

The Notice Board

Dutch trip



If you are interested in joining the Gardeners' Club trip to Holland from the 18th to the 21st of April 2010, please put your name down on the list at the next GC meeting, or see Avril for more information. A £40 deposit will be needed by the 25th November at the latest to secure your place.

Hampton Court, Herefordshire

11am to 5pm up to Saturday 31st October 2009
(Saturdays and Sundays only thereafter)

Gardens, Orangery Restaurant
and Gift Shop:

Open Tuesday to Sunday and Bank Holiday Mondays.

Last entry one hour before closing time.

Favourite flowers

You will see within the pages of this edition of the Notice Board that we have another member's favourite flowers described for us. Quite apart from hearing about the flower itself, it is very interesting (and often moving too) to hear about why a particular flower means so much to us.

*Have **you** thought about talking to Marilyn about your favourite flower? Or tree or shrub if you prefer? You can also write to Marilyn at The Mill, Lloyney, Knighton LD7 1RG, or email her at metippett@btinternet.com, or even telephone her on 01547 528842. Don't worry about how much you can write, or even if it needs "tidying up" as Marilyn will happily do that for you.*

Please share you thoughts with other members - we look forward to hearing from you!

"Youth is like Spring, an over-praised season more remarkable for biting winds than genial breezes. Autumn is the mellower season, and what we lose in flowers we more than gain in fruits."

- Samuel Butler

RHS RAFFLE TICKETS

**WILL BE ON THE RAFFLE TABLE FOR THE NEXT TWO MEETINGS.
£1 A TICKET. EXCELLENT PRIZES!**



Meeting report: September 2009

Rachel Salisbury, last month's guest and a very effective, engaging speaker, generated much interest with a seemingly endless fund of knowledge and some really helpful practical demonstrations using fresh plant material. Rachel's main messages on plant propagation, which she made technically satisfying yet easy to grasp, were as follows. Seeds yield many more plants but cuttings provide more exact facsimiles. Nevertheless, if you follow the instructions on the packet and, according to plant type, supply a cold dormant period, moisture (especially for tree seeds which get theirs from leaf-mold where they fall), light but not direct sunlight, or darkness as the case may be, enough space between seeds to eliminate disease, and the right ratio of compost to grit, then you will be rewarded with germination and, eventually, strong, healthy plants. Although plants like the hosta and sedum are easy subjects, cuttings are trickier and susceptible to rotting – particularly herbaceous cuttings – and need tender, loving care, along with light to help form roots, sterile compost, a polythene covering to keep in moisture and, if you are an organic gardener or one who does a great deal of propagation, Rachel's advice was to eschew rooting powders for the plants' health and your own. Of course, this doesn't do Rachel's performance justice, and we were fascinated by her careful cleaning off and cutting down of bulbs like the daffodil's to a couple of scales and a portion of the basal plate; but members plied her with questions during her talk and shared experiences with her afterwards – always proof of an absorbing evening! Congratulations to Jean, Marilyn and Brenda, who came first, second, and third respectively in the competition for the best orange flower!

Mary Bufton tells us about her favourite flower and here is the lovely story of what makes it special for her.

Atty's yellow roses

My grandfather was christened Arthur James, but was known affectionately as Atty, and he loved roses, especially yellow roses. He never picked them because it meant that their life in his garden was over, and he never removed the fallen petals without holding them in his hand for the scent.

He mulched them with manure from Sarah the old sow (there were many Sarahs but we didn't realise that at the time), and when it had hardened he poked a stick in it to make holes and then filled them with sand so that in Winter the roots were kept warm and in Summer they acted as drain holes for moisture. He only deadheaded when the petals had fallen.

One early morning as I watched the morning mist creeping away from the garden, I saw all the roses stood in their splendour but with their heads bowed. That day, Atty left his garden and his roses in the care of his loving family who were very sad, but with happy memories.

Bless him, for when I see and smell roses I am with my Grandad again. Avril's organised trip for the Gardeners' Club to Paris included a visit to Monet's garden, which evoked vivid memories for me as it was so like what my grandparent's garden had been.

See also Notice Board Issue number 44: "Just the Job - charming old time gardens".

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Tamarisk taken to task!

According to our local spy, Rosemary Naylor has finally taken in hand the tamarisk that was threatening to take over her garden (see February issue of the Notice Board) and has cut it down to size at last. We await the next stage in the saga with baited breath Rosemary!

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Autumn preserves

As we try to use up the annual glut of fruit, ours or our neighbours', here are a couple of recipes to try. Make sure your jars are sterilised in the oven or microwave before filling them with the preserves.

