



California Gardeners' Club

Newsletter February 2017

www.californiagardenersclub.co.uk

Last Club Meeting

48 people attended the AGM on a cold, wet evening. Our Chairman, Dick Hawes, presided which made for a lively meeting as usual. The club is still thriving and we now have our own website:

www.californiagardenersclub.co.uk

The accounts were accepted. One member asked about the miscellaneous entry; this was for a coffee pot and flowers for several people who had stepped down from the committee.

We had two very successful shows in 2016, with an increase in entries. We agreed we will try to get more children entries. Special thanks went to all the show helpers.

Our Trading Officer has made great strides with the Trading Hut, sorting out the old lines and arranging for new ones. The hut will be open from the end of February.

We are fortunate to have such loyal and helpful members, and such a good Committee. I am pleased to say that we have a new Committee Member and two others who agreed to be co-opted. Of course, like all the other local clubs, we could always do with a few more Committee members – so if you would like to join us, you will be made very welcome!

The meeting ended at 20:50 and was followed, as usual, by cheese and wine and other tasty nibbles, which were very much enjoyed. We all had time for a good chat before heading home.

Things to remember

1. Next meeting is on 6th March when Brian Fisher will be talking about bulbs, corms, tubers and rhizomes.
2. Note the prize money in the Monthly Table Competition below.
3. Trading hut open 26th February
4. Subs are now due for 2017
5. Make a note of March 26th for tool sharpening at the hut 10:00 to 12:00

Daffodil Growing Competition

Only a couple of months to go. My daffodils have now grown to about 4 to 5 inches. I think they are on schedule for the Spring Show and April meeting. All the rain we have had, has been good for them. The flowers are scheduled to be out for late March early April but I think I will need to keep an eye on them in March with a view to either helping them on or delaying the flowering. Good luck everyone.

NGS Open Garden

Oak Cottage, Finchampstead, RG40 3PD will open its garden on the 19th February 2pm to 4:30pm in aid of the 'National Garden Scheme' charity. Oak Cottage, a private ¼ acre garden in Finchampstead, has a lovely woodland feel. To help celebrate the Snowdrop Festival and to raise funds for NGS, the owner Liz Ince is looking forward to welcoming visitors to view her garden. Over a period of several years, Liz has planted around 6,000 snowdrops under the mature deciduous trees. These have been complimented by a variety of winter and spring

flowering plants including Hellebores, Cyclamen, Witch Hazel, Tulip, Magnolia and Camellias as well as many other bulbs. Hope you can make it. Entry is £3.50 adults, children free.

Tombola

Prizes for the Tombola at the Spring show are needed. If you have any that you can donate, then please bring them to the March meeting. Marise Radband will collect them.

Membership

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.

Show Schedule for 2017

Please see below for the 2017 Show Schedule. You will also be able to see the schedule on the club's website www.californiagardenersclub.co.uk **Please note** that one of the photographic classes is a series of 'three linked pictures'.

Trading Hut

Below is a report on 'peat free compost'. It makes interesting reading especially this time of year when we are thinking about seed sowing and cuttings. Rest assured, our hut compost is of the best quality. Please note the hut will open on the 26th February 10:00 to 12:00

Wisley Ticket

The Wisley ticket is still available from Valerie Pickersgill. It allows two people a 30% discount. If you want the ticket for the day, then give Valerie a ring on 0118-9783647 to let her know when you will need them. Valerie will then let you know how to pick them up.

Monthly Table Competition

As announced at the AGM, there will be a £50 prize for the winner of the 2017 table competition, £25 for 2nd place and £10 for the highest number of average points (minimum 5 entries).

The subject for March is:

Any plant, flower, vegetable or fruit.

All exhibits must have been in the exhibitor's possession for at least one month.

As there is a cash prize, we will not be giving a free strip of raffle tickets each time you enter.

Chairman: Dick Hawes 0118 979 3730	Hon. Treasurer: Peter Jourdan 01344 304571	Membership: Lynn Potts 0118 977 1852	Committee Member Peter Radband 01344 774310
Deputy Chairman Ian Gillott	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	Committee Member: Judy Thomas 0118 9780108	Co-opted Member Shirley Brown 0118 9734571

Weedkiller contamination of peat-free composts

In summer 2016, RHS Gardening Advice received a number of cases of distorted growth on tomatoes planted in growing bags. Pale, curled or 'fern-like' shoot tips of the tomatoes were symptomatic of hormonal weedkiller damage. The most likely culprit was composted green waste that included grass clippings from turf treated with the persistent broad-leaved lawn weedkiller clopyralid.

