



GARDENER'S GAZETTE

Winter 2024

Pumpkin Evening
Thursday 7th November

AGM
5th December

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

Officers and Committee Members 2024

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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, Alice McKerrow.

The Chair Chats!

So, with leaves turning crimson and ready to fall, we come to the end of another year. Trips completed and thanks to Ann's special pact with the weather Gods, all in great walking conditions and we eagerly await the 2025 excursions.

Brian has somehow managed to keep the Store well stocked despite the constant request for Evergreen compost and you have all benefited from the discounted prices and friendly banter.

Frances has booked speakers on such diverse topics that have educated, amused and enthralled and is, as I write, finalizing the fiendish Pumpkin Evening and Quiz.

Phil and Frances along with new recruit Penny, have also kept the plant sales area clean, tidy and well stocked, thanks to the generous donations by members of plants and those that purchased them.

Richard has been the compiler of Gazettes as well as sorting out all the rest of the printed matter required by the Society.

Tanya has kept the membership rotas and details in great order.

Jan has compiled the minutes of all monthly meetings as well as being the person distributing all magazines and periodicals.

Charles has again managed the Spring and Summer Shows with great patience, always ready to accommodate late entries and changes of variety.

The leadership of Wendy, our president, has inspired and encouraged both Committee and members so making the Society the fun, friendly place that we all enjoy.

A huge thank you must go to the unsung heroes who tirelessly and in all weathers fill bags with wood chip; dispense tea and coffee; make cakes and provide refreshments; manage the raffle and sales tables and help behind the scenes to help the Society succeed.

If you too can spare an hour or so please do speak to one of us as your help would be most welcome and help ease the burden on the small number (in terms of helpers to member numbers) of hardy volunteers.

Lynda

Monthly Meetings

Thursday 7th November

Pumpkin and Quiz Evening. See following page for details.

Thursday 5th December

AGM - your chance to have your say!

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Meetings 2025

6th February 2025

Andrew Negus will continue his 'History of Portsmouth' with Part 4 - 1930 to Present Day.

Andrew is a local retired history teacher who has been around the world twice. He is a Blue Badge guide for the South. He also keeps chickens, bees and daughters (his own words).

Talk 6th March 2025

Alan Horgan is a qualified horticulturist and in 55 years has covered all aspects of gardening, plant trials, teaching and plant protection. Since retiring he judges and exhibits in local shows and has an interest in photography and art. He will take us through his career as 'Apprentice to Scientist'.

Frances

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Floral Art Meetings

Deverell Hall. 1.30pm for 2pm start to 4pm

Thursday 21st November

Demonstration by Steven McDonnell-Daley. 'Paint the Sky with Stars'.

Thursday 19th December

Christmas Lunch. Details and venue to be confirmed as soon as we can.

Subscription is £40 per year. Guest Attendance is £8.

TRIPS 2025

Our trip organiser, Ann, is researching venues for our 2025 season. Details will be on the web and in the next issue of the *Gazette* when available. Remember demand is always high!

Each trip price includes your seat and a tip for the driver.

I am in the Store every Saturday and at monthly meetings. Cash or cheque only please.

My telephone number is: 023 92 254 986.

Address: 16 Fir Copse Road, Waterloooville PO7 5JA.

Cheques to be made payable to: PHS.

Ann Richardson

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Pumpkin Evening and Quiz

The Thursday 7th November meeting is our fantastic Pumpkin Evening and Quiz. Free to members and prizes to be won!

For those who have not yet attended this event they are fun! Some (although not mandatory) do decide to come dressed for the occasion that is not that they usually attend naked, but in a mildly spooky but fun way.

Tea/coffee and light refreshments are served free and you have the opportunity to win prizes in the following classes:

1. A Decorated Pumpkin; Squash or Gourd which may be shop bought and then decorated if you have not grown any for yourself
2. A Floral Arrangement with the title 'Season of Mists and Mellow Fruitfulness' which is an Autumnal arrangement to include fresh or an artificial Pumpkin or Gourd
3. Any crafted item relating to Autumn

There will also be a quiz. Teams of four with Frances as the quiz master with prizes given to the team achieving the highest number of correct answers.

