



Founded 1940

GARDENER'S GAZETTE

Autumn 2022

AGM
Thursday 1st December
2022

Affiliated to:

The Royal Horticultural Society

National Dahlia Society

National Chrysanthemum Society

The Daffodil Society

The National Vegetable Society

The Hampshire Federation of Horticultural Societies

www.purbrookhorticulturalsociety.org.uk

Officers and Committee Members 2022

President: Wendy Wright

Life Vice-President: Maureen Kemp

Chairman: Lynda Piddington 023 9226 1149
40 Westbrook Grove, linda.piddington@sky.com
Purbrook PO7 5HX

Treasurer: Brian Andrews 023 9226 3731
26 Kings Road, Cowplain PO8 8UR

Trading Manager: Brian Andrews (as above)

Secretary: Jan Baxter 023 9238 3007
29 The Brow, Waterloooville PO7 5BY

Show Manager: Graeme MacFarlane 023 9225 2124
30 Khandala Gardens, Purbrook PO7 5UA

Show Secretary: Charles Mobsby 023 9226 5136
17 Padnell Road, Cowplain PO8 8DZ

Membership Sec: Tanya Barker 023 9378 2577
48 The Glade, Waterloooville PO7 7PE

Catering Convenor: Ann Richardson 023 9225 4986

Outing Organiser: Ann Richardson 023 9225 4986

Gazette Editor: Richard Knight rwknight@live.co.uk

General Committee: Lynda Piddington, Brian Andrews, Phil Stock, Jan Baxter, Ron Brumhill, Frances Leppard, Charles Mobsby, Richard Knight, Carole Rowland, Wendy Wright, Ann Richardson, Tanya Barker

Show Committee: Brian Andrews, Ron Brumhill, Charles Mobsby, Mark Ward, Lynda Piddington, Ann Richardson

The Chair Chats!

Following a deluge of rain, the weather suddenly became red hot, thus giving us a respite from mowing and allowing us time to sit and enjoy our labours.

With the Summer Show scheduled for Sunday 21st August - for the first time since the pandemic; preparations are going full throttle. If you can assist in any way by baking large cakes to sell, donating surplus plants to sell, manning stalls or even setting up and dismantling, you will be most welcome. Please contact Charles Mobsby or myself.

For new members it is a good opportunity to see 'behind the scenes' thus giving an even bigger confidence boost to providing exhibits yourself. Regarding exhibits, so often visitors to the Shows state they too have lovely produce, flowers, handicrafts, etc. so we are all not experts. I am sure many of us have one single flower or a few tomatoes, etc. that they can exhibit; so, my advice is simple, read the Schedule carefully, then re-read it to make sure you know what is required and start in a Novice Class as you will get a lot of help with staging and who knows you could be a proud winner!

So what else is new? Trips have recommenced, as have meetings, much to everyone's delight, as it feels as if life is beginning again.

The Trading Store is busier than ever, keeping Brian and the happy volunteers on the go and it is a pleasure to see you all again - and if you have a little time to help with lifting and shifting, that would be great.

Our new President Wendy and Vice-President Richard are settling into their roles nicely, despite the long shadow cast by the passing of Peter Brooks, and we look forward to initiatives that are in the pipeline.

Membership numbers are on the increase with many having been 'encouraged' to join by fellow members, which is a brilliant sign that you enjoy the benefits of membership and are encouraged to pass on the information to friends and neighbours, especially if they are new to the area. It is a safe and friendly place to meet others, whether you garden or not. In fact thinking of Christmas (yes it will soon be here) - it seems to come along ever more quickly every year, so why not buy a membership in September when the new year starts, as a gift for a friend for Christmas.

Lynda

Talks for 2022

Thursday 4th August

Annie Guilfoyle is a garden designer who runs a design studio and course at West Dean, Great Dixter and Chanticleer. With Noel Kingsbury, Annie is co-director of Garden Masterclass Ltd. and writes for several major garden magazines.