Gardeners can try a simple germination test if they suspect there is a problem with a particular batch of peat-free or peat-reduced compost or growing bag.

Germination test

To check if a potting compost is the source of weedkiller contamination, germinate plants sensitive to herbicides such as tomatoes or broad beans:

- ❖ **Step 1:** fill two clean pots with the suspect growing media (fresh, not used), and label clearly.
- ❖ **Step 2:** fill another two clean pots with another brand of growing media, or John Innes potting compost, as a 'control' (a standard to compare to). Label these as well.
- ❖ **Step 3:** sow four broad bean seeds into each pot, or insert four tomato cuttings (you can use sideshoots from healthy tomato plants). Water well with clean water.
- ❖ **Step 4:** place the pots in a greenhouse or warm windowsill in winter or, for beans, outdoors in summer.
- ❖ **Step 5:** keep the compost damp but ensure any drainage water from pots that contain the suspect growing media cannot contaminate the control pots.

Assessing results

If after three weeks seeds fail to emerge, growth of seedlings or cuttings is distorted, show less growth than in the controls, or exhibit fern-like growth (right) in the suspect growing medium – while control plants are normal – weedkiller residues may well be present.

What to do next

If the test appears positive for weedkiller contamination, contact the manufacturer of the compost or growing bag. Suspect compost, however, can be used safely to topdress lawns. Plants showing symptoms early in the growing season may grow out of the problem as chemical residues break down. Harvestable produce from plants exhibiting symptoms is still considered safe to eat. Vegetables such as courgettes, brassicas and salad leaves are unlikely to show any distorted growth.

SylvaGrow is an RHS-approved peat-free compost that does not contain green waste, so is worth considering. Visit sylvagrow.co.uk for stockists.

• Search 'Weedkiller damage' at www.rhs.org.uk for more.



Distorted, fern-like growth of tomatoes (above and right) affected by weedkiller residue.



CALIFORNIA GARDENERS' CLUB



SHOW SCHEDULE 2017

Spring Show – Sunday 2nd April 2017

Summer Show – Sunday 10th September 2017

Each Class entry 20p

Held at California Ratepayers' Hall

Finchampstead

Doors open: 2.30 p.m.

Admission to Show: 50p

Under 16 free

Prize Giving and Auction commence at 4pm

Show Secretary: Peter Turner

Tel: 0118 9730424

RULES

1. The Show is open to any amateur.
2. Club vases **must** be used and sundry items needed to stage the exhibit must be provided by the exhibitor. Every care will be taken of the sundries, but the Committee cannot accept any responsibility for breakages or losses.
3. A Novice is an exhibitor who has not won more than two first prizes in the same Novice section in the previous 3 years.
4. Packing is allowed for cut flowers, but no artificial supports are permissible.
5. Exhibits must be staged between 08.00 and 11.00 hours and the hall vacated prior to commencement of judging.
6. Exhibitors not wishing their entries to be sold should apply to a Steward for a label to affix to the entry card. Exhibits may be removed between 15.45 and 16.00 hours, but all entries on show after that time will be sold in aid of Club funds.
7. Either Official entry forms to be used or email entries, stating the exhibitor's name, address and class numbers entered. Forms to be accompanied by the entrance fee of 20p for each class entered emails entries to be paid for on the day of show. Children's Classes are FREE.
8. All entry forms will be accepted by the Show Secretary: -
 - 8.1 Between 19.00 and 20.30 hours on the Wednesday before the Show at California Hall.
 - 8.2 At the Club's monthly meeting preceding the Show.
 - 8.3 By email to: turner1235@btinternet.com
 - 8.4 Late entries will be accepted at the discretion of the Show Secretary up to 10.30 on the day of the Show, accompanied by an entry fee of 25p. No late entries are allowed for Flower Arranging classes.
9. No person may enter more than one exhibit in any one class.
10. Prizes will be: **1st** - 70p; **2nd** – 50p; **3rd** – 30p.
11. The Judges' decisions will be final.
12. Any complaint must be made to the Show Secretary before 3:45pm on the day of the show.
13. The Committee reserves the right to refuse any entry not according to Schedule.
14. Any matter not provided for in these Rules shall be dealt with by the Show Secretary at his or her discretion and whose decision shall be binding.
15. All entries in the Children's, Domestic, Floral Art and Handicraft sections **must be the sole work of the exhibitor.**
16. All pot plants must have been in the exhibitor's possession for a minimum of 2 months.

