



GARDENER'S GAZETTE

Winter 2018

AGM
Thursday
6th December 2018
Deverell Hall 7.30pm

Affiliated to:

The Royal Horticultural Society

National Dahlia Society

National Chrysanthemum Society

The Daffodil Society

The Hampshire Federation of Horticultural Societies

www.purbrookhorticulturalsociety.org.uk

Officers and Committee Members 2018

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

Auditor: Vacant

The Chair Chats!

With this year drawing to a close, it is time to reflect on what has been achieved this year. Successful Spring and Summer Shows, despite challenging growing conditions, so beautifully organised by Charles Mobsby and Graeme Macfarlane to give such a wonderful visual impact – obviously with help from all you exhibitors!

Talking of exhibitors, what a pleasant surprise to see so many new exhibitors taking on the old hands, who, in the Purbrook spirit, gave such help and encouragement that some even won a trophy.

We have welcomed a new Lady Convenor, Ann Richardson of Trip Organiser fame and a new Membership Secretary, Jennie Ryton Smith, both of whom have taken to the roles with great aplomb, achieving a great deal in a short space of time. We have enjoyed wonderful days out on coach trips again this year with the promise of more next year (see website or in this *Gazette* for details, as seats book quickly). Each outing managed to have the right amount of sun and breeze for comfortable walking or just sitting in beautiful surroundings – does Ann have a secret spy in the Meteorology Office?

Our website is now accessible via all modes of technology and looks brighter and more interesting in a user-friendly format thanks to Richard Knight our web manager liaising closely with the new web designer and hopefully encouraging more of you to write a short article or send photographs taken at meetings, shows and coach trips.

The Trading Store is still a hive of activity with a good tidy up of the car park and borders achieved thanks to a small but hardworking team of volunteers (Wendy, Malcolm, Trevor, Richard, Brian and myself) in order to get it ready for the shrubs kindly donated by Peter Brooks. The interior of the Store has been hard work keeping shelves stocked and full of products, despite the ever increasing list of EU banned products. Brian is open to requests for items not currently stocked as either a one-off purchase or even continuous stock should an item prove popular.

On environmental issues, we are aiming for a more natural world and trying to stock items that are organic, environmentally friendly and pet/animal safe, as well as trying to reuse packaging for the plant buyers instead of relying on plastic bags. Roger Pyle has also made bird boxes and insect lodges to be placed around the grounds as part of being more environmentally friendly.

So, with all this achieved, and a new year approaching, we do need your feedback and opinions on the running of YOUR Society. Please do attend the AGM – refreshments will be available – and take the time to have your say.

May you all have a Happy Christmas and a healthy New Year.

Lynda

From our Northern Correspondent!

(Ed: Article received just after last issue went to press hence the out-of-sync seasons.)

My visitors had departed to the south, taking the weather with them. We have had a few days of misty dampness and were delighted to have rain yesterday. That meant that grass cutting could not happen and I could watch tennis and cycling with an easy conscience.

I have been trying to kill off buttercups in the grass – it is not a lawn – with limited success. Travelling around with visitors we have been in awe of the fields of gold – not sunflowers, as we see in France, or even rapeseed as seen in Hampshire, but buttercups! It should not be too big a surprise for me to have plenty of them.

I have eaten the first tomato from my greenhouse – a Sungold. I feel that all my tomatoes are out of control as I was on holiday when they should have been staked firmly. How I miss the PHS Store! I have struggled in vain to purchase canes of the quality I was used to. I don't suppose I fully appreciated the canes I bought and used until now. All I can find here are third-rate!

It will be some time, if ever, that I enjoy a pepper from said greenhouse. There are buds, but so far only one showing signs of opening! However we may have an Indian summer ...

After my hero, Roger Federer, lost yesterday, I took myself outside and set about planting up a border which was created behind the path to the shed. The shed had to be moved before the greenhouse could be built. A platform for the shed to stand on had to be constructed before the shed could be moved. Nothing is ever straightforward unfortunately. I managed to plant some French marigolds, some mesembryanthemums and pansies. Anything taller than a few inches gets flattened by the wind.

I have numerous shrubs in pots which are needing to be planted. Once I get protective netting around the fencing I will attend to them. During the dry spell it has necessitated much carrying of watering cans which seems to indicate that I will need to get an outside tap fitted.

