



# **GARDENER'S GAZETTE**

## **Winter 2023**

**AGM**  
**Thursday 7th December**  
**2023**

**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](http://www.purbrookhorticulturalsociety.org.uk)**

## **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 2024, should be with the Editor by 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024, for distribution at the start of February 2024.

## **The Chair Chats!**

So, despite yet again events attempting to disrupt the Summer Show we did manage to achieve a wonderful and successful one!

This year's potential hazard was the road outside the College being partially blocked by utility works meaning a wonderful safari around the detour signs to get to our destination.

It was, however, uplifting to see so many new members giving support by putting in exhibits and bringing the whole family to view, they certainly gave us 'veterans' competition. The children's exhibits certainly showed flair and imagination and their enthusiasm put a smile on all our faces especially when they realised they won prize money as well as a Trophy!

Speaking of the Trophies, you may have spotted that they were overhauled this year with repairs and engravings completed and even a new Trophy purchased in memory of our late President Peter Brooks.

Thanks to our new Chief Steward, Eddie Horrell, they were beautifully polished and prepared for presentation, so we have decided he can keep the post!

A new initiative this year made possible thanks to the thriving membership numbers and participation by you all was, the purchase of Trophies especially designed for the Children that may be kept by the winners rather than having to return them each year - let's see how many they can achieve! By the way, the first winner of the Peter Brooks Trophy for Best Potato Exhibit was Garry White who was fortunate to have taken over Peter's allotment and even managed to harvest enough quality Raspberries from the canes left on the plot to produce and exhibit a jar of Raspberry jam!

Now with shorter days and longer nights we can look forward to a great selection of topics at Monthly meetings, including the ever-popular Pumpkin Evening and Quiz, overseen by the very strict quizmaster, Frances. Do not worry if new to this event as it is fun with the quizzing taking place in teams of four and with questions not just on Gardening and Horticultural but General Knowledge as well.

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In December we host the Annual General Meeting which gives the committee an opportunity to report on what has been achieved, what is in the pipeline and to get your input as to how things can be improved and what you would like the Society to achieve.

Then at the start of the new year we begin a new membership year and as stated at the last AGM it will be at the reduced price of £5!

So, may I be the first to wish you all A Very Merry Christmas and a Happy, Healthy New Year!

**Lynda**

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## **Talks for 2023**

### **Pumpkin Evening**

#### **Thursday 2nd November**

The Classes for the popular Pumpkin Evening are as follows.

1. Decorated Pumpkin, Squash or Gourd (may be shop-bought and then decorated).
2. A Spooky Halloween Floral Arrangement (to be judged by Lorraine Plant)
3. Any Crafted item or Photograph relating to Autumn.

Prizes awarded: 1st - £10 2nd - £5 3rd - £3

Also a super quiz (in teams) where the prize is a bottle of wine.

#### **Thursday 7th December AGM**

Presentation of Accounts and Election of Officers for the coming year.  
Reports from the various sections who organise all your activities.

This is your chance to put forward your views and suggestions to the Committee for consideration.

**Frances**

## Floral Art Programme 2023

**Thursday 19th October:**

Demonstration: Karla Bell-Marsh: Night Skies

**Thursday 16th November:**

Demonstration: Dennis Van Wonderen: Christmas

**Christmas Lunch:**

Venue and date to be arranged



### **Jerry and Betty Clark**

It is with pleasure that the Society  
wishes to extend their warmest congratulations to  
Betty and Jerry Clark on their 60th Wedding Anniversary.

As many of you will know, Betty was on the Committee for many years  
and helped our Society to grow and prosper  
in her various roles.

Congratulations to you both.



Dates for your diary:  
**Spring Show**  
**Sunday 24th March 2024**

*Don't forget that we now have a  
website where you can read current issues of  
the Gazette and Store information:*

*[www.purbrookhorticulturalsociety.org.uk](http://www.purbrookhorticulturalsociety.org.uk)*

## Bulb Fibre

The questions I am most often asked, as are my colleagues on the RHS Bulb Committee, concern bulbs in pots and containers.

These centre around stunted growth or even just leaves appearing. In reality, there is very little to go wrong, provided that you start with good bulbs and prepare a good friable soil for the plants to make their roots and take up water. Watering is of vital importance even during February and March, a time when we would not necessarily have it high on our to-do list. Containers must be kept evenly moist but not wet. If the growing plant cannot take up enough water the result will be stunted and even shrivelled flowers.