17. Money prizes may be collected from the Club Treasurer between 15.00 and 16.00 hours on the day of the Show. Any prizes not claimed by the end of the Show will be returned to Club funds.

18. Points for calculation of awards:
1st – 3 points; 2nd – 2 points; 3rd – 1 point.

FOR SHOW NOTES AND ADVICE PLEASE SEE END OF SCHEDULE

Spring Show

Spring Show - Section A - Flowers, etc.

Classes 1 to 11 – One bloom per stem excluding classes 6 and 11

Class	Title	Variety
1	2 Vases of 3 Daffodils and/or Narcissi	One per vase
2	3 Daffodils or Narcissi	One
3	5 Daffodils or Narcissi	One
4	5 Daffodils or Narcissi	Mixed
5	1 Specimen Daffodil or Narcissi	
6	3 Daffodils or Narcissi (bunch flowered)	One
7	3 Daffodils or Narcissi (double)	One
8	3 Daffodils or Narcissi (novice)	One
9	5 Tulips (One bloom per stem) (novice)	One or more
10	5 Stems Miniature Daffodils (single headed)	One or more
11	5 Stems Miniature Daffodils (multi headed)	One or more
12	3 Stems miniature tulips	One or more
13	5 Tulips (one bloom per stem)	One or more
14	3 Tulips (one bloom per stem)	One
15	1 Camellia bloom	
16	Bowl/pot not to exceed 23cm (9") growing any one species of Bulb/Corm /Tuber	One or more
17	3 Sprays of Polyanthus (same colour)	One
18	5 Sprays of Polyanthus	Mixed
19	1 Vase of any other Primulas/Auriculas	One
20	1 Cut spike of Hyacinth	
21	Flowering Orchid – Pot size over 13cm (5.1/2")	
22	An exotic plant (excluding orchids)	
23	3 Specimen blooms in a decorative vase (both bloom and vase to be judged)	One cultivar
24	1 Vase of ornamental foliage	Min. 5 kinds
25	1 Vase of flowering shrubs/trees	Mixed
26	1 Vase of Spring flowers (No shrubs)	Mixed
27	1 Vase of any other flowers not included in schedule	Mixed
28	Pot plant in flower (excluding cacti & orchids)	
29	Foliage pot plant (pot not to exceed 12.5cm (5"))	
30	Foliage pot plant (pot not to exceed 25cm (10"))	
31	1 cactus or Succulent pot plant	
32	3 Sticks of Rhubarb – (natural)	One
33	Any other vegetable as per RHS Rules	One

Spring Show – Section B – Floral Arrangements

NO LATE ENTRIES ALLOWED

See class for space allowed

Novice Classes

Class	Title
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34	'Easter Celebration'. A triangular arrangement of Spring flowers. Niche size 18" x 18" (46cm x 46cm)
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35	'Springtime' – An exhibit. A Springtime landscape. Space up to 2' square.
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Open Classes

Class	Title
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36	'A Midas Touch' An exhibit. Niche size 2'6" x 2'6".
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37	'The Quiet Water' - An exhibit to include water as part of the design. Space allowed 2'
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38	'Delights of Spring' – An arrangement. Space allowed 2'6" Open staging. <u>Please refer to the explanation of terms set out at the bottom of the schedule</u>
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Spring Show – Section C – Young Exhibitors' Section

Class	Title
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Aged 7 and Under.

39	A Potato Print pattern. A4 size
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40	A Colourful picture of a snail. Paint or Crayon – Size A4
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Aged 8 to 11 inclusive

41	An insect made from natural materials. Space 1'6" max.
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42	A Drawing of a named common Garden Bird. Size A4
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Spring Show – Section D – Domestic

Class	Title
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43	<u>Chocolate Sponge Sandwich</u>
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6 oz butter	6 oz Caster Sugar
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5 oz Self Raising Flour	3 Eggs, beaten
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1 oz Cocoa	
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For the filling:

4 oz Plain Chocolate	2 tps Clear Honey
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2 oz Butter	
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Butter and flour two 7" (18C<) appx. Sandwich tins. Cream butter and sugar together until pale and creamy. Add eggs a little at a time, beating well after each addition. Fold in half the flour and cocoa (which have been sieved together) then fold in the remainder. Place half the mixture in each tin and level, bake in the oven at 190C, 375F, or gas mark 5 for about 20 minutes until well risen, firm to the touch and beginning to shrink from the sides. Turn out and cool on a wire rack. When cold, sandwich together with half the chocolate filling and coat the top with the remainder.

