

South West Shropshire Gardening Club

Newsletter



February 2025

Thank goodness for the beautiful flowers which appear at this time of year - they encourage me to look and be outside after weeks of hibernating! The banks of snowdrops coming into Clunton have increased over the years and are looking quite spectacular. As I have featured snowdrops before in the newsletter, I thought some witch hazel would make a change: Hamamelis x intermedia "Barmstedt Gold" ...



...plus pink pussy willow (much treasured gift from Mellie, our Vice Chair) and a clematis whose label has been lost for many years.



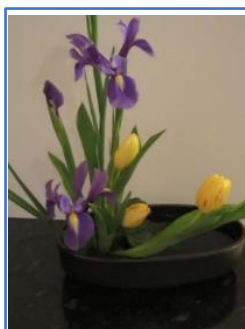
Calling vegetable growers!

I had an email from Nicola Westwood whose son lives with four other young adults who each have learning and/or physical disabilities, in a property owned and managed by Condover College. There is an area measuring 13x8m which would be great for developing into a vegetable garden, where the young people could learn about vegetables; how to grow them and then cook their own produce. Nicola is seeking advice and maybe help, in getting started as she is "not green fingered at all".

Are there any members who would be willing to take a look at the site near Shrewsbury and offer advice and/or help to get this worthwhile project started? I would be happy to drive a group or individual to visit and find out more details but I am totally ignorant about growing vegetables! Please let me know if you think you could help in any way.

Ikebana Workshop

This workshop will take place on Wednesday, April 2nd at Lydbury North Village Hall. If anyone is interested, please contact Elly Bibby to book a place



TRY SOMETHING NEW FOR 2025!

IKEBANA FLOWER ARRANGING WORKSHOP

10.00 – 12.30, Wednesday April 2ND

In the committee room at Lydbury North Village Hall.

£20

This Japanese Art of Flower Arranging will be led by Noella Plasman, a qualified teacher and 3rd Master of the Ohara School of Ikebana.

All materials will be provided & each participant will create their own arrangements.



To book a place please contact Elly Bibby 0780 2497780
ellisonbibby05@gmail.com



Bees

As you probably know, we are focussing on bees this year. We have two talks in March and April on honeybees and pollinator plants and we are planning mini trips to Minsterley Meadows and Sarah Jameson's 11.4-acre meadow near New Invention, in May and June. The club donated money towards the purchase of the former last year. To learn more about Sarah Jameson you can put "weboughtafield" into your search engine.

One of the joys of being on the committee is learning from the other members – it has been brought to my attention that honeybees are only a very small part of the picture. Our wild bees pollinate trees, flowers and crops more efficiently and on a much bigger scale than farmed honeybees, so I am going to feature one of the two hundred and fifty species of wild bees each month, in our newsletter.

Tree Bumblebee (*Bombus hypnorum*) – one of the four most common bumblebees in the UK.



These are easily identified by the ginger thorax, black abdomen and white tail. They traditionally nested in trees but have adapted to colonising nest boxes, house eaves and compost heaps, since arriving here in 2001. They live in woodland, parks and gardens. Their favourite sources of pollen and nectar are comfrey, shrubs like bramble, fruit trees, fuchsia and other garden plants. They can be seen between March and July.

Our UK bees are in severe decline for several reasons including habitat loss, pollution and climate change. We would not be able to survive without the vital roles they play in pollinating crops used for animal feed, wild flowers and trees, which then support other insects, birds, bats, mammals and everything up the food chain with food and shelter.

Out of the more than two hundred and fifty species of bees native to the UK, twenty-four are bumblebees while the rest are solitary like the masonry and mining bees. The Red Mason bee is one of the most important pollinators, being around one hundred and twenty times more efficient than non-native honeybees.

The shipping of managed honeybees between countries brought varroa mite (a parasite) to the UK in the 1990s. Combined with a rise in other diseases it nearly wiped out wild honeybees completely. It is now threatening bumblebees too. Farmed honeybees can out-compete native bees for food and nectar, which is a particular problem in cities like London, where urban bee-keeping has reached unsustainable levels that threaten other bee species. Asian hornets have had a catastrophic impact on wild bees in France, preying on both solitary and bumblebees.

