in your boot for plants?

The speaker for the meeting of Monday November 14th is Mrs Susan Hammer who will demonstrate Floral Decorations for Christmas. Susan is replacing Derek Walker, our advertised speaker, who has had to withdraw. Geoff Duthie is going to show us some hardening items and ideas from his “Garden Shed”. He has promised not to demonstrate everything he does in there! The competition for November is “**a branch with berries**”.

Mary Bufton. Speaker Programme organiser. 01547 510285