The bird feeders are still attended by sparrows, although at the moment I put out niger seed only. I have been delighted to see greenfinches and goldfinches visiting. What has surprised me is seeing the sparrows chasing off the greenfinches and goldfinches. If there are other bits and pieces put out the starlings always seem to be the first to arrive. Well must get on with the housework and other boring tasks.

Best wishes,

Maureen

PHS Meetings 2018

All meeting at Deverell Hall — start 7.30pm

Thursday 1st November

Lesley Chamberlain has various talks available. I have chosen 'The Language of Flowers' as this sounds romantic - or not - as we will find out!

Thursday 6th December

AGM. Your chance to have your say in the running of the Society.

Frances

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Trip to Sissinghurst Castle on 22nd July

It was one of those very hot days (remember them?) but the coach was lovely and cool. The driver hadn't been there before, so by following his satnav which told him there were some tight squeezes, we nearly took one of the quaint old buildings with us, but he managed to get us there in good time.

Sissinghurst Castle (not really a castle), started life as a Saxon pig farm with a moated manor house. Nothing remains of the original house. In the late 16th C the site was owned by the Baker family who built a courtyard house. This house was leased to the government in the seven years war (1756-1763) and was used to accommodate 3,000 captured French sailors. In 1796 it became a poor house for up to 100 men. In the 1800s a family called Mann Cornwallis bought the house and repaired it. Vita Sackville-West and Harold Nicholson moved into Sissinghurst in 1932 and created the gardens as we see them today.

The walk to the lakes was very pleasant and cool. One lake was quite clear with signs of fish popping up to snaffle the flies; the other lake was oily courtesy of the hot weather I expect. The moat was a brilliant green.

I did climb up the tower (78 steps); what a weird place for a writing room! I'm not a great lover of heights and one little boy pleaded with his grandad not to pick him up. The gardens were suffering in the drought, but I am sure they are usually lovely. We weren't allowed on the grass – is this a NT thing? The curved oak floorboards in the rooms of the tower were brilliant.

The most impressive area by a long way was the kitchen garden. Fabulous onions, sweetcorn, courgettes and different types of squash winding around the other vegetables. Great fun as well.

Frances

To: MI5; MI6; GCHQ; PHS

‘Your secret mission should you wish to take it, Mr. Show Manager, is to increase the number of first-time exhibitors, increase visitor numbers and produce a great Summer Show.’

Well, Mr. Graeme Macfarlane, you chose, along with your A team, to take on this mission . . . And yes, you succeeded!

A fun day was had by all, and how lovely to see more first-time exhibitors who, along with their skill and a little help from the more experienced of you, managed to achieve placements and even a Trophy!

After all her hard work over the years helping Schools to enter the Show, Jan Baxter was delighted to see one of the schoolchildren come up to collect her prize, but perhaps not as proud as the parents and grandparents!

Some of the generous traders who help finance the Show by purchasing advertising space within the Schedule also paid a visit and were pleasantly surprised at the numbers which, in turn, made their contribution of more value.

The new Catering Team headed by Ann Richardson, produced a wonderful spread for Judges and helpers, before pouring and slicing like dervishes, for the seemingly hordes of thirsty and hungry visitors.

The backroom people who helped transport, move chairs and desks, stage the classrooms and then do it all in reverse at the end of the Show, deserve as much praise as most of them even produced exhibits; donated plants; made and donated cakes; and manned stalls. So, a very tiring but happy few days resulted in a great Show.

Now a deserved rest? Not likely! A Spring Show to prepare – Schedules are available now and bulbs to purchase at the Trading Store – and so it starts again!

PS: Date for your diary: Spring Show on Sunday 24th March 2019 at the Deverell Hall.

Lynda

Trips 2019

Sunday 3rd March

Orchids at Kew Gardens – 9am – £27

This will be the 24th Orchid Festival at Kew. The theme will be 'Columbia'.

Sunday 12th May

Leonardslee Lakes and Gardens – 9am – £22

Leonardslee is world famous for its display of azaleas and rhododendrons set alongside seven lakes. It was developed over 200 years. In 1889 it was being maintained by the Loder family.

It was closed a few years ago and now has a new owner and will be re-opening in January. It has all facilities and the wallabies, doll's house, shop and café serving hot and cold meals will be open.