Thursday 1st September

Pauline Weeks will tell us about the growing of perennials the 'Which, Where and Why' understanding the 'hots' and 'nots'. The range of perennials available now is great and also you can raise your own more cheaply from seed.

Thursday 6th October

This evening will be a film show. Michael Bailey (also known as 'Speedy') was filmed for a year around Denmead and area where he is a farmer rearing calves. This film has been well received in several locations as far away as the New Forest. It will be lovely to get a local interest and see how a farmer spends his year.

Thursday 3rd November

Traditionally called our 'Pumpkin Evening' though not many people now have the room to grow giant pumpkins, or even have the muscle to carry them to the hall, but we will have other categories that you can enter - watch this space. Also the ever popular (or not!) quiz. Prizes to astound - they will be awarded for the exhibits and quiz winners. There will be cake - yum, yum.

Thursday 1st December

The AGM, not a boring evening, but a chance for you to find out all the facts about the club and to have your say.

Talk by Peter Rogers June 2022

Peter's talk was how to prepare daffodil bulbs for putting into Spring shows. He certainly has the qualifications as he has this year won 'Best Bloom in Show' at Wisley. It was a very interesting and informative talk.

When buying bulbs to win top prizes you have to spend a little more than usual, but you can still win at local shows with the ordinary 'over the counter' types. Peter recommends 'Choice Bulbs' or 'Flying Colours' as firms online.

He showed us slides of the following, all of which were very attractive flowers.

Pops Legacy
Midas Touch
Corby Candle
Honeybourne
Park Springs
Badbury Rings
Rapture

There are 13 different types of daffodil blooms in shape and colour and they need to be put into the right category for judging. Any show steward would help you to do this. The judges are looking for symmetrical flowers with no nicks on the edge of either petal (perianth) or centre (corona). The flower should be at right angles to the stem. Bulbs do not need too much feeding and if you do this the blooms may end up too big for the type which will lose you points.

Growing bulbs for showing in the ground versus a pot

In soil there is less protection from the weather and they are more susceptible to pests. In a pot they are lighter to move around and can be fed more easily. The drawback is they can only stay in the pot for 2 years and if left in the sun the bulbs can cook - not tasty!

Continued on page 4

For potting Peter uses 90% Levingtons M2 with 10% grit and 6oz of bonemeal for every 3 bags of compost. Pot up from October onwards putting some more grit under each bulb. They will flower approximately 35 days from when the flower bud appears. Feed with potash in February, water every 2 days, keep cool (plants and yourself), check for slugs and support the blooms. Make sure you label the plant.

When showing your prize winners put some leaves in the pot but keep them short, away from the flower. Support the blooms with wet newspaper, tissue or anything absorbent and if possible put some moss on the top for decoration. Vases are available at the show.

Best of luck everyone.

Frances

* * * * *

Memories of Peter Brooks

My favourite memory of Peter was on the occasion when a local school requested we facilitate a visit by their children to an allotment as part of their lesson on the topic 'Food - From Ground to Plate'.

Peter fully embraced the idea and thus minibuses of primary school children, teachers and teaching assistants, parked up in the Store car park and crocodiles made their way to Peter's immaculate allotment.

The interaction between Peter and the children was a joy to witness, as Peter explained how things were grown and patiently answered the myriad of questions pre-prepared (and even more not prepared previously - but thought of on the spot! And some were very amusing).

The children and adults were fully engaged and charmed by Peter, who had even gone to the trouble of giving everyone an envelope containing beans to grow.

A true gentleman.

Lynda

Peter Brooks

It is not often I get to sit in the garden, but recently was lucky enough to have lunch outside. The weather was lovely, not too hot and a slight breeze, which took the heat away, but very sunny.

It got me thinking. There was the abutilon, now a tree at almost 12' and far too big for such a small garden. It was given to me as a small twig, no bigger than 8", which refused to grow in a pot, but since I put it in the ground about two years ago, has come on in leaps and bounds. It has beautiful lilac flowers which adorn the tree in the Spring and is a stunner. The Tufa stones, now planted with houseleeks, seem quite happy in there, despite the lack of soil and water. The lavatera, not the common or garden one, but a deep pink with smaller flowers, seem quite happy in our claggy soil.

