

Dear Members,

Having got Christmas out of the way, at this time of year I start getting very impatient to be back out in the garden and getting things growing. No windowsill is to be spared in the search for suitable seed-tray resting spots! To add to the anticipation, we have an exciting year planned for you all in 2019, with a varied programme of talks and events starting with none other than the fantastic Roy Lancaster on 6th March. I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at that or one of our other events. A very happy new year!

**Georgina Ellerton (Chairwoman)**

**Our 2019 Celebrity Speaker will be**

## **Roy Lancaster**

**who will be talking at 7.30 p.m. in the Chichester Hall on Wednesday March 6<sup>th</sup>  
on**

### **A Plantsman's Travels**



**Roy is probably the UK's greatest living plantsman. He has an encyclopaedic knowledge of the plants of the world, having travelled to most of its corners in his hunt for new and unusual species. The RHS gave him its highest award, the Victoria Medal of Honour, in 1988 and he was appointed OBE in 1999 and CBE in 2012.**

**He is an author, photographer, radio and TV personality, tour leader of botanical expeditions worldwide and Chairman of the Hardy Plant Society.**

***His enthusiasm for plants matches his expertise and we can rely on a wonderfully entertaining evening!***

Tickets are £5 for members and £10 for guests (including members' partners). Those of you who are online can now purchase your tickets using our brand new online booking facility at [www.witleygarden-ing.org/bookings](http://www.witleygarden-ing.org/bookings) or, if you don't have internet access, by telephoning **Peter Herring** on **01428 683281**. Booking is **exclusively for members and their guests until 31 January** after which the tickets will be on general sale, and the talk advertised in local press, so we recommend you get your tickets early to avoid disappointment. Tickets will **NOT** be available on the door

#### **Recent events**

If you didn't come to the **AGM and quiz on Oct 31st**, you missed a really good evening (and great refreshments). Shirl Hughes won the quiz and Eva Smith the BAFTA award for a flower spike of blue monkshood. In summary, the Committee were re-elected *en masse* and the finances are sufficiently secure for the Treasurer to allow the sub to remain just £5 for 2019. What an investment!

The **Christmas wreath-making workshop** on 21st November was a huge success and the participants departed with some wonderful decorations for their doors. Almost too wonderful, because sadly one was stolen not long after it was displayed. Plans are in hand for another Floral Workshop in 2019.

It's been a mild December and we've been able to enjoy some of the most fragrant of Viburnum flowers. The bare stems of *V. x bodnantense* 'Dawn' and 'Charles Lamont' bear clusters of pink flowers that are exquisitely scented (top right). Bring in a sprig to scent the room.

They don't much like frost or persistent rain (like me!) but are wonderful at the moment. There are nice bushes in Wheeler Street and in Petworth Road, opposite the Star. Another Viburnum flowering now is the evergreen *Viburnum tinus* (bottom right), also known as Laurustinus. This is a tougher plant. The flowers are held for much longer and are resistant to frost but they lack the scent. Variety 'Eve Price' is often recommended for the slightly pinker colour of its buds.

Having enjoyed the scent of winter-flowering Viburnum you can look forward with anticipation to even more of the same from the spring-flowering species, particularly the evergreen *V. burkwoodii* and the deciduous *V. carlesii*. Both have large rounded heads of flowers that are pink in bud and open to white, with an almost overwhelming scent.



The **Surrey Horticultural Federation's** spring talk is by **BBC Gardeners' World** presenter **Nick Bailey**, whose title is **Revive your Garden**. Tickets to the talk on Sunday March 10<sup>th</sup> at 2.30 at Glaziers Hall, Normandy are £7.50 for members and £10 for guests (WGA members are automatically members of SHF). Contact **Janet Arm**, Redleaf Nursery, Green Lane, Tilford on 01252-783133 or [janetarm@btinternet.com](mailto:janetarm@btinternet.com)

Your distributor will soon be calling for your (very cheap!) subscription, bringing your 2019 schedule and new credit card sized membership card. We are very grateful for all the effort they put in on *your* behalf and hope for both your benefits they need call only once!

### **Topical Tips from Jane Swift**

Clean the greenhouse glass (inside & out) to allow the plants to make the most of the weaker winter light; give the birds plenty of clean water; check tree ties and stakes; sow seeds of summer bedding to give them a head start (e.g. Lobelia, Pelargoniums and Snapdragons). Then make time to visit one of the many gardens that are open to display their amazing Snowdrop collections. Welford Park may be a ride away, but it is worth it!

**Welford Park**, Welford, Newbury, RG20 8HU. [www.welfordpark.co.uk](http://www.welfordpark.co.uk) Wednesday 30th January-Sunday 3rd March 11-4 (closed Monday & Tuesday)

**Winkworth Arboretum**, Hascombe Road, Godalming GU8 4AD Daily 10-4 NT (I have just heard there are daffodils out already, plus some Rhododendrons). Snowdrops are best at the top of the Azalea steps and on the Spring walk.

**Gatton Park**, nr Reigate Sunday 3rd February 1-5 £5 [www.gattonpark.com](http://www.gattonpark.com)

**Bramdean House**, Alresford SO24 0JU Sunday 10th February 2-4 £5 NGS, so Homemade Teas!

**Manor of Dean**, Tillington Petworth GU28 9AP Sunday 10th February 2-4 £4.50. NGS, so more Homemade Teas!

**West Dean Gardens**, nr Chichester PO18 0RX February Monday-Friday 10.30-4. Saturday & Sunday 9-4. £5.75 RHS members free (main member).

For a wonderful natural display locally walk the footpath through **Watersedge Copse**, GU27 3BZ on Jobson's Lane.

Check out our new logo, and website [www.witleygardening.org](http://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>.

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