Sunday 14th July

Mapperton House and Gardens – 9am – £24

'The nations' finest house' *Countryfile* 2006. Jacobean manor overlooking an Italianate upper garden with orangery, topiary and formal borders descending to fishponds and shrub gardens. All Saints' Church forms the South wing opening on to courtyard and stables. There are fine views of nearby Dorset hills and woodlands. There will be a guided tour of the Manor which is still lived in by the Earl and Countess of Sandwich.

The café and shop are on the ground floor.

Sunday 8th September

Wisley and the Flower Show – 9am – £15

The new visitor centre should be open by then.

Sunday November TBA

Christmas at Hever Castle

As usual a deposit of £15 will secure your seat and the balance must be paid before the trip.

Payments can be made at the Trading Store on Saturday (9.30am-11,30am) or at the monthly meetings. A cheque can be posted to Ann Richardson, 16 Fir Copse Road, Waterlooville PO7 5JA. Cheques to be made payable to PHS Trips.

My telephone no: 023 9225 4986.

Purbrook Horticultural Society

Meeting on 6th September 2018

Ray Broughton gave us a very entertaining and informative talk. Here are a few of the tips on pests and diseases that he passed on.

Some information about our friendly ladybird, contrary to opinion they do not actually eat aphids but suck the juice from their heads (ugh!) A Harlequin ladybird can get through 150 aphids a day and our indigenous 2 spot ladybird only 100. These can be bought online. Another bizarre fact, after mating, the female red spider mite bites the legs off the male and then eats him (yum yum!).

Tomato ketchup is good for cleaning secateurs, glob on and leave for a while. It will also work for larger items such as hedgecutters, better warn people or they might think it's blood. It is the vinegar which cleans, this can also be used as an insecticide, dab onto mealy bugs with a cotton bud and the same with scale insects. To combat carrot fly, water some malt vinegar over the soil when you thin carrots. Vinegar applied around lily plants will deter the lily beetle.

Don't forget to feed your hedges. Honey fungus and coral spot will thrive where plants are struggling. Feed with Vitax Q4 Plus – available at the Store. Also Vitax winter wash can be applied in the autumn and woolly aphids hosed from fruit trees. Blister aphids on soft fruit overwinter in nearby shrubs so in December hose them.

Alyssum planted near leeks will help to combat leek rust. When planting marigolds around your runner beans leave the dead heads on the plant, these are the attraction for the blackfly. White flowered runner beans rely on wind pollination so do not attract so many predators.

Pea moths start life on the leaves and commercially peas are being grown without leaves. There is enough chlorophyll in the stems and pods to sustain them. Black spot on roses must be prevented before it takes hold. While the leaves are still lovely and green spray with SB Plant Invigorator. This is based on dried milk.

Keep water butts clean, scrub out once a year and then you will not be spreading downy mildew.

To prevent canker on parsnips, cover the seeds with vermiculite when sowing.

Water pots with luke warm water, this will hopefully kill vine weevil grubs.

Grow potatoes in straw (barley is easier). Put the potato tubers an inch into the soil and then make a mound of the straw. They will be cleaner and easier to pick and the straw can be used again. To prevent scab wrap the seed potato in an unwaxed newspaper before planting eg Daily Mirror or Sun.

I hope you enjoyed the talk. We will be getting a fact sheet from Ray, photocopies of which will be available in the Store for a small donation to the Gardeners Benevolent Society.

Frances

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Membership

A quick reminder that renewal of your membership became due on 1st September and will remain at the £6 per household per annum again this year. To renew please speak to the person on the membership desk at the Store or at monthly meetings, as the new **BLUE** cards are now available!

We would also love you to help promote membership as this is how we manage to retain the low annual cost, as well as helping to fund meetings, the Trading Store, Shows and Outings. Why not bring along a friend to a monthly meeting or see what plants are on sale (among other items) at the Trading Store. After all, as the saying goes: 'the more the merrier!'

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Old Bags Wanted (*esp. Large*)

The sort that compost comes in! We are getting quite short at the Store of the larger bags which are used for chippings. It is a great way to ensure that plastic is being recycled and not entering landfill or our rivers and streams and then on to the sea. If you are purchasing wood chip or grit then please return the bags once emptied (or bring your own), plus any surplus to your needs. Thank you. Wendy and Trevor of the woodchip team will be very grateful!