All of these were given to me by Peter Brooks. So although Peter has gone, every time I look at one of those plants, I remember his help and advice, but most of all his generosity and kindness. A true gentleman.

Wendy

* * * * *

Happy Birthday!

Very happy 101st birthday wishes to our oldest member, Mrs. Lunn (mother to Janet Andrews and mother-in-law to Brian Andrews). We wish you many happy returns and hope you enjoy a great birthday and see you at the Summer Show!

Lynda

* * * * *

Spring Show Bulbs

Suitable bulbs for most of the Classes in the Show will be available at the Store in early September, including the two varieties that we buy in bulk for Classes 13 and 14. Sealing Wax for the ones in pots, Geranium for the pebbles.

Brian

Looking to the Future

All Societies rely on 'new blood' to ensure they grow rather than stagnate and finally cease to exist, so we are really delighted to see membership numbers on the increase, and I'm not sure if I am getting older, but they do seem to be getting younger!

It is lovely to see new members, but the enthusiasm of the children coming to the Store is a real joy. Hearing from parents or grandparents that they are encouraged to grow things - whether in pots on the windowsill, or have an actual piece of garden for themselves, is refreshing and what better way (as we are all reminded during lockdown) to keep mind and body healthy, than to grow food or colour to brighten our lives.

So, if your children, grandchildren or even great-grandchildren are glued to their electronic devices, why not encourage them to start a gardening project and bring them along to the Store? Accompanied children are always welcome in the Society and Store and we would love to see more entries in the Summer Show Classes, especially tailored to them.

* * * * *

New Initiatives

One of the new initiatives introduced recently is a Membership Pack, given to new members. This is a folder containing:

A list of products in the Store

A copy of the latest Gazette

A copy of the latest Show Schedule

Membership Card

All of which has been well received.

Another exciting initiatives is for new member's children that visit the Store - to be unveiled shortly, so watch this space!

Lynda

Spring Show Class 14: A bowl of Narcissi in Pebbles and Water

This class is included in the show for the following reasons:

The Narcissus variety is specified and inexpensive quality bulbs are available at the store so exhibitors are starting on equal terms.

Suitable plastic bowls are available at the store.

Varieties specified will bloom for the show date.

The suitable varieties are all double multi headed with a sweet scent. These perfume the air at the show.

Bowls can be brought into the house to decorate and spread their strong perfume through the home so they are not just for the show.

Despite this, very few members enter this class. Talking to members I have got the impression that this is because of uncertainty as to how to plant and grow the bulbs. To rectify this, I hope to give a short demonstration at the September meeting (when the bulbs and bowls will be on sale) showing how to plant the bulbs in the bowl in the hope that it will encourage members get the bulbs and bowls on the night or at the store and have a go. This article is aimed at those of our members who will not be at this meeting.

First of all, the roles of the components.

The pebbles serve two roles. They keep the bulbs above the base of the bowl with room below and between them for the roots AND they hold the bulbs upright so they do not flop sideways when in bloom. You do not have to use pebbles. I have always used pea shingle mainly because I had some the first year I tried but also because I found that it flowed more easily between the bulbs and better held them upright. Another alternative to pebbles is clay pellets which are available at the store. If you use pebbles or pea shingle give it a quick wash to remove any residual salt that may be present.

A bowl is used because the container needs to hold water, to be wide enough to accommodate between 10 and 12 bulbs, with a wide base so it is stable and shallow so it is not too heavy when full of pebbles.

The water initially provides the humidity below the bulb to encourage it to produce roots and then provide the water to the bulb to expand the leaves and flower already present in the bulb. There are two constraints on the depth of the water - the depth of the bowl and the size of the bulb. The bulb must be deep enough in the bowl so that the pebbles/pea shingle/clay pellets hold the bulb fairly rigidly upright.

BUT the water level must be below the base of the bulbs which will rot if immersed in water for significant periods.