How can we help?

We can stop using pesticides and plant lots of nectar rich, bee friendly flowers – don't forget the seeds we gave you for Xmas! In the 2024 RHS Bumbles on Blooms study, bumblebee garden favourites for Feb and Mar included crocus, heather, honeysuckles, grape hyacinth, mahonias, hellebores, flowering currants and daffodils. Follow on with comfrey, lungwort, rosemary, chives, aquilegia and foxgloves. Make room for dandelions too. We can also provide shelter – bee hotels need to hang in sunny, sheltered spots.

Wollerton Old Hall Garden Winter Workshops 2025

Seed sowing for Cut flowers – Wednesday 19th March 10.30am – 1.30 pm

Learn about the half hardy and annual plants that can be sown now to provide a plethora of cut flowers for the year. Learn how to sow the seeds and go home with your own pot of sown seeds

All workshops will be led by the Head Gardener, Claire Tatler (MHort)

All workshops are £45 per person (non-refundable)

Tea and Coffee will be provided.

Workshops will be held in the garden therefore suitable shoes and clothing should be worn for the time of year

All materials will be provided, please bring your own secateurs if you have them

Places are limited – please email head.gardener@wollertonoldhallgarden.com to book tickets and for payment details

Pearl Garden

We are having a working party to weed, mulch, refresh and install some Everedge to prevent erosion of the bed in front of the village hall. If you could spare an hour from 2pm on Wednesday 12th March, any help would be much appreciated. Please let me know.



This is the lovely hellebore which Seonaid Wootton helped us choose for the garden, before she sadly passed away last year. As you can see, there is quite a bit of tidying around it which needs to be done.

Has anyone got photos of the party held in 2017 to celebrate the Pearl Anniversary? It would be nice to have some for the history of the club, which I am working on for the website (you would be able to have them back).

Clun Gardens Open Flowers in St George's Church

28th/29th June

You may remember that Elly and I took part in this exhibition last year with a display honouring Percy Thrower. Members of the club contributed masses of beautiful flowers and foliage for us to arrange which was a real treat. This year the theme is "The Magic of Music" which should enable the creative juices to flow! I am unable to join in this year due to family commitments but would love someone else to have a go. Please let me know if you are interested or would like to learn more about the event.

Below is a list of suggested titles in a broad spectrum of ideas and genres but you can choose your own. Helen Brown the organiser, says it would be helpful to give her a first and second choice of title so she can achieve a balance of ideas.

You would also need to choose where to place your arrangement in the church – I have a list which I will put on our notice board at the meeting. I would recommend walking round the church to see which placement would best suit your plans. The font is unfortunately out of bounds this year due to ongoing work.

GO FLOWERS – ST. GEORGE'S, CLUN, JUNE 2025. THE MAGIC OF MUSIC.

Ideas for titles of flower arrangements: -

COMPOSERS – with named pieces/works. e.g.

Carnival of the Animals – Saint Saens

The Planets – Holst

William Tell Overture – Rossini

Peter & the Wolf – Prokofiev

In the Hall of the Mountain King – Grieg (from Peer Gynt Suite)

The Four Seasons – Vivaldi

Wedding March – Mendelssohn (*suitable for pew ends?)

A Mid-Summer Night's Dream --

Sheep may safely graze – Bach

Moonlight Sonata – Beethoven

NAMED OPERAS e.g.

The Magic Flute – Mozart

The Mikado – Gilbert & Sullivan

Madame Butterfly – Puccini

The Gondoliers – Gilbert & Sullivan

The Pirates of Penzance – Gilbert & Sullivan

NAMED BALLETS e.g.

Swan Lake – Tchaikovsky

Romeo & Juliet – Prokofiev

The Nutcracker – Tchaikovsky

Sleeping Beauty – Tchaikovsky

NAMED DANCES e.g.

Cha Cha Cha / Jive / Flamenco etc

Folk/ Morris Dancing – English Country Garden (* invite South West Shropshire Gardening Club again?).

