Witley GARDENING ASSOCIATION

Newsletter Issue 51, July 2021

Most members will receive this Newsletter through email, but only if we have your correct address. If you change it, please let us know.
We deliver paper copies of the Newsletter to all members without email, but regret that we cannot do the same with other email communications. Do let us know if you acquire email, so we can keep you informed.

Hello gardeners, what a year so far! Catherine has been booking, cancelling and re-booking events like there was no tomorrow but finally we managed the evening visit to Lower House on our schedule. It was a real treat for those lucky people who managed to get a ticket, after selling out in the first 24 hours. We raised £245 towards the upkeep of the garden, so that Mrs Harvey can continue to raise funds for charity through the NGS. Our thanks to Peter, who liaised with Mrs Harvey and managed all the bookings. The beautiful roses there made the evening very special. Those of you who enjoyed a drink will have been served by two of our new committee members and we are very grateful to Jan, Barbara, and Patricia for joining our merry band. After many ZOOM meetings, we've had our first "in person" committee meeting. Needless to say, it poured with rain so we could not enjoy my garden: very typical of the weather we have had. I've been alternately watching the rain ruin my flowers, deadheading and watching it all start over. The scents in the evening are a joy though, so it's hardly a chore. Like many of you, no doubt, I spent the first lockdown with a project. Mine was building a pond. We have watched the range of the wildlife in our garden increase from the local cats (!) to two foxes and now we have had a badger, a hedgehog and a deer come to the pond, with newts and a frog in the pond. It really doesn't take long for it all to establish. I could have done without the mice in the greenhouse though! Talking of wildlife, I was relieved to see the cavalry arrive this week in the form of hoverflies. Wiping the aphids off by hand was getting tedious. Only one ladybird so far though. I'm told by a friend that they are all in Lincolnshire!

See you at the Autumn show, HAPPY GARDENING! Christine Cox (acting Chair and Secretary)

The rain in previous weeks was welcomed by the flowers in our garden, which have grown much taller than usual. Consequently the heavy rain at the beginning of the month knocked some of them down. There's always a price to be paid!

Water lilies on the other hand are sublimely indifferent to these problems and are at their best from now on. Two from my pond are pictured, right.

Every garden should have a pond, even if it is only in an old bucket, and there is a water lily that will suit every size and type, with some rather lovely miniatures now available. They don't mind whether or not there are fish in the pond and they are the ultimate minimum maintenance plant, requiring only a cull every 3-4 years. Pull up the thick rhizome and replant just the tip of it with the newest shoot. The leaves will spread beautifully over the surface. The ultimate water lily is an Amazonian species with leaves more than a metre across, which you can find at Kew.

An article about water lilies is to be found in the July issue of the RHS' *The Garden*. Do try them!

2021 PROGRAMME
Autumn Show

What a good summer we are enjoying, Covid is in retreat, the grass is growing madly, strawberries are a regular breakfast treat- we are lucky indeed.
My name is Trevor Sears and my wife, Phyllis and I have lived in Brook Road for some 60 years, our garden is on the right down Station Lane with the beech hedge.
I have been asked by the Witley Gardening Association to undertake the organising of the annual Autumn Flower Show, Saturday 11 September. My predecessor, Richard Ashwell, did a wonderful job over many years until his death in November last year, leaving us, the village and his family to mourn his passing. Richard frequently won the 'Gardener of the Year' award and we need to do him proud with a good effort from everyone to keep up the high standard he set.

The Gardening Association has staged at least two flower shows annually for the past 150 years and, if you have an interest in growing plants, these are interesting and enjoyable events bringing together our community. We are fortunate to have gardens with greensand running through the village and fertile clay below. Should you consider joining us at the September show, either as a visitor or exhibitor, we would welcome you and be happy to help with any advice. The shows provide an interesting challenge and the knowledge you would accrue will be of great benefit to you and your garden. If travelling to the Chichester Hall is difficult for you, please let me know and we will do our best to arrange a lift for you and your plants. Please do read the schedule carefully and look at the rules and regulations.

We look forward to welcoming you to our village flower show, my telephone number is 01428 481610.

Talk and AGM
On Wednesday 13th October **Paul Patton** will be giving a talk on **"Behind the scenes at RHS Chelsea"** which will be preceded by drinks and nibbles and followed by a (brief!) AGM. Details of the event will appear in the October Newsletter.

Topical Tips from Jane Swift
Continue to cut back early flowering plants. **Lupins** and **Delphiniums** can be cut to near ground level to encourage a second display. Perennial **Geraniums** also benefit for a haircut. Deadhead **Alchemilla mollis** too. Prune early flowering shrubs such as **Weigela** (after flowering) to healthy new growth lower down. Divide congested **Bearded Iris**. This encourages better flowering next year. Cut each fan to 15cm, then replant the best rhizomes.
Raise the mower blades when the weather is dry (!) to help the grass cope. Trimming lightly encourages the grass to thicken up which will improve the quality of the lawn.
Give your house plants a holiday outdoors in a sheltered spot.
Water containers as the foliage covers the soil and they will not benefit from the rain. They will also benefit from a weekly feed (eg Tomato feed).
Stop harvesting **Rhubarb**, leaving some stems to store energy for next year's crop.
There is still time to sow a late crop of **Peas**, **French and Runner Beans**. Keep sowing **Radish**, **Salad leaves** and **Spinach.** Sow a few seeds every 2-3 weeks for a continuous supply.
Keep **Tomatoes** well watered and fed. Removing the growing tip on cordon types helps to maximise growth on the fruit below. In the greenhouse it is usual to allow 6 or 7 trusses to grow. Outside, growth is often slower so allow for 4 or 5 trusses. Bush varieties have a different growing habit so side shoots are not removed.

Check out our new logo, and website www.witleygardening.org for information about the Association. Suggestions for additions or improvements will be most welcome. We want to keep you up-to-date.
Visit our Facebook a/c https://www.facebook.com/witleygardening.

Editor: Peter Herring (01428-683281)
email: *pjherring1@tiscali.co.uk*