



California Gardeners' Club

Newsletter August 2018

www.californiagardenersclub.co.uk

Last Club Meeting

On a very hot evening there was a large turnout to hear Ray Broughton talk to us. He gave us so many useful hints and tips that it is impossible to remember them all!

If there is no ban, you can keep your lawn green by using a sprayer for just 10 minutes every four days, but grass will recover, the roots are still alive no matter how dry the leaves are.

If your plants in the greenhouse are "drawn" and straggly, it is not because they are looking for light, it is lack of carbon dioxide. If you put fresh manure in a plastic box, cover with clingfilm and make 6 holes in the top, that will provide CO₂ with no smell.

When planting a tree or shrub make 3 vertical cuts down the rootball with a spade and cut off the bottom inch of roots. This helps new roots to form. Mycorrhizal fungi help growth too.

If you use marigolds to keep off whitefly, do not deadhead. It is the dead flowers that do the job! Alyssum will protect from onion rot. Nasturtiums are NOT good! They do not deflect pests, they attract pests to your plants!

A good method of growing potatoes is to put them one inch down in the soil and then cover them with a thick heap of straw. Water this once a week with tomato fertiliser and leave them to it. They will grow through the straw, no earthing up and you will get good clean potatoes with no digging.

White flowered runner beans are best in high temperatures as they are more tolerant, and are wind, not insect, pollinated so crop better.

Other tips: Cuttings taken from half way down a plant are stronger and bushier. Drill holes in the sides of the compost bin for quicker compost. Shade the outside, not the inside, of greenhouses. Only prune hedges in Autumn. Put Sulphate of Potash (which can be found in the Trading Hut) around plants just before Christmas for better flowers.

Lynn Potts

Things to remember

1. Our next meeting is on September 3rd when Richard Gillings will be talking about daffodils.
2. Make a note that our Summer Show is on Sunday September 9th
3. **Trading hut – Now closed for August.**
4. **Membership subs are now due.** Once again, we have held the cost at £5.
5. Table competition for September is "Any plant, flower, vegetable or fruit".

Ordering seeds this year?

Don't order your seeds for 2019 yet. We have joined with Sandhurst Garden Club to order in bulk from Mr Fothergill and will receive a discount which will potentially mean you will end up payin less than half price! Watch this space.

Summer Show

It is only a month away and it will be our Summer Show. The very hot weather has not helped my plants but the arrival of the rain in the last 24 hours has already perked them up.

Information I have received is that Shows held recently in the Reading area have been really well supported with record entries. So, there is our challenge we must do as well and exceed last years. For those who have never entered, "give it a go". Unsure of exactly what to do? Then please ask; any committee member will only be too pleased to help. Not sure of what class to enter, then come along on the Wednesday evening before the Show between 7.00 pm and 8.30 pm to the California hall. I shall be there and other committee members who are great exhibitors and we will guide you to the right classes.

Now for the facts as a reminder:

- Date of Show - Sunday 9th September
- Staging of exhibits between 8.00 am and 11.00 am. (PLEASE NOTE 11.00 AM IS THE TIME THAT YOU MUST LEAVE THE HALL). Do arrive early enough to have placed ALL your exhibits on the staging by that time.
- Entries can be handed in on Wednesday evening 5th Sept. between 7.00 and 8.30 pm. At the California Ratepayers Hall. This is the preferred way- you know I have received them.
- I will also collect them at the meeting on Monday 3rd.
- E-mail entries to me: turner1235@btinternet.com, you will receive a very brief reply. I cannot except any email entries after 8.00am on the Saturday morning Sept 8th. E mail entries must be paid for at the Door on Sunday morning before staging them. "if you do send any after the above time and I do receive them (no guarantee) they will be charged as late entries"

WE shall be setting up in the Hall on the Saturday evening do come along and help it is usually a friendly chaos. You do not require any expert knowledge just a willing pair of hands. We aim to do the whole lot in an hour (we succeeded last year).

If you have entered something like a pot plant and there is time after setting up, we do allow you to stage it that evening. There is no one at the hall overnight so it is at your own risk.