Growing Cacti and Succulents as a Hobby

Succulents and Cacti are easy to look after, lovely to look at, very collectable and don't take up too much space. You can find more and more cacti and succulents now in florists, garden centres, supermarkets and even online.

The Portsmouth & District Branch of the British Cactus and Succulent Society have provided some tips for buying and keeping these lovely plants:

What are they? All cacti are from the Succulent family. Cacti are usually the ones with the prickly bits! Succulents and cacti are plants that store moisture in their roots, stems and leaves - this is how they survive periods of drought. They are from South America, Central America, Southern Africa and there are even some succulents in the Alps.

Growing and Light: Most succulents and cacti need bright sunlight to grow and flower well, so they need to sit in a greenhouse, a bright conservatory or south-facing windowsill. Cacti and succulents don't mind the cold, so long as they are kept dry, but you must keep them away from frost.

Watering: From Spring to Autumn succulents and cacti can be watered every one or two weeks depending on your conditions. The pot should be allowed to dry out between watering and should never sit in a tray of water. Over-watering is one of the main things you need to avoid to keep your plants healthy and happy (although they do need watering in summer). Even though many come from hot places, cacti flower better if they are given a cool and dry winter rest, which means that during winter you don't water them at all from early October to mid-March, but if kept indoors may require an occasional light watering to prevent shrivelling. This also applies to most succulents.

Compost and Feeding: They need a soil that is free draining so they don't get waterlogged. You can buy cactus compost from gardening stores, or make your own (with a mixture of two parts loam, either a John Innes No. 2 or 3, and one part coarse garden grit). Feed them once a month during the growing season using either a specialist cactus fertiliser or tomato feed diluted to half strength.

Pests: Some plants can get mealy bugs and red spider mite, both of which can be treated with a suitable insecticide.

Find out more: More information can be found on the British Cactus and Succulent Website: www.bcsc.org.uk.

You are also welcome to visit the Portsmouth BCSS Branch meetings, usually on the 3rd Saturday of the month at St Colman's Church Hall in Cosham. Visitors are always welcome, there's a talk and usually some plants for sale at each meeting, and it is a great opportunity to learn more. Visit our website at www.portsmouth.bcss.org.uk, join our Facebook group (**Portsmouth & District Branch of the British Cactus & Succulent Society**), follow us on Instagram (@portsmouthBCSS) or email our Secretary, Carrie Hands for more info at secports@outlook.com.

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Honey!

Well, the honey season is now over and all the hives are now down for winter; that means that all the surplus honey has been taken off and the hives reduced to 1 super (honey chamber) and the brood box.

The bees will now be collecting nectar and pollen – the nectar will be turned into honey and stored and the pollen will feed the new baby bees that will keep the hive going over the winter. The queen will gradually reduce laying and eventually stop. The queen excluder has also been removed so that as the stores diminish the queen will not be left behind as the bees go up into the stores. The queen cannot feed herself – she has to rely on her attendants.

At the time of writing, the sun is shining and the temperature is quite warm, so the bees are out foraging and are also clustered around the entrance. The reason for this is to guard the hive and stop wasps and other bees not belonging to that hive from stealing the stores. All bees are robbers and will steal if allowed. This year has been rather out of the ordinary. We have had a long winter and the bees were struggling, so had to be fed with syrup and consequently the queen delayed the start of egg laying. She usually commences laying in February and builds up to laying some 2,000 eggs per day by May. During the winter months when the temperature drops the bees will go into a cluster to keep warm – rotating all the time. The queen will be in the middle and will be busy doing the maintenance ready for next year.

(Thanks to Vic Mould who contributed this article: he says he doesn't profess to know everything but perhaps with 20 years more experience he may learn a bit more!)

Store News

Potato Varieties for 2019

The Society has ordered the following varieties for the 2019 season. A short description of each is added for your information. All seed potatoes are certified from Scotland.

FIRST EARLY

Arran Pilot is one of the most popular first early potato varieties among amateur gardeners. It has a short shelf life, but eaten when newly dug they are very flavourful. Not the best looking potato; it has a good resistance to scab.

Casablanca is classed differently by different suppliers. They produce heavy yields of tasty cream-fleshed oval tubers early in the season. They can be left to grow on for storage as a maincrop potato. Good resistance to diseases such as blight, blackleg and eelworm.