General-purpose composts are the culprit. You need to incorporate coarse and fine particles in your mix to create a balanced growing medium that holds enough water and air, the essentials for good root development. Without exception, we would all recommend incorporating a good bulb fibre and the use of a soil-based compost such as John Innes No. 2. Bulbs for indoors need only use bulb fibre.

So, what is bulb fibre? It is designed specifically for growing bulbs. Unlike multipurpose composts, it has a very open and free-draining structure. Many composts continue to decompose when exposed to oxygen and moisture causing them to compress around the roots, stunting development and causing damage if too wet. Choose a bulb fibre that has few or no nutrients, your bulbs do not require them, they will only make the plants leggy and will not improve the size of the flower. Leave any feeding until after your bulbs have flowered. The fibre will also usually contain charcoal which keeps the compost from becoming sour, very important for growing bulbs indoors. Significantly it also reduces acidity, bulbs generally do not like acidic soil.

As always, keep doing whatever works for you. Reading about a subject is often helpful but doing it from experience is invaluable.

**Chris Blom – Bloms Bulbs**

PS: Bulb fibre is available in the store.

## Plants you can't live without

These are from a 2020 plant catalogue for garden flowers.

*Dracunculus vulgaris*, Netta Statham's 'Old Smelly'. Appallingly scented, easy, memorable and a good present for a budding gardener (or perhaps someone you don't like?).

*Ginkgo biloba*, The Maidenhair tree. If female plants are fertilized they bear edible fruits which smell of rancid cream matured on unwashed human bodies (ooh ! yummy).

*Morina longifolia*, Thistle-like leaves which smell like cheap detergent when crushed. (How do you define that smell?)

*Tanacetum*, 'Cream Klenza'. Creamy flowers rather than the normal vacuum cleaner dust colour.

*Trachelospermum*, 'Summer sunset'. Delicate glossy golden-yellow foliage with new leaves growing bright orange. Some people find the colours frighteningly vivid - (after the magic mushrooms maybe?).

Parenthesis comments are mine.

Frances

### Spring 2024 Bulbs

The usual selection of bulbs, many of which will be suitable for classes in our Spring Show, are from Taylors of Spalding, and are now available to purchase at the Store.

The bulbs chosen for the two special classes, 13 and 14, are 'Sacajawea' and 'Bridal Crown' for the pebbles.

We buy these bulbs in bulk, so they are particularly good value, even if you don't enter them in the Show.

Brian

## **Mycorrhizal Fungi**

There has been a lot of talk about this over the last couple of years. The word itself comes from the Greek for fungus and roots. There has always been a symbiotic relationship between wild plants and this fungi, that is, a beneficial arrangement between them. In the wild the fungi are in association with plant roots and can attach to them either externally or internally. They then send out filaments into the soil allowing plants to survive drought, disease, poor soil and competition from other plants. These filaments (mycelium) can extend over several miles in a small space. They double up as extra roots absorbing water and nutrients by a great amount. In return, the plant supplies root sugars and compounds needed by the fungus.

The nutrients absorbed by the fungi, such as phosphorus, sulphur and iron are dissolved and become more easily available to the host plant. Another benefit is that the filaments bind particles of soil together thus increasing the movement of water and air around the plant roots. Some fungi can produce antibiotics and some can trap and kill root-feeding nematodes.

Although this information has been known since classical Greek times it has only recently been used in agriculture, forestry, golf courses and horticulture. It is now available to the amateur gardener so if you are planting a new tree or shrub it might be an idea to sprinkle some directly onto the roots to give them a good start.

**Frances**

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## **Trading Store Stock**

When you come into the Store now, you may be surprised to see the amount of stock we are already holding for next year. This is to ensure we get ahead of rising prices. Growbags are the only item that we haven't been able to purchase, as these are unlikely to be available before the New Year, but we do still have some at the Store.

**Brian**



## **Southdown's Garden Centre & Parham House - 23 July 2023**

The day before the trip it had rained and rained and even more rain which did not bode well for the following day. However, Ann worked her usual magic and the Sunday broke fine and dry, that was until we got on the coach, and then it started to drizzle again. Luckily by the time the coach got to Arundel, the rain had stopped and although the sun had not quite come out it was warm. We made good time and arrived at Southdown's Garden Centre in Hassocks, a little after 10am. We had an hour and a half to wander round before we were to board the coach to our final destination Parham House, Storrington.