Lynda

Abbotsbury Trip - 8th September 2024

Did you know that we must be blessed, or in this case Ann is blessed? The coach trip down to Abbotsbury was wet, not just wet but it was raining stair rods in some places, and the coach was aquaplaning through the surface water. Many a grim face could be seen on the coach. I should have put my wellies on; why didn't I bring my big coat; I hope there are places to shelter when we get there; were just a few comments I heard. As we came off the motorway and wound our way through six miles of country lanes and picturesque Dorset villages, the weather eased. By the time we alighted the coach - the rain had stopped, the clouds had disappeared and the sun was well and truly out.

The history of Abbotsbury is tied closely with the creation of the monastery that once dominated the village. In 1541, part of the old monastery was converted into a mansion and its remains could be seen from the coach.

In 1765 Elizabeth, 1st Countess of Ilchester, built the castle on a site overlooking Lyme Bay.

A short distance away, a wall was built for a sheltered kitchen garden to provide fresh produce for the family in residence. That walled garden is now the heart of the Abbotsbury Subtropical Gardens that is there today.

In 1808, the open fields surrounding the gardens were enclosed and a major programme of woodland planting was instigated.

The range of plants in the garden was expanded under the auspices of William Fox-Strangways, 4th Earl of Ilchester. He was a diplomat on foreign service, a leading botanist and an expert on the flora of Europe. He introduced many new species into cultivation, from a wide range of countries, including such plants as 'Citronella mucronate' from Chile, 'Picconia excelsa', which is an endangered species from the Canary Isles, and the genus 'Stranvaesia' which was named after him (now known as Photinia).

He and his successors took the garden into the surrounding woodland, where the shade, shelter and moisture provided ideal conditions for the great influx of newly collected plants from the Himalayas, China and Japan.

The 5th Lord of Ilchester was devoted to the care of this garden as his ancestors were, and he and Lady Ilchester trebled its original size. It became home to one of the finest plant collections in England at the time.

In 1899 a catalogue was printed by Lady Ilchester of all the different plants growing in the garden - and the number amounted to over 5,000. This, of course, was constantly being added to.

An issue of *Country Life* magazine, also from 1899, gives a picture of a varied and important collection of plants, many of them tender, growing in what amounted to a well-tended jungle.

Another influence on the garden at the time came from the head gardener, a Mr. Benbow. He came to Abbotsbury having worked for ten years at the famous La Mortola Garden in northern Italy. The timely arrival of succulent plants and other exotics could well have come from his experiences in the Mediterranean.

In 1913 the castle burned down. It was rebuilt in 1915, but due to some major construction faults it remained uninhabited and was eventually demolished in 1934. Today, all that remains is a section of the outer wall, visible from the beach.

The period between the two wars was a time of economic difficulty when labour and resources were scarce, so the gardens were understandably neglected and soon declined beneath a rolling sea of brambles and runaway bamboos. In the gardens, rampant growth and weed species took advantage of the lack of vigilance at an astonishing rate.

During the Second World War, part of the West Lawn was occupied by an encampment of the Dorset Light Infantry Regiment. The old castle site was used by the Polish Pioneer Corps, and the East Gate had a searchlight battalion. The rabbit population diminished rapidly at the time!

In the late 1960s, Lady Teresa Agnew and her first husband Lord Galway introduced a programme of restoration. A further 3 acres were added between 1982 and 1984, but a major impact on garden development was been made after the damage from the 'Great Storm' of 1987 and subsequent replanting from 1990 onwards when a major restoration project was undertaken. Many new exotic and unusual flowers have been introduced to the garden.

The garden is a mixture of formal and informal flowers, world famous for its Camellia groves and magnolias. Noted in Dorset for its Rhododendron and Hydrangea collections and the charming Victorian Garden.

