

The Notice Board

What's On Locally

This month is apple month, so no apologies for including lots of apple-related events

Knuckles Community Land Trust celebrates Apple day on the 17th October at the allotment site. Apple cake baking competition, apple & pear pressing and other fun events

Hereford Cider Museum has a Cider Festival on October 16th and 17th. Exhibitions of coopering and blacksmithing amongst other cider-related events. If you want to see a Slack-ma-Girdle or a Brown Snout, here's the place!

Leominster also has an apple day on October 17th at the Lion Ballroom, Broad Street. The Marcher Apple Network will be present

On Sunday 17th October, the **Silvester Horne Institute, Church Stretton**, has a display of over 100 apple varieties. Identification by Mike Porter, Marcher Apple Network. Wholefood café featuring apples, cider bar, food stalls, competitions, quizzes, juicing

Hampton Court gardens are open Tuesdays - Sundays until the end of October

Hergest Croft has a Plant fair on Sunday 17 October 2010 at 10.30am – 4.30pm. Unusual plants and interesting stalls



The morns are meeker than they were,
The nuts are getting brown;
The berry's cheek is plumper,
The rose is out of town.

The maple wears a gayer scarf,
The field a scarlet gown.

Westonbirt trip -

last opportunity to sign up!

The Westonbirt trip this October is definitely happening, at a cost of £15 per person, not including lunch. There are plenty of places to eat at Westonbirt, or you can take a picnic.

We hope that this trip will coincide with the trees in their Autumn beauty as Westonbirt has plenty of wonderful maples and other good colourers.

If you would like to have a look at Westonbirt on your computer before you go, the address is

www.forestry.gov.uk/westonbirt



Emily Dickinson

Meeting report: September 2010

Our speaker at the September meeting was Susan Russell who with her husband Peter has a long term love of cottage garden pinks. They left their nursery at Mendlesham, Suffolk four years ago and now live locally. Her talk, titled "Pinks" was of the centuries-long development of these lovely flowers and why they have been bred into the many forms now available.

If you want to check out pinks in your Gardening Encyclopedia you will need to look for the genus *Dianthus* where you will find not only pinks, but sweet williams, border carnations and florists perpetual flowering carnations. All are related and grown for their various qualities; perfume, habit, strength of stem, length of flowering period and whether or not they are repeat flowering.

The International Register of *Dianthus*, past and present, lists 8/9,000 varieties. There are many to choose from but obviously many no longer to be found. Amongst the slides shown at the meeting was of a pink called Camilla which was found, after a search, in only one location. Susan said that old-fashioned pinks had, with some, lost their popularity because of their short flowering period. But her belief in their value was unshaken; just look; she said; at its great spread of blooms on a single plant Camilla. Another lovely fragrant pink is the white Mrs Sinkin. Here one must understand the name pink refers not to colour but arose because of the frilly petal edges which look as though they have been trimmed by pinking shears.

We heard of the many uses in the 17th cent. for fragrance, colour in salads, flavour in meat dishes (the poor man's cloves) and in medicine (as in Gerard's herbal).

Although the talk was chiefly about pinks and their development in detail from the 16th century to today, the talk included border and florists carnations since they all played their part. Nursery people have to follow the fortunes as dictated by the buying public.

While growers wanted newer varieties for their stronger, longer stems, especially for picking and for buttonholes, the old varieties are a necessary input into breeding programmes as they are the source of fragrance.

Susan described how in their nursery in Mendlesham they cross pollinated and when the result was garden worthy a new *Dianthus* was named. These would be given a name including their nursery name, thus Mendlesham Minx and Mendelsham Moll.

When a desirable new plant results from cross breeding its subsequent propagation depends on taking cuttings to perpetuate the discovery. Making the same cross again could be completely different and not necessarily garden worthy. So, if you get chance to buy a Mendelsham dianthus in a local garden centre you will be doing your bit to keep the strain alive. And just think of all the cuttings which have been made over the centuries to keep the current 5/600 varieties in circulation, some in continuous growth for over 400 years.

This proved to be a formidable talk and was followed by a number of questions to the speaker.

There were 11 entries to the competition for a stem of *Crocoshmia*. The winners were Kath Graham, Audrey Fox and Margaret Crawley as first, second and third respectively.