For anyone that hasn't been to Southdown's Garden Centre it is massive, about four times as big as Garson's in Titchfield. Not only did it have a huge plant section, but a restaurant, café, local food produce, art centre, handmade chocolates, art gallery, gifts, and all the other things that you would be offered at somewhere like Garson's. There was also the museum of old gardening equipment, which I found really interesting. Some of the old tools I've seen come into the store! The cutting equipment looked lethal and I'm not surprised that many gardeners in the Victorian era lost fingers and toes. There was a lovely selection of all things garden related from ancient lawn mowers to the usual forks, spades and turf cutters. I am sure that we have items in the store that we could donate to the museum!

Some of the plants were expensive, but there was a nice selection, and some unusual plants that I haven't seen in other Garden Centres, plus the discounted tables which were good value. It was a bit of a dash to see everything that the centre had to offer.

Suitably refreshed we boarded the coach and made our way on to Parham House. Unfortunately, there was a road closure with no warning, which meant 45 minutes extra added on to our 30 minutes trip to get to Parham. We do hope the coach driver doesn't get a ticket for doing a U-turn on the A27 at Lancing. ETA at Parham was supposed to be midday, but it was 12.45pm before we eventually arrived and left the coach.

Parham House, and the gardens, were lovely. The foundation stone of the house had been laid in 1577 and after it was sold by its original owners, the next family lived in it for eleven generations. It was then sold in 1922 when it was purchased by the family of the current occupiers but it was in a sorry state of repair. Work started immediately to renovate the house during the 1920's and 1930's. The owners embarked on a buying spree to fill the property with paintings, furniture, textiles etc. over the next 40 years. During the Second World War the house was occupied by relatives and friends of the owners, together with 30 evacuees from London. Canadian officers were based on the 875 acre estate from 1942 until the end of the war. The house itself is on four floors culminating in the long gallery, 158 feet long, which stretches from one end of the house to the other, with stunning views from all of the windows and amazing artefacts.

The gardens consist of seven acres with a lake, a brick and turf maze, and specimen trees. There is also an old four acre walled garden with wide herbaceous borders, all of which were colour themed as well as a splendid greenhouse, cut flower garden, vegetable garden, rose garden, herb garden, an orchard and a 1920's Wendy House built of brick into the garden wall. The flower beds attracted much wildlife and it is some time since I have seen so many butterflies in one place. There were broods of partridges wandering around the garden with their chicks in tow. During COVID when the gardens were closed, the decision was made to tackle some serious and long-standing convolvulus weed problems which appears to be ongoing. Some of the beds had been cleared and were bare so it is a work in progress. The greenhouse contained some interesting tender plants including abutilon and brugmansia, and the plant centre sold plants that had come from the garden itself. As with the garden centre, these were expensive - makes you realise what good value our Store plants are!!

There was plenty to see and if you were interested you could watch cricket on the pitch in the gardens - just as well as the Test Match had been rained off!

All in all, a lovely day out and we were back safely at 5pm. Thank you Ann for organising another splendid day.

**Wendy**

## Meeting 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2023

This was a talk on the National Open Garden Scheme. This is an arrangement where people open their gardens to the public, maybe once or twice a year, and the money raised from the entrance fees, teas, cakes and plants is donated to charity.

Mark Porter, our speaker, is the county organiser for Hampshire. He gave an informative talk about the scheme, its origins and the charities which benefit.

In 1859 William Rathbone was looking for home nurses to care for his wife. He funded the first district nurses and because the then Queen, Victoria, became a supporter it was known as the Queen's Nursing Institute. They visited patients in their home and got there by bike!

The NGS, as it is known, was started in 1927 from an idea by Elsie Wagg to support the QNI and who suggested an entrance fee of one shilling. Sandringham House was open first and kept open throughout the war. In 1932 there were 1,000 gardens open and the first guide book was produced. They had associations with the Automobile Association which is the reason for the booklet being yellow. Many charities are now funded, including Macmillan, Marie Curie, Hospices and Carers. Money is also given to build gardens attached to hospitals and hospices.

Over £70 million has been raised to date and about 750,000 people have visited the gardens. Last year alone £3.1 million was raised. In our area this year 3,500 gardens are open which includes the Isle Of Wight. Mary Berry is the President of the NGS and each year she hosts a lunch for the volunteers.

The gardens are inspected before being accepted for the scheme. There must be at least 40 minutes of interest. The planting must be attractive, with quality plants and character. Unique features of the gardens are a must and the owners have to be passionate about their plot. Many are turned down but they can also be given suggestions on how to improve and maybe be put in the book for the following year. These days of course, car parking is a must, and it has to be safe.

So if any of you are really proud of your gardens and want to share them, apply and help raise money for very good causes.