Chocolate Filling:

Place the broken chocolate, honey and butter into a heatproof bowl over a pan of simmering water until melted and smooth. Leave to cool and thicken slightly.

44	A Jar of your own Marmalade.
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45	A round of shortbread.
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46	6 Sausage Rolls.
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47	A Savoury Quiche
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48 A Jar of your own Chutney.

Spring Show – Section E – Handicrafts

Class Title

49 An item of knitwear (Not shown before)

50 An article of Tapestry or Embroidery. (Not shown before)

51 An article of general handicraft (Not shown before)

Spring Show – Section F – Photography

Class Title

52 Three linked pictures

53 A photograph of a Garden to include a garden ornament.

Spring Show – Section G – Poetry

54 Compose a poem of not more than 12 lines referring to 'A Puppy'.

Summer Show

Summer Show – Section A – Vegetables

Class	Title	Variety
1	6 Runner Beans	One
2	6 Runner Beans (Novice)	One
3	3 Onions (globe or flat)	One
4	3 Courgettes	One
5	4 Potatoes – white or coloured	One
6	5 Tomatoes – other than cherry	One
7	5 Tomatoes (Novice) – other than cherry	One
8	1 Truss of tomatoes * (cherry/small fruited)	#
9	1 Truss of tomatoes * (Not cherry/small fruited)	
10	1 Dish of 12 cherry/small fruited tomatoes #	One
11	3 Beetroots	One
12	2 Cucumbers	One
13	3 Carrots	One
14	5 Shallots	One
15	Any vegetable not included in Classes 1 – 14 (quantity optional)	One
16	Collection of 4 vegetables. Quantities and kinds to be chosen from 1 to 14. Space 60 x 60cm (2'x2')	
17	3 different vegetables (One of each) (Novice)	
18	A Corn on the cob	
19	Longest Runner Bean	
20	Oddest Shaped vegetable	
*	<i>A Truss consists of a Single or Forked Stem of flowers and fruits growing from one main stem of the plant (this can contain unripe fruit).</i>	
#	<i>Cherry Tomatoes must not exceed 38mm (1 ½") diameter.</i>	

Summer Show – Section B – Fruit

Class	Title	Variety
21	3 Apples – Dessert	One
22	3 Apples – Cooking	One
23	A Dish of Soft Fruit shown with stalks (quantity optional)	One
24	Any other Fruit – quantity optional	One

Summer Show – Section C – Flowers

25	3 Roses (one flower per stem)	One
26	2 Sprays of multi-headed roses	One
27	1 Specimen Rose bloom	
28	3 Hydrangea heads	One or more
29	3 Pelargonium heads	One or more
30	A vase of mixed grasses (no more than 5 stems)	One or more
31	1 Vase of Annual Flowers or Biennials grown as Annuals (mixed colours allowed)	One
32	1 Vase of Herbaceous Perennial Flowers	One or more

33	1 Vase of mixed flowers with no additional foliage in a decorative vase (both to be judged)	One or more
34	1 Vase of mixed flowers using the smallest club vase	One or more
35	1 Gladiolus spike	
36	1 Dahlia, Giant or Large	
37	3 Dahlias, decorative	One or more
38	3 Dahlias, cactus or semi-cactus	One or more
39	3 Dahlias, water lily, small	One or more
40	5 Dahlias, pompom or ball	One or more
41	1 Vase of 5 Dahlias, any variety	
42	Club competition Begonia	