Rosemary Naylor



My favourite flower

We start with an apology to Ron Clugston for the missing last sentence of his article on the fuchsia, which should have read as follows: "Kenny Dalglish", a Hardy Variety, a must for any Liverpool F C fan like myself." Apologies also for the poor proof-reading, picked up by many of you I am sure, that allowed so many different spellings of Fuchsia! For the record, that is FUCHSIA!!

Marilyn Tippett



This month,
Marilyn Price tells us
about her love of the
cornflower

My favourite summer flower has to be the cornflower. There are many colours to choose from but the two that impress me the most are the blue cornflower and the Black Ball. They look so stunning and elegant when fully grown and can produce lots of flowers throughout their growing season.

I plant them in separate rows with the bright, striking orange flowers of the calendula and they look stunning when all out in bloom together. I sow the seeds in trays in February, and when they are about 1" to 2" high I transplant them to larger trays and plant them out at the end of May or early June, approximately 8" apart. They can grow up to 3' tall, so I find that if you plant them close together they will help support each other when we get the lovely wet British summers we have had lately.

It is not necessary to plant them in trays; they can be sown straight into the flower beds as seed (any well-drained soil will do), saving you a lot of work. They are good for wildlife, and can be cut for indoor displays too, lasting a long time. The Blue Ball is still flowering now in my garden in October.

The October garden: tasks and ideas

Time to start the Autumn tidy-up, if the rain ceases long enough for us to get out into the garden without waders! Many people prefer to leave the seedheads of perennial plants over the Winter to add height and interest in the garden, and to feed the birds on their seeds. This works well if your garden is not in a windy spot, when you will need to think whether you like the effect of broken stems and wilted leaves all Winter. Personally, I prefer to do most of my tidying up now, and whilst I am doing this I will plant some more bulbs, which I will promptly forget about until next Spring. Whilst the soil is still warm, now is a good time to move any plants which you have decided are in the wrong place, or to divide overgrown clumps - don't forget to take the outer parts of those plants to replant, throwing out the inner section. This is also a good time to put

compost onto the top of the soil so that the worms can pull it into the ground over the Winter. Compost or bracken heaped over slightly tender perennials will help to protect the roots from frost, which will no doubt show its face this month. With this in mind, take in any tender plants and start to lessen the watering schedule as they get ready to over-winter. This year I am going to try and keep my dahlia tubers by wrapping them in bubble wrap when they are dry and then putting them in cool bags or polystyrene boxes; if it doesn't work then I shall have to give up storing them and start from seed each year.

Those last tomatoes in the green house can often be much better if roasted at this time of the year. Cooked with a little oil in a slow oven, they freeze very well and add a good depth of flavour to stews and casseroles in the Winter months. Add some herbs if you like them - basil or thyme work well.

Iris for planting in pots

Thinking of next year and a wish for some colour early in the year, here are some small iris which do well in pots

Iris reticulata: George, Pauline, J S Diojt and Katharine Hodgkin are especially good colours

Iris histroides Halkis or Lady Beatrice Stanley should be readily available from the more specialist nursery

Iris danfordiae (reticulata) are very good in pots and a strong yellow in contrast to most other small iris which come in shades of purple and blue.

Plant Profile: Schizostylis

(the Kaffir Lily)

Schizostylis coccinea are South African flowers, members of the Iris family. They are great additions to the late season border, often carrying on flowering until Christmas. They grow naturally in wetter places on the eastern side of the Cape, in stream beds and on cliff edges, where summers are warm and wet and winters cold and dry. The South African terrain is rugged, but the soil in the valleys, although poor, is ideal for bulbous and rhizomatous plants. Schizostylis is slow growing and takes many years to produce lots of flower spikes. But it's worth the wait, as once established, each stem will produce between six and 12 flowers

or more. There are many forms of Schizostylis coccinea. The copper-red 'Major' is the most readily available, 'Sunrise', is a floppy plant with large pink flowers, and Alba which is of course white. 'Mrs Hegarty' and 'Viscountess Byng' are older varieties which have smaller, pink flowers, whilst 'Zeal Salmon' is a showy, late variety with deep pink flowers.

Schizostylis need moisture-retentive soil to perform well, but also sunshine to open the flowers. They do not like being soggy in the Winter, so a gravelly soil, or one with added gravel at planting time, will suit them best. If your garden is very cold in the Winter, plant them in a warm and sheltered spot - the base of a wall is a good place - and leave them undisturbed to grow to flowering size.