MUSICALS e.g. (or named songs from the shows)

Evita – Andrew Lloyd Webber

Cats

Phantom of the Opera

Les Misérables

Chess – Bjorn Ulvaeus, & Benny Anderson (Abba) & Tim Rice

The Lion King – Elton John, Tim Rice, Roger Allers & Irene Mecchi

MUSICAL SCORE FOR FILMS

Dr Zhivago – Jarre

Star Wars – John Williams

Harry Potter --

Out of Africa – John Barry

Braveheart – James Horner

The Sound of Music – Richard Rodgers

The Good, the Bad & the Ugly – Ennio Morricone

CHURCH MUSIC

The Psalms of David – Psalm 23, The Lord is my Shepherd

Favourite Hymns e.g. Jerusalem – Hubert Parry (* invite Clun W.I. to represent this?) I Vow to thee my country, Peace Perfect Peace....

Christmas Carolling – e.g. Ding Dong Merrily on High or Carol of the Bells
(* invite the Clun Bellringers to represent this?)

Choral Music e.g. The Messiah, Handel (* invite Ad Hoc Choir to represent this or something from their repertoire).

NAMED POPULAR GROUPS/ SINGERS e.g.

Beatles/ Rolling Stones/ Abba/ Queen etc

Etta James/ Madonna/ Beyonce/ Taylor Swift/ Adele etc

Elton John/Neil Diamond/ Elvis / Cliff Richard etc

Alfie Boe & Michael Ball

SONGS ASSOCIATED WITH PARTICULAR PEOPLE e.g.

Dame Vera Lynn – There'll be Bluebirds over the White Cliffs of Dover

Morecambe & Wise – Bring me sunshine in your smile

MUSICAL EVENTS

Andre Rieu & the Johann Strauss Orchestra

Clun Valley Music

Last Night at the Proms

Glastonbury

Glyndebourne

MUSICAL GENRES

Many of the musical genres have been included in the list. However, there may be some that could stand as a title in their own right...

Rock & Heavy Metal/Jazz/Pop/Disco/Opera/Rhythm & Blues/ BeepBox/ Hip Hop/ Rock & Roll/ Orchestral/
Folk/ Ballet/ Country & Western/ Reggae/ Bollywood/ Punk Rock/ Soul/ Swing Band

Plant Fairs

Plant fairs bring together some of the best independent plant nurseries from across the country with a brilliant choice of plants to delight every gardener. The entrance charges on these special days are such good value, often up to half the standard garden entry price.

The fairs are also valuable fundraisers for our venues and every penny of the entrance fees goes to the venues to help them keep going in these tough times.

When a plant fair takes place within a garden, we arrange a special reduced entry price to the garden. Some gardens on these days are half-price (or better) entry to the garden and entry to the fair is included. Other fairs are free or with a small charge or donation that all goes to maintaining the venue.

Always check event status before travelling at www.planthuntersfairs.co.uk

NEW **Sun 16 March Thoresby Park**, Newark NG22 9EP 10am-4pm Plant Fair & Country Park **Free Entry** Normal Parking Charges Apply

Sun 23 March Arley Hall and Gardens, Northwich CW9 6NA 10am-4pm Gardens and Fair £5.00

Sat 29 March Bodenham Arboretum, Kidderminster DY11 5TB 10am-4pm Plant Fair Free Entry

Sun 30 March Sugnall Walled Garden, Eccleshall ST21 6NF 10am-4pm Gardens and Fair £1.00

Sat - Sun 5 - 6 April Weston Park, Shifnal TF11 8LE 10am-4pm Gardens and Fair £5.00 **TICKET REQUIRED***

Sun 13 April Middleton Hall, Tamworth B78 2AE 9am-4pm Gardens and Fair £4.00 **TICKET REQUIRED**

Fri 18 April Whittington Castle, Oswestry SY11 4DF 10am-4pm Plant Fair and Grounds **Free Entry** Normal Parking Charges Apply

Sun - Mon 20 - 21 April Dorothy Clive Garden, Market Drayton TF9 4EU 10am-5pm Gardens and Fair £5.00

Sun 27 April Cholmondeley Castle Gardens, Malpas SY14 8ET 10am-5pm Gardens and Fair £5.00

Splitting Plants?

If you have any spare plants you are splitting, why not bring them to gardening club to share with members. Please don't leave any unwanted plants behind at the end of the meeting.