NOT entered before. Think out of the box. Can you bake a cake? I have tried the no fail fruit cake and I actually made an edible cake, the first cake I ever made so why not have a go. To the men amongst us, floral art is not limited to the female gender! So, have a go at something, you are almost certainly better than you think.

All that now remains is for everyone to come along on Sunday afternoon and admire the hard work of your fellow gardeners (or to comment that you have better at home so why did you not enter).

Peter Turner, Show Secretary

PS- If you can help Ann or Betty with cakes for tea please see them at the meeting on the 3rd.
PPS - Marise says a big thank you for your fantastic response to her request for prizes.

Topical tip



This month's tip follows on from Ray Broughton's talk at the August meeting in which he suggested using SMART lawn grass seed for repairing bare patches in the lawn this autumn. This seed is coated with Aqua Gel to assist germination which helps to prevent the seed drying out. It also has a blue coating which makes it unattractive to birds.

It is widely available, comes in various pack-sizes and costs around 0.40p per square meter. Well worth a try!

Membership

Over the past six months our membership has steadily grown.

Why not tell your neighbours and friends about us and invite them to a meeting?

Keeping annual membership at £5 makes us a great club to be a member of.

So, don't keep it a secret

Outing

Fortunately, the weather turned refreshingly from the 30-degree temperatures we'd been experiencing for weeks to the mid-20s for our trip to Sir Harold Hillier Gardens on Tuesday July 10th. Over 30 members and friends thoroughly enjoyed a surprisingly large array of flowers and greenery despite the unprecedented dry and hot conditions previously.



There was abundant shade and water provided by the Himalayan garden, the bog garden and pond, etc. whilst the famous Centenary garden didn't disappoint with its very long double herbaceous borders of glorious blooms. The 180 acres were a feast for garden lovers with a plant centre, shop, restaurants and coach travel thrown in.

Deputy Chairman's Challenge.

Several members have commented that their chilli plant is already producing crop. It is important to keep feeding with a high potash feed such as Tomorite to improve both size and quality of fruit.

Monthly Table Competition

1st was Kerry Eaton with 29 points, 2nd Ian Gillott with 28 points,
3rd Peter Radband and Pat Turner with 26 points,
4th Jean Potter and Jayne Male with 25 points,
5th Hermione Lewis with 22 points and Anne Blakeman with 20 points.

The subject for September is:
Any plant, flower, vegetable or fruit.
All exhibits must have been in the exhibitor's possession for at least one month.

Berkshire Hardy Plant Society

Will be holding its annual Plant Sale, at the Harris Garden, University of Reading, on Sunday, 9th September, from 2.00pm to 4.30pm. Free admission. Everyone welcome.

They will also be presenting a talk by Thomas Stone on 'The Roses of Mottisfont Abbey Gardens' on Tuesday, 11 September. The talk will take place at St Peter's Church Hall, Church Road, Earley, Reading, RG6 1EY. Doors open at 7.15 pm for a 7.45 pm start.

Visitors welcome. However, an admission fee of £3 per person is payable at the door by all non-members of the Hardy Plant Society – Berkshire Group. Plants and refreshments will also be available for purchase.

Monthly talks

This is a call to members: if you have any ideas/requests for the subjects of the monthly talks, please let us know. Either reply to this email or give Hermione a ring (number below).

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| Chairman: Dick Hawes 0118 979 3730 | Membership: Kerry Eaton 07736 022361 | Committee Member: Lynn Potts 0118 977 1852 | Committee Member Peter Radband 07976 640989 |
| Deputy Chairman Ian Gillott 0118 9892649 | Trading Hut: Stuart Slocombe 0118 9734531 | Programmes: Hermione Lewis 0118 989 1671 | Co-opted Member Marise Radband 01344 774310 |
| Hon. Secretary: Chris Spinks 0118 978 1432 | Show Secretary: Peter Turner 0118 9730424 | Hon. Treasurer: Judy Thomas 0118 9780108 | Co-opted Member Shirley Brown 0118 9734571 |