Facilities included the coffee shop, a quality gift shop and a plant centre where many of the flowers grown in the Garden could be purchased.

Stunning views of the Dorset Jurassic Coast from the viewpoint at the top of the Magnolia Walk could be obtained, although the path said it was closed. Nevertheless, some of our group did climb and were rewarded with stunning views of Chesil beach and the surrounding coastline.

All in all, another lovely trip out - thank you. Where are we going next year?!!

Wendy

Purbrook Horticultural Society Summer Show Results

Borrow Young Peoples Cup: won by Rose Morris
Charles Rose Memorial Cup (Best Vegetable Collection): won by
Peter Rogers
Peter Brooks Cup (Best Potato exhibit): won by Jim Osman
Cornelius Cup (Best Vegetable exhibit excl. collections):
won by John Gilbert
Ted Miles Trophy (Most points for Vegetables): won by Jim Osman
Juniper Cup (Most points for Novice): won by Alice McKerrow
Rowena Cup (Most points for Fruit): won by Peter Chivers
Dring Cup (Most points for Roses): won by Amanda Jones
Healey Cup (Most points for Flowers): won by Alice McKerrow
George Broom Memorial Bowl (Most points for Pot Plants): won by
Peter Chivers
Norman Cup (Most points for Dahlias): won by Graham Badrick
Rosemary Trophy (Most points for Floral Art): won by Maureen
Simpson
Ava Trophy (Most points for Jams and Preserves): won by Angela
Rogers
Charwood Cup (Most points in all classes - Ladies): won by Alice
McKerrow
Napier Cup (Most points in all classes - Gentlemen): won by Jim
Osman
Enid Gauntlett Cup (Most points for Handicrafts): won by Joan Smart
Mary Gauntlett Cup (Best Fuchsia exhibit): won by Peter Rogers
Society Shield (Most points Monthly Show Table): won by Frances
Leppard
Janet Bendell Cup (Best Pot Plant): won by Jim Osman
Chairman's Cup (Best Floral Art exhibit): won by Maureen Simpson
Greta Carter Trophy (Best Novice Floral Art exhibit): won by Carole
Rowland
Havant Borough Council Cup (Best Cookery exhibit): won by Charles
Mobsby
Jim Mew Cup (Best Onion exhibit): won by Peter Rogers
Gauntlett Cup (Local Dahlia Championship): won by Graham Badrick
The National Dahlia Society Silver Medal: won by Graham Badrick
The National Dahlia Society Bronze Medal
won by Jim Osman
The National Vegetable Society Silver Medal: won by John Gilbert
The Banksian Medal: won by John Gilbert

Evening Talk on Show Plants by Peter Rogers

Some notes from Peter's talk about growing plants for showing. The following is a list used by judges, Condition, Uniformity i.e. better to have 3 small items than 3 different sizes, Shape, Colour, Size and Presentation. You can always ask the stewards about any of these things while you are setting up for the show.

Potatoes, planted either in bags or in a trench.

1st earlies e.g. Winston, take 10 weeks from sowing and 2nd earlies e.g. Kestrel, 12 weeks. Plant in peat or peat-free with Vitax Q4 and powdered seaweed. You can also add chicken manure and slug pellets. When the potatoes are ready and you have lifted them, take off the haulms (stems) and put the potatoes back onto the containers in a greenhouse ready for the show. This will keep them clean and separated; don't forget your label.

Pick your beans a week before the show, wrap them in a damp cloth and put into fridge. They can be shaped when they are taken out.

Beetroot can go corky around base of stem, and carrots can go green when exposed to light. This can be remedied by putting a small collar over them while they are growing.

Tomatoes benefit from nettle feed or Chempak, applied little and often. Pick tomatoes for show as late as possible so that they don't lose their bloom.

Pick your courgettes with the flower on if you can.

Onions (large variety) should be sown in Dec/Jan on a heated bench with artificial light. They will go into 6in pots eventually with pure peat, Vitax Q4, seaweed, garden lime and John Innes No 3. When you have harvested them put into vermiculite and talcum powder to prevent mould, tie necks with raffia.