Pickled pears

Ingredients

450g granulated sugar
400ml cider or white wine vinegar
1 tsp cloves
1 tsp allspice berries
1 small cinnamon stick, broken in half
4 pared strips lemon zest
2 rosemary sprigs
750g small pears, peeled

Method

1. In a large, heavy-based pan, stir together all the ingredients except the rosemary and pears and bring to the boil slowly.
2. Add the pears and simmer for 10 minutes; throw in the rosemary sprigs and cook for a further 5 minutes, until the fruits are just tender. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the pears, rosemary and spices to the sterilised jar. Return the pickling liquid to the heat and bubble away for 5 minutes, uncovered.
3. Pour over the pears, rosemary and spices, then seal. When cold, store for up to 6 months in a cool, dark place. Once opened, keep chilled and eat within 2 weeks.

Plum and apple chutney

Ingredients

75g fresh root ginger
1.4kg plums, stoned and roughly chopped
1.4kg cooking apples, peeled, cored and chopped
2 red onions, chopped
350g light brown muscovado sugar
2 tsp salt
400ml cider vinegar
1 tsp ground allspice

Method

1. Peel and finely chop the ginger and place in a preserving pan with the chopped plums, apples and onions.
2. Mix in the remaining ingredients and bring the chutney slowly to the boil, stirring frequently. Reduce the heat to a gentle simmer and let the chutney bubble, uncovered, for about 1½-1¾ hours, stirring frequently until the chutney has a thick, pulpy consistency. Spoon the chutney into sterilised jars and cover immediately with vinegar-proof lids. Label and store in a cool, dark place for at least 2 months before eating.

Christmas meal-help wanted! It has been suggested that we eat together at Knucklas Community Hall again. As you will realise, this means a great deal of work for Avril, and if we are to do this again, we would need some of you to come in on the morning of the event for an hour or so to help prepare the hall. There will be a volunteer list to sign at the November meeting, and we really need your help so that all the work does not fall onto the "usual" shoulders! Please think about this and speak to a committee member if you are prepared to get involved.

The October garden: tasks and ideas

By now you will be seeing the apples start to fall to the ground, and so pick them carefully, composting any that are even slightly damaged (or cook them and use or freeze them) and store them in a cold place in a box so that they are not touching. They will need inspecting every now and again just in case of rot. If you know that your apples are not “keepers”, then use them as soon as you can. Pears too need to come off the tree, but they are not keepers unless they are Conference. These can be stored as for apples, maybe even a little cooler, and used until Christmas, but other pear varieties need to be used now, or made into perry or cooked and preserved. Pears pickle well - see the recipe elsewhere in this edition of the Notice Board. Cuttings can also be taken now from the currant and gooseberry families.

The advice in all the gardening books is to plant new shrubs and trees from October onwards, but new ideas suggest that this may not be helpful in the current climate and may lead to losses. Current thinking seems to suggest that it is better to plant in late Spring once the Winter has done its worst and new plants can be more carefully watched over and supported. I still move and plant herbaceous perennials at this time of the year, but would wait until Spring for tree planting. Finally this month, it is not too late to plant more bulbs to brighten the early months of the year. Tulips are best planted now and into November, but daffodils can still be planted and will give a good show, although it may be a little later than usual. Remember to pot some bulbs up to bring into the house so that you can really feel that Spring does begin in February! Iris reticulata do well in pots, and crocus are old favourites of course.

Some useful internet sites for gardeners. Part one

nvsuk.org.uk: the national vegetable society's website, packed full of good advice and information

ngs.org.uk: you can search the “yellow book” online for your area or another part of the country

rareplants.co.uk: a good list of, yes, rare plants to grow

kew.org: you can look at the scientific research, and even shop online here at the Kew gardens website

gardensillustrated.com: online version of the magazine, with a forum, gardeners' bookshop and podcasts too

Plant Profile: Liquidambar styraciflua (the sweet gum)

A tree from the eastern parts of the USA, this tree comes to mind when planting for Autumn colour. It is a member of the Hamamelidaceae family, and does not mind damp soils, including those that flood occasionally, so is just about perfect for this part of the world!

In a good season, as this year looks as if it may be, the liquidambar is almost without compare for Autumn colour. It would in fact be fairer to say that the liquidambar does not just colour, it explodes into a kaleidoscope of colours, varying from crimson to purple, with yellows and oranges thrown in too, all at once. And then the leaves fall, suddenly, and the show is over for another year. But what anticipation!

Its leaves are finely shaped (star-shaped, rather like a maple leaf); its bark is pale and slightly corky and it produces rather charming round fruits too, called gumballs in the USA.

As this is a tree which will, in optimal conditions, grow to 80 feet (25 metres) be careful where you plant it, as it would be great shame to have to take it out because it has outgrown its place in your garden.

There is another variety available in the UK called “Worplesdon”, which also colours well but is in all honesty not that different from the species. “Moonbeam” is a smaller tree, reaching 10m. It has creamy yellow young leaves that turn green as the summer progresses.

One word of warning; if your garden is known to have honey fungus, then this is a tree which has a moderate susceptibility to the fungus so is best avoided.