Local Nurseries reopening

Wildegooose Nursery, Munslow, will reopen on Thursday 27th March

Kings Nursery, Garthmyl, Montgomery will reopen on Saturday 1st March (this is where we buy our raffle prizes – good plants and great café!)

RHS Malvern Spring Festival

Thursday 8 – Sun 11 May 2025

Floral Marquee - has over 60 of the UK's finest growers' displays, including rare and unusual varieties- shop for plants and get advice from the experts.

Show Gardens - take inspiration from a diverse array of RHS-judged gardens.

New Indoor Plant Gardens – RHS-judged gardens. Shop for plants, pots and gifts.

New Dog Day – dogs are welcome on Sunday only.

Book before 31 March with discount code Malvern10! For £2 off advance tickets (T&Cs apply)

A group of us went to this last year and thoroughly enjoyed the day.

Peat




The RHS has launched a free service to help answer questions for all gardeners (not just RHS members) who want tips for success with peat-free growing. Queries will be tackled via email, by Nikki Barker, RHS Peat Free Transition Technical Co-Ordinator at peatfree@rhs.org.uk. Research has been done with eight nurseries across the UK; also, irrigation trials in growing media from six major manufacturers from Spring 2023 – Autumn 2024 including herbaceous perennials at Allensmore Nursery in Hereford. Dr Raghavendra Prasad, the Research Fellow who conducted the trials says: "Peat-free growing media differ from peat-based mixes in physical, chemical and biological properties, including water demand and moisture retention. Home gardeners need to be aware of the differences. Always check before you water plants in peat-free compost, by either pushing your finger in to feel for moisture or by lifting the pot to check weight. It can look dry on top but hold plenty of water lower down the pot."

Next meeting: Wednesday 26th February

Dahlias – a talk by Pip Smith

SOUTH WEST SHROPSHIRE GARDENING CLUB


DELIGHTFUL DAHLIAS!
By
Pip Smith




Wednesday 26th February at 7.30 pm
Lydbury North Village Hall

FREE TO MEMBERS (annual membership £20), **GUESTS WELCOME: £5**
For more information contact Angie Salmon on 01588 661025 or email
angiejsalmon12@gmail.com
www.gardeningshropshire.co.uk Also on Facebook.

We are a friendly club of like-minded garden enthusiasts. We meet at Lydbury North Village Hall on the 4th Wednesday of the month: interesting speakers, refreshments, forums, advice, outings, seed offers, plant sales.



South West Shropshire Gardening Club:
celebrating over 30 years of gardening in Shropshire



Everything you need to know about the gardening obsession which is Dahlias! Pip will be making a return visit to the Club to give his second talk about the ever-popular dahlia.

Pip is a Landscape Designer with over 13 years' experience working as a professional qualified horticulturist. He has held the post of Head Gardener at several private and public gardens, including Wollerton Old Hall. Now a Pre-Registered Member of the Society of Garden Designers, he is using his previous knowledge and experience to create imaginative, sympathetic and long-lasting designs. Taking inspiration from the natural world, he enjoys mixing the old and new. Design should consider and embrace the challenges we all face. For a green space to be successful it must connect with the user and wider landscape, allowing room to grow and mature.

I love the landscape's hidden attributes, its ability to soothe, restore, provide comfort, solace and reflection, all key elements to design.

Membership

Membership costs £20 to cover attendance to all our meetings for a year (from October); early access to trips and events with subsidised tickets; seed offers and plant sales. We are also affiliated to the RHS so you are able to borrow our discount card which provides 50% discount for two people to any RHS garden. Such a bargain!

Payment can be made with cash, cheque or card at our meetings or by transfer to:

South West Shropshire Gardening Club

sort code 20-53-22

account number 80754803.

Please add your name as reference and email Alleyne to let him know: aandpcopetake@hotmail.com

Flower of the Month



Congratulations to Dorothy Morris who won the January competition with this stunning hellebore. Please bring a single bloom or spray from your garden in order to participate. Points are given each month and then an overall winner is announced and rewarded in October.

Please note that to be fair, we can only accept **one** entry from each participant.

I look forward to seeing you on Wednesday 26th February.

Angie Salmon
Chair