Leeks, collect the bulbils from some left over leeks about November. Put in bleach to kill bugs. When they have sprouted drop into the planting hole. In March/April cover with piping in order to blanch the stem.

Don't forget to rotate your potted plants several times to get an all round shape.

Apologies to Peter if I have got anything wrong. I cannot do shorthand.

This is not meant to scare you off from putting items in a show but might help towards a prize and who doesn't like to win something.

Frances

Evening Talk on Perennials by Benjamin Pope

Just a few notes from this talk about perennials. These are a few of the plants he mentioned which you may like. I have looked them up online and they look very good.

Francoa, lovely pink flower spikes and is good in dry shade.

Veronicastrum. Tall violet spikes, nectar rich.

Digitalis lanata, pale cream or yellow flowers, an unusual species (known as Woolly foxglove). Don't forget that foxgloves are poisonous.

Pandora poppy. A double poppy in shades of pink and red, very pretty.

Chinese mutabilis rose, shades of pink and salmon, a single shrub rose.

Althaea cannabina. A perennial hollyhock, bright pink with a dark centre. Commonly called palm-leaf marshmallow.

He also, amongst other advice, told us to plant tulip bulbs deeply so that you can overplant in the spring when the foliage is dying down and looking rather untidy.

Frances

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Post Christmas

I know, you may think this is too early to contemplate, but it will soon be with us! Last year as an experiment, Wendy suggested we have a get-together for members at the Deverell Hall on the Saturday between Christmas and New Year, as many feel that with the Store shut over the Christmas, that time when festivities are over and family and friends have returned home can be challenging. Well, although we had no time to really advertise it to members it proved such a success we have decided to do it again this year. On Saturday 28th December the Deverell Hall has been booked for us to get together for tea/coffee and light refreshments from 10am-12 noon.

All members are welcome free of charge, just another perk of membership, but if you have family and friends still with you and they wish to attend as a guest again we welcome them free as well! If you wish to contribute by bringing along that extra tin of biscuits; packets of crisps or mince pies etc., please do bring them along as they will be gratefully received.

Lynda

Reuse and Reduce Plastics

We are all now aware, more than ever before, that reducing the use of plastics in the garden is good for the environment. Most plastics are made from non-renewable sources, such as oil, and they take a long time to break down in the environment, while also releasing tiny particles, or microplastics, in the process.

While we all want to reduce our use of plastic, buying new alternatives is often not as sustainable as reusing the plastic items we already have. And where there is no alternative to buying new, consider whether the products will break down naturally (such as bamboo, coir or jute) or can be recycled commercially and placed in kerb-side collection bins or taken to a recycling centre.

Pots, containers and trays

From takeaway cartons to Christmas sweet tubs, most of us have plastic containers that we can reuse for storing seeds, hand tools and gardening sundries. Washed and stored out of sunlight, they often last for decades. Foil and plastic food trays, plastic cups and yoghurt pots can be used for seed sowing - just pierce a few drainage holes in the base. Hard plastics can be difficult to recycle, so reuse is the best option.

Compost bags

It's hard to avoid buying products such as compost and soil improvers in plastic bags. However, these can be used again. They are ideal for lining containers and baskets to reduce evaporation and can also be weighted down to cover and smother difficult weeds such as ground elder. A few suppliers are beginning to offer a 'bag for life' allowing you to refill them at garden centres, but this service isn't widely available. Although they're not widely recycled, some garden centres are now accepting old compost bags for recycling too.

Plastic bottles

Creative gardeners have led the way in finding uses for household items, such as plastic milk and soft drinks bottles. Cutting the bottom off gives you a mini cloche that can be used to protect young seedlings in early spring; take off the top for additional ventilation and they can be stacked and stored in a shed without taking up too much space.