Winston released in 1992 this white skinned variety has been an exhibition success winning many titles on the show bench. They produce a high yield of smooth shallow-eyed tubers that are short and oval in shape. Flesh is firm textured and a creamy colour. Excellent disease resistance.

SECOND EARLY

Charlotte is a good second early with long tubers, yellow flesh and skin and shallow eyes. Yield, virus and blight resistance is fair to good. Excellent cooking quality and very good for salads.

Kestrel potatoes produce smooth skinned tubers with purple eyes and prove to be a winner at exhibitions. Kestrel has an old-fashioned flavour and makes good chips and roasts well.

Marfona are short, oval shaped potatoes with a smooth texture. Marfona lends itself perfectly to mash, wedges and boiled potatoes cooked in a sauce. Potatoes have a golden brown skin and smooth buttery taste.

MAINCROP

Desiree have a firm, creamy tasting flesh, making them ideal for smooth mash or for being cooked in a sauce. They have a lovely red skin and light yellow flesh.

Maris Piper is a favourite English potato grown since the 1960s. It is purple flowered and has a golden skin and creamy white flesh with a fluffy texture. This makes it a versatile all-rounder, great for chips, roast potatoes and mash and wedges.

Picasso produces round to oval tubers with smooth white skins and pink eyes. A popular variety for allotment growers due to high disease resistance. Great range of uses in the kitchen.

Valor shows great levels of blight resistance combined with the ability to produce large crops of bold white tubers. This variety has high tolerance to heat and drought, whilst the flesh is cream coloured and of a floury texture.

Although garden centres will no doubt have their potatoes available in January, we believe it is better to delay delivery until February so that during the worst of the weather they are kept in the controlled conditions at the suppliers in Scotland.

Limited space and facilities in our Store means that storage conditions, particularly during very cold changeable weather, are not ideal; also, a later delivery means there is less chance of the local rodent population finding them, as has happened in previous years. There will still be adequate time for chitting prior to planting and the tubers will be in a better condition when planted.

As usual, the potatoes will be available in 3kg net bags, or 1kg if preferred. We have to buy in the net bags which adds to the cost (30p-60p) last year, so if possible please return them for reuse. This will help keep our costs down and help a little towards our overall use of packaging products.

Brian

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Floral Art Programme 2018

Thursday 8th November:

Demonstration – Jo Hornsby – ‘Festive Fun’

Thursday 13th November:

Christmas Party/Social

Percy Thrower's Paradise Garden

The Dingle is part of the Quarry Garden at Shrewsbury. The summer bedding displays in The Dingle are top notch; Percy would be proud of the gardeners who maintain this tourist attraction which is at the southern end of the Shrewsbury Show site, close to the River Severn.

The Flower Show (amateur growers) is in the Severn Marquee. This year it was held on Friday 10th and Saturday 11th August 2018.

Again I was an exhibitor with all of my six entries returning home with prize cards:

Second for six specimen foliage plants: Coleus 'River Walk' -
Coleus 'Walter Turner' - Begonia Rex 'Renoir' -
Brunnera Variegata - Ajuga 'Black Scappop' -
Senecioia Candicans 'Angel Wings'.

Highly Commended: one scented leaf Pelargonium (Variegated
Fragrens).

Second: for six specimen Coleus: 2 x 'Fifth Avenue' - crimson, green,
maroon

2 x 'Rodeo Drive' - maroon and green

2 x 'River Walk' - bright green with yellow veins.

Second for greenhouse fern: Nephrolepis Exaltata (Ladder Fern).

Third for cut or planted shrub: Lycesteria Formosa (Pheasant Bush).

First for one Dwarf Conifer: Cryptomeria Japonia 'Bandai-Sugi'.

To finish the Friday evening, before the massed bands and fireworks, for one night, The Abba Reunion - never thought I'd go to a pop concert!

Peter

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Data/Privacy Protection Policy

Thanks to Malcolm, and in line with the Data Protection Policy the Society has a Policy which is pinned on the Noticeboard in the Store. Anyone who wishes to view the said document is welcome to visit and I will in due course be putting it on our website.

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

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 (2)

Leaf Vacuum/Blowers (2)

Lawn Rakes and Leads (2)

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 Spring Gazette, should be with the Editor by 1st January 2019, for distribution at the start of February 2019.