Paper bags of 12 bulbs, the bowl and clay pellets will be on sale at the store from early September. Try to buy and plant by mid- September. To keep the water level below the bulbs, drill a hole about 3mm ($\frac{1}{8}$ ") about three quarter inch above the bottom of the bowl to set a maximum water level and fill the bottom of the bowl with pre-wetted clay pellets so the hole is just covered. At this stage some recommend the addition of a small piece of charcoal to this layer to keep the water sweet. Position the bulbs uniformly around the bowl. If the bulbs are large you may not be able to fit in all twelve bulbs, fit in as many as you can. Dribble in the clay pellets all round the bulbs until the bowl is filled - jiggle to settle the pellets and top up. Pour water into the bowl until it starts to flow out of the hole in the side and let all surplus water drain away. Be prepared for this outflow if you are doing this indoors.

Position the bowl in a cool darkish space. My garage can get too warm on sunny days in September and early October so the bowls are outdoors in the shade of the house, but the bowls are moved to the garage when frost threatens. By early to mid January there should be green leaves visible. Move to a sunny position but protect when frost threatens. Make sure there is always water in the bottom of the bowl.

Once there is about an inch or more of leaf, you may wish to use a very weak liquid feed when topping up the water. If you think the bowl will bloom too early, move to a cooler part of the garden. If progress is too slow, move to a sunnier warmer spot and as a last resort about a fortnight before the show into a greenhouse or warm window for a few days. Aim to get the first blooms on each stem open about 7 to 10 days before the show. Care - greenhouse and indoor forcing can produce leggy growth which will need supporting. Use 3 or 4 split canes round the edge of the bowl and string to support.

I grow at least two bowls and force or retard them at different rates in an attempt to get one just right for the show. But remember, all the bowls can be brought indoors in turn to decorate and spread their fragrance round the room so none are wasted.

Happy growing and I hope to see the fruits of your efforts at the Spring Show on Sunday 19th March 2023.

P.S. We hope to also provide a hole drilling service in September if there is a demand so you can take home a predrilled bowl.

Charles

Magazines, Cards and Equipment Loans

There is a selection of Society Magazines, Privilege Cards and garden equipment available for loan to Members against a signature at the Membership Desk in the Store.

Magazines:

The Garden - Journal of the RHS
National Dahlia Society Bulletin
Chrysanthemum Society
National Vegetable Society
Hampshire Federation of Horticultural Societies - Monthly Bulletin - available online only

Cards:

RHS Reduced Garden Entry (+ 1 guest) - not Sundays at Wisley
National Vegetable Society
National Chrysanthemum Society
National Dahlia Society

Equipment:

£2 non-refundable charge per item towards replacement costs
Lawn Spreaders
Leaf Vacuum/Blowers
Lawn Rakes and Leads
Folding Tables (for indoor use only)

Anyone borrowing an item is required to return it within two weeks so that other Members may have the opportunity to use it.

Please use RCDs when using electrical equipment outdoors for your own safety.

For our New Members

For those of you reading this magazine for the first time, you may be interested to know what takes place at our Monthly Meetings.

We meet at the Deverell Hall on the first Thursday of every month excluding January. Doors are open at 7pm and the meeting commences at 7.30pm. Illustrated talks are presented by local personalities; these programmes are mainly of a horticultural nature, although at times other topics of interest are presented.

An interval is usually taken at about 8.30pm when coffee/tea and biscuits are served (at no charge). This is then followed by the drawing of the Raffle and the winner of the Show Table. The speaker then concludes the evening talk and the meeting closes at about 9.30pm.

Do come and join us, you will be made most welcome. In addition to enjoying the talk you can also

- participate in the Show Table
- buy plants from the Plant Stall
- book a seat on one of our outings
- pay your Membership Fees
- catch up with other Members and Officers of the Society

Trading Store Opening Hours

Every Saturday 9.30am - 11.30am

The Trading Store is situated on the London Road, Widley, adjacent to Purbrook East Allotments.

Items for inclusion in the Winter Gazette 2022, should be with the Editor by 1st October 2022, for distribution at the start of November 2022.