

Dear Members,

Well, summer is well and truly upon us and, thanks to the late spring rain, gardens are looking considerably more lush than this time last year. I very much enjoyed seeing so many of you at our recent evening visit to the Walled Garden at Cowdray Park, almost as much as I enjoyed hearing about their very relaxed attitude towards weeds! A good reminder to turn the occasional blind eye to the chores and just spend some time enjoying your garden. Have a great summer and I look forward to seeing the results of all your hard work at our Autumn Show.

Georgina Ellerton (Chairwoman)

Now's the time when English lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*) comes into its own, as a very decorative border plant for dry places and as a source of that wonderful scent. Of course the bees and butterflies love it!

Cowdray Park Walled Garden used it to great effect (see also Topical Tips). 'Hidcote' is probably the best garden variety for both colour and scent. 'Munstead', named after Gertrude Jekyll's house in Godalming, is a slightly paler variety with looser flower heads (used at the Walled Garden). Despite the nursery rhyme, not all lavender is blue (or green); there is a pink form 'Rosea' and white ones 'Arctic Snow' and 'Edelweiss'. Commercial fields of lavender can be found all around the country (locally Mayfield Lavender in Banstead, Long Barn Lavender in Alresford, both open to the public). Crops will yield around 10 gallons of the wonderful cosmetic and healing oil an acre.



Lavender over a wall on the Petworth Road

Recent events

The Spring Show anxieties about the early warmth depleting the daffodil exhibits were unfounded. In a fine overall display **Trevor Sears** won the George Edwards Cup, **Jill Long** the Cutler and Witley Evergreens Cups, **Cindy Dillon** the Norman Cup, **Catherine Bullock** the Redhead Bowl and Witley W.I. Flower Arranging Cup, and **Georgina Ellerton** the W.I. Cookery Cup.

In May **Carol Gubler** gave us a masterclass on **Fuchsias** and the audience went home newly inspired and bearing her plants.

A **Floral Workshop** in June provided new ideas and inspiration. Nevertheless more members could have been accommodated. Should we repeat the event next year? Let us know if you have a view.

Finally the evening visit with Milford to **Cowdray Park's Walled Garden** was a fascinating insight into the 15 year regeneration and maintenance of a "venue" garden, planted largely with perennials including clematis and roses, lavender and *Verbena*, in beds around a central lawn and with a feature raised "black" pool.

The **WGA Plant Stall** at the **Witley Fair** was a triumph over wind and occasional wet. Thanks to the efforts of all those involved we took almost £500 and as usual shared this between our two charities with local connections, Skillway in Godalming (Catherine Bullock is a tutor) and Transplant Sport UK (Jodie Cox, Christine's daughter, is captain of the women's swim team).



The plant stall in the sunshine (above) and (right) Christine hands a cheque to Skillway staff and students.

Last year we supported the Witley Infants School garden project. Headmistress Kate Turner writes: *We have already purchased a selection of flowering plants that the youngest children have enthusiastically planted around our grounds. Our pond has been re-located and we have been able to put some plants in already - we were delighted to spot froglets in there yesterday! With the remaining funds, we intend to research fruit trees/bushes before selecting and purchasing some that are well suited to our needs... Once we are a little further on with the planting, I would be delighted to invite any members of the WGA to come and visit.*

Coming up soon

The **Autumn Show is on Saturday 14th September** so do start thinking about what you might enter. This year there is a special trophy for jams and preserves, donated by Dennis Amy's family. Full details of all the classes are in your schedule.

The last event of the year is the **AGM on October 9th**, at which your editor will be talking about *Fascinating fungi: the good the bad and the ugly*. Don't miss it!

A dribble in the border?

A visit to the Hampton Court Flower Festival was both inspiring and tiring! As a regular pedant I am always slightly surprised by the extensive misspelling of plants and other items (Senicio, Tumeric etc) but this year's winner by a mile is from a nursery leaflet:

"Middleton Nurseries have a range of saliva's available to purchase online" How tasteful!

Topical Tips from Jane Swift

Vegetable plots can quickly dry out in hot weather, so be sure to water vegetable and fruit plants daily. Also, **potato and tomato blight** can strike at this time of the year. Dispose of or burn any affected plants to prevent the spores spreading.

Dwarf French Beans can cope with dryer conditions and seeds can be planted now, directly into the soil, 15cm apart. Harvest when the pods are about 10cm long and the beans are visible inside and the pods snap easily. **Radish, Spring Onion and Beetroot** are fast growing and can also be sown now.

Having seen the beautiful **Lavender** at the Cowdray Walled Garden, it is a reminder to trim Lavender after it has finished flowering. Cut off the faded flower heads, back into leafy growth but never into the old woodier growth. To keep the bush trim and not leggy, later in the year cut as low as possible, still into green growth.

If you were inspired by the **Roses** at the Walled Garden, the award-winning Rose garden at Loseley Park is open under the National Garden scheme every Sunday to Thursday (11-5) until the end of July. The 2 acres also contain a herb and vegetable garden, fruit/flower garden, herbaceous borders and a spectacular Mulberry tree.

A commercial: Your editor's illustrated booklet *The Story of Dr Wilfrid Fox and Winkworth Arboretum* is available for just £3. Contacts on the right.

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.

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