**Frances**

## **Yellow Rattle**

Now . . . who gets excited about a lawn full of Yellow Rattle? It is so difficult to germinate but I have now succeeded, after five years. I have been in the process of converting two large lawns to wild flower meadows and so once they have set seed I will diligently collect the seed and keep for members who would like some to try. It has to be fresh seed. The seeds will be available at the Store and at the monthly meetings when available.

**Wendy Smullen**

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## **Vacancy**

We currently have a vacancy for the post of Catering Manager.

The post involves:

1. Organising the provision of Paper Cups/Plates; Cutlery; Tea; Milk; Sugar; Sweeteners; Coffee; Biscuits for Monthly Meetings and managing volunteers to distribute.
2. Organising same for Spring and Summer Shows as well as providing light refreshments for the helpers setting up the Shows. Ensuring enough volunteers are recruited to man the Refreshments at shows and the Cake Stall while encouraging the donation of cakes to sell as slices in the Cafe area and in slabs for Cake Stall.
3. Providing appropriate nibbles for the Pumpkin Evening and AGM and any extra special occasion when requested by the Committee.
4. Attending Monthly Committee meetings and Show Committee meetings when requested by Show Secretary.
- 5, All expenses reimbursed by Treasurer when given receipts.

Assistance and guidance will be given!

Volunteers please to Lynda.

## **John Richardson**

It is with sadness that we have to announce the passing of a long-time member and helper at PHS.

John was known for his friendliness and how he managed to stay out in all weathers to bag and load wood chips for members.

He also had the skills to fix anything that needed renewing or repairing and nothing was too much trouble to him.

Our sincere condolences  
go to his wife, Ann, and family at this sad time.

## **Cliff Jones**

It is with regret that we have to announce the passing of Cliff, who was a long-serving, experienced and thoughtful member of our Committee who also took on the roles of Secretary, President and Vice-President.

He helped the Society to prosper over many years.

Our sincere condolences  
go to his wife, Gerry, and family at this sad time.

## July Meeting

At our July meeting we had a very lively talk on climbers by Pip Bensley who has been a plant buyer for Hilliers Nurseries for 27 years. Here is a small selection of some of the climbers which she recommends. Having checked the spellings in Google I can endorse her view as they all look fabulous.

### **Climbing Roses**

'The Pilgrim', yellow - 'Constance Spry', bright pink - 'Crown Princess Margareta', apricot orange and 'Tess of the D'Urbervilles', crimson. These are all beautiful old-fashioned fully double roses.

### **Rambler Roses**

'Veilchenblau', bluey-mauve and 'Lutea', double yellow. They produce shoots one year to flower the next.

### **Shrubs**

Trachelospermum jasminoides, fragrant star-shaped white flowers, evergreen, climber.

Euonymus, 'Emerald Gaiety' (spindle) - good for hedges, evergreen.

Chaenomeles, 'Crimson and Gold' (Japanese quince) - pretty red flowers followed by small fruits.

Daphne bholua, 'Jacqueline Postill', gorgeously scented pink flowers, evergreen.

Abutilon, 'Jermyns' - very quick growing shrub - purple flowers.

Campsis, 'Madame Galen' - a climber for a sunny wall, bright orange flowers, highly recommended.

### **Honeysuckles (Ionicera)**

'Belgica, Serotina and Similis delavayi

Plant with feet in the shade and head in the sun.

### **Vines**

Vitis coignetiae (crimson glory vine), not edible, grown for the stunning red autumn leaves.

Vitis Brant, sweet black grapes and autumn colour.

### **Hedera (Ivy)**

'Parsley Crested', attractive curled leaf and 'Buttercup' with, as name suggests, yellow leaves.

Frances

## Officers and Committee Members 2023

President: Wendy Wright

Vice-President: Richard Knight

Life Vice-President: Maureen Kemp

Chairman: Lynda Piddington  
40 Westbrook Grove,  
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linda.piddington@sky.com

Treasurer: Brian Andrews  
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023 9226 3731

Trading Manager: Brian Andrews (as above)

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

023 9238 3007

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

023 9225 2124

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

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Floral Art Chair: Carole Rowland

023 9225 5134

Membership Sec: Tanya Barker  
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Catering Convenor: Vacant

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, Frances Leppard, Charles Mobsby, Richard Knight, Garry White, Carole Rowland, Wendy Wright, Ann Richardson, Tanya Barker.

**Show Committee:** Brian Andrews, Charles Mobsby, Lynda Piddington, Mark Ward, Eddie Horrell.

## **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.*