Continued on page 10

Continued from page 9

Alternatively, if you pierce the lid of a plastic bottle multiple times and fill it with water, you can make a mini watering can with a fine spray, ideal for watering established seedlings.

Netting and support

Plastic-free netting, often made from jute, is becoming more widely available, or you could try making your own from string, if you have the patience - but do reuse old plastic netting if you have it, rather than throwing it away. Instead of buying bamboo canes and hazel poles, you could grow these plants in your garden and harvest the stems - cutting them regularly will also help to manage the size of these potentially large plants.

Wendy

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Talk on Beekeeping in September

On Thursday 5th September we had a very interesting evening with Wendy Gilbert telling us about this fascinating occupation and hobby. Wendy is the secretary of the Beekeepers Association for Portsmouth.

She began by saying that there are over 200 species of bee in the UK but only one of them is a honeybee. The bees are kept in hives or skeps. Skeps were used back in Roman times and are made from woven grasses. They look very good but are not quite as practical as modern hives. Hives are placed at least one metre apart. Subject to permission they can be placed in gardens, fields and allotments. Inside, there are frames for the bees to store honey, these are all vertical and hooked over a support for ease of removing.

There is only one Queen bee and the rest of the bees are workers, drones, nurses, undertakers, guards, scouts, cleaners, comb builders, honey packers and foragers. Most of these jobs are self explanatory. The pollen collectors can fly up to three miles in one trip and several times in a day, they generally live for about three weeks. The Queen is the only bee to lay eggs, if they are fertilised they hatch into worker bees but unfertilised eggs become drones. The eggs are laid into single cells.

After three days the eggs hatch and become grubs which are fed and cleaned by the worker bees. They are then sealed into their cells with a cap of wax. The queen can lay about 2,000 eggs in a day. The

drones only purpose is to mate and they are killed off after. There are about 200 drones to 6,000 worker bees.

In March/April the hives may become overcrowded and the old Queen leaves taking about half of the hive. The prime swarm comprises about 20,000 bees. A new Queen will have been selected and fed Royal Jelly.

Honeybees have an enemy in a mite which deforms their wings. Also the Asian hornet is a threat. We have a poster in the store but if you think you have seen a hornet please take a photo and report to the National Bee Unit. They are as large as a normal hornet but the difference is that they have orange legs.

The honey is collected by specialists from the frames but only half is taken at a time. The bees are also fed with sugar in the winter. The reason raw honey is more expensive than ordinary supermarket types is because it has less water, comes from one local source and has not been heated, a process which kills the anti-bacterial properties.

I have only skimmed the history of the honeybee. It is such an important insect for the pollination of our food plants. I am sure Wendy would happily answer some of your questions if you are interested in keeping bees. Her delicious honey is sold in our store.

Frances

*Don't forget that we have a website where you can read current
issues of the Gazette and Store information:
www.purbrookhorticulturalsociety.org.uk*

Deverell Hall Event

To celebrate the Deverell Hall reaching its centenary, an event has been booked for 2nd November between 1400-1630.

The event is for regular hirers of the Hall plus friends and family, but not open to the general public to pop in at any time to view displays from the groups that hire the Hall and a history of the Deverell Hall.

Light refreshments will be available so why not pop along to see who does use the Hall and what they do!

The event has been organised by Paul and Margaret Ludford who are members of our Society, so please do support their efforts and those of the groups taking time to share information, and yes we intend to also be there!

Lynda

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Nets and Bags

If you have any plastic bags suitable for grit and/or mulch, we would be happy to reuse them.

Also nets, in which the onions and potatoes were packaged would also be gratefully received.

We're doing our bit for the environment!

Brian

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Editor's Note

I would like to thank all the contributors to this edition of our *Gazette*. As you can see, it is a full 12 pages.

Remember, the articles supplied don't have to be gardening/allotment oriented. If you have a hobby/passion you think other members might like to know about, please send to me and I will try to insert into the next publication.

Richard

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
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 2025, should be with the Editor by 1st January 2025, for distribution at the start of February 2025.