



# NEWSLETTER 71

## AUGUST/SEPTEMBER

### 2024

#### Chairman's chat

Well the garden has finally decided it's summer ( as has the weather!) and it's a joy to walk round in the evening cool to deadhead and indeed to enjoy the flowers and insects up close. This newsletter has the information about the Autumn show, which we are working on at the moment. This year it is our turn to host the CLOSE BROOKS CUP, which we haven't taken part in for some time. This is an intervillage competition where each club presents a selection of vegetables and flowers on a 6 foot table. The different veg have different weighting as regards points so this will be quite an interesting addition to the show for us. We will post the "schedule " in the Swallow room with the entries so that you can understand the judging. I have heard from 3 other clubs so far so at least we have a competition! In addition to this Jan and Barbara have liaised with Witley Infant school and Hambledon Nursery to run a sunflower competition. We have provided the seeds ( dwarf variety you'll be pleased to know) and instructions and they have been into the school to talk to the children, who seemed very keen, so we hope to have plenty of sunflowers adorning the hall in addition to all the other lovely flowers and veg on show.



Members were invited to join Milford for the annual joint visit and Jane has written a small report on what turned out to be a very wet day. Well done to those of you who braved the weather. In July we also had an excellent talk from Marina Christopher. I was very sad to miss this. I was in bed with covid. Catherine has written about this evening, when we had a reasonable turn out, despite it turning out to be on the evening of an England game. We should have had more faith in our team shouldn't we!! Just a head's up. We are currently deciding on this year's AGM and it looks likely that we will do something similar to last year. If you have any thoughts on this please do let us know. We'll be back in action after the summer break with four more dates for your diary so do keep an eye on the program booklet. Enjoy the rest of summer! *Christine, chairman*

### COMING UP

**Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> September**

### AUTUMN SHOW

**Details and info on page 3**

**Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> September**

**RICHARD RAMSEY of WITHYPITTS DAHLIAS**

As seen on Gardeners World

Look out for the poster!

DOORS OPEN 7.00PM



**Milford Horticultural Society** organised our joint visit to High Clandon Vineyard and Gardens in July. Open in aid of charity, it also showcases the work of local artists, with many of their works on display throughout the garden. Forget scarecrows. There were totem poles, jazz playing frogs, and a couple dancing into eternity, all in the torrential rain. *Jane*



## MARINA CHRISTOPHER

Early in July WGA were fortunate to welcome Marina Christopher to the Chichester Hall to give a talk on 'Late Perennials and Grasses'.

Marina is the owner of Phoenix Perennial Plants, a nursery that is not open to the public but supplies top garden designers with unusual plants for RHS Chelsea, Hampton Court, and other well known flower shows.

Marina arrived at the hall with a van full of plants and an unusual array of garden hand tools that she finds useful herself. Several trolley loads were wheeled into the room and the tables of gardening goodies, all for sale, looked very tempting. We were all eager to hear what Marina had to say about the plants and how best to use the tools.

The interesting talk and demonstration that followed included Marina bringing some props out of a bag that made us all smile. These included some furry friends that cause trouble for many of us in our gardens, and some jelly slugs that Marina had for fun positioned on some of the Chelsea exhibits she was delivering, much to the horror of the designers.

Marina is an ecologist and as she says herself her emphasis has always been to 'provide a balanced ecosystem in the garden to benefit wildlife and to provide cordon bleu plants for insects.' We were told some interesting facts about the insects that visit our gardens. We learned about the different colours that insects see to guide them to particular flowers for pollination. I had never thought about umbellifers such as cow parsley as skyscrapers for beetles! Apparently the hollow stems provide winter homes for certain beetles and the advice was to cut them back after the winter and leave them on the ground for a few days to let the beetles escape before heading to the compost bin or bonfire.

It has become clear with all of the evidence that is being collected by various organisations that as gardeners we need to do as much as we can to add as many plants that are beneficial to insects to our gardens as their numbers are declining dramatically. The members of WGA who were present that evening bought many of the plants from Marina, so we are doing our best for wildlife in Witley.

This was a very interesting wildlife talk with a difference. It is easy to see why so many garden designers are including these plants in their designs and why Marina is being kept so busy in her nursery.

Catherine Bullock

**OUR NEXT EVENT IS THE AUTUMN SHOW  
SATURDAY 7<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER  
DOORS OPEN 2.30**

Our Spring show was our best since COVID days so many thanks to all entrants for making this happen.

**LET'S DO THE SAME AGAIN FOR THE AUTUMN SHOW!**

**I have put as much help as possible in the schedule so do read it carefully.**

**ENTRIES BY 10am FRIDAY 6<sup>TH</sup>**

**STAGING FROM 8.30 -10.30am SATURDAY 7<sup>TH</sup>**

**PLEASE DON'T  
FORGET TO RETURN  
ANY CUPS THAT YOU  
WON LAST AUTUMN.  
Saturday morning will  
be fine. If that  
doesn't suit please  
contact us. Many  
thanks**

This year we have **extra interest** :  
We are hosting the Intervillage Cup in the Swallow Room and we have an extra competition from Witley Infants and Hambledon Nursery school with their dwarf sunflowers.

*Teas and homemade cakes served in the main hall. Meet up with friends in our pop up cafe*

**We desperately need cakes for the tea room. Please don't rely on the committee to provide them. Email [admin@witleygardening.org](mailto:admin@witleygardening.org) if you can help add to the fun and raise vital funds for the club.**  
**THANK YOU**