Summer Show – Section D – Pot Plants

Class	Title
43	1 Fuchsia in a pot (pot size not to exceed 12.5cm (5"))
44	1 Fuchsia in a pot (pot size not to exceed 22.5cm (9"))
45	1 Standard or Half Standard Fuchsia (minimum 45cm (18") length of clear stem from soil to lowest branches)
46	6 Fuchsia florets, one variety displayed on a board (board supplied)
47	6 Fuchsia florets, mixed variety displayed on a board (board supplied)
48	1 Pelargonium in a pot (pot size not to exceed 12.5cm (5"))
49	1 Pelargonium in a pot (pot size not to exceed 22.5cm (9"))
50	1 Foliage pot plant (pot size not to exceed 12.5cm (5"))
51	1 Foliage pot plant (pot size not to exceed 25cm (10"))
52	1 Cactus or Succulent pot plant (pot size not to exceed 22.5cm (9"))
53	An Orchid or other exotic pot plant. Pot size over 13cm (5 ½")
54	1 Flowering pot plant exclusive of Classes 43 to 53 (pot size not to exceed 12.5cm (5")).
55	1 Flowering pot plant exclusive of classes 43 to 53 (pot size not to exceed 25cm (10"))

Summer Show – Section E – Floral Arrangements (NO LATE ENTRIES ALLOWED)

See class for space allowed

Please refer to the explanation of terms set out at the back of the schedule

Novice Classes

Class	Title
57	"Wedding Buffet" – An exhibit to stand on a buffet table. Candles may be used. Space allowed 2'. Open staging
58	'Treasure Trove'-An exhibit in a chest or box. Open staging 2' x 2'
59	'Harvest Festival' An exhibit of flowers and natural plants suitable for a mantelpiece. 2'6" length max.
60	'Summer sunshine'. An exhibit of flowers and natural foliage. Niche size 2'6" x 2'6"
61	A petit arrangement in a teacup. i.e. between 4" and 9" in height, depth & width

Summer Show – Section F – Young Exhibitors

Class Title

Aged 7 and under

62	A Garden on a Dinner Plate
63	A painting of a flower in summer. Size A4

Aged 8 to 11 inclusive

64	An article of your own handiwork.
65	A vase made from a decorated jam jar.

- 66 3 Brownies
- 67 tba

Summer Show – Section G – Domestic

Class Title

- 68 Cherry cake
 - 3 oz self-raising flour. 8 oz Glace Cherries
 - 6 oz butter 3 oz Plain Flour
 - 4oz caster sugar 3 oz Ground Almonds
 - 3 egg - beaten Pinch of Salt
 - Finely grated rind of 1 lemon

Grease and line a 7" (18cm) appx. Cake tin with greased greaseproof paper. Cut each cherry in half, sieve the flours together and toss the cherries in a little of the flour. Cream butter, sugar and lemon rind together until mixture is pale and creamy, add a little beaten egg at a time and beat well after each addition. Fold in flour, ground almonds and cherries, adding a little milk to make a fairly stiff dropping consistency. Turn mixture into tin and bake in a moderate oven at 350F, 180C, gas mark 4, for about 1 hour 20 minutes, or until skewer comes out clean.

TIP: To remove excess syrup from cherries, rinse thoroughly in water, drain well and dry thoroughly on absorbent kitchen paper.

- 69 Home-made ginger biscuits
- 70 A jar of Lemon Curd
- 71 5 Macaroons
- 72 A jar of your favourite Jam

SHOW NOTES - To aid and assist members who may not have shown before, the following notes may be helpful. If you are unsure how to stage or exhibit, or this is your first Show, then please ask a Committee member at a meeting or on the morning of the Show, to introduce you to an experienced member of the Club who can answer queries. Please remember that help and advice are always readily available.

Flowers, Fruit and Vegetables

- Read the schedule carefully and be sure that the number of specimens and groupings per variety are correct.
- It is recommended that you use the smallest Club vase that will comfortably hold the exhibit. Please ask for an alternative sized vase if required.
- Aim for uniformity of freshness, size, shape and colour.
- If you wish to read more about show techniques the Horticultural Show Handbook published by the Royal Horticultural Society is worth reading. A copy is available, for reference purposes only, at all meetings or in the Trading Hut. This book is widely accepted and forms a standard reference for all who take part in shows, judges, exhibitors and organisers alike.
- Please name your exhibit whenever possible as this adds the final touch for the benefit of the judge and public.

Domestic

- Key points are presentation, adherence to schedule, i.e. no original manufacturer's writing on jars or lids, correct number of items and size, etc.
- Entries should be appropriately covered, e.g. cling-film or a dome
- Finally – please ask if you are unsure, help and advice is readily available.

Plants

- All pot sizes are measured across the top edge (inside diameter).
Plants usually grown for their ornamental foliage are not debarred from Foliage Classes simply because they happen to be in flower at the time of the competition. However, when judging a 'Foliage Class' judges must take no account of any flowers on a plant.