

VIRTUAL AGM



Newsletter February 2021

www.californiagardenersclub.co.uk



AGM

Although official business was the purpose of the evening, being such a friendly club, the meeting also offered the opportunity for some socialising. In fact, the happy hubub of banter and chatter before the business part opened, reminded me of why I joined the club in the first place. It is definitely a very friendly club! Amongst our 38 members who participated were two new members. They were very brave to 'zoom' into an AGM for their first meeting! I particularly enjoyed the repartee around two members who very beautifully set their screen background to the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, only to disappear off the screen themselves. Eventually, they did reappear but upside down! If 12 months ago any of us had even thought to envisage what our 2021 AGM would be like, I am sure we would have all got it completely wrong. How things have changed!

The official part of the AGM includes reports from those on the committee with particular responsibilities. Stuart Slocombe, the Trading Hut secretary, reported that despite everything, the trading hut did very well last year, with no significant fall in income. With the Click and Collect system Stuart had put in place, the hut was able to operate safely. Thanks indeed are due to Stuart, especially because as well as this extra work involved, it meant that he was always the one on duty. He has done such a sterling job. Peter Radband, the Treasurer, who keeps a very close track of the money, reported healthy finances. He also made a request to members who pay by BACS to say what the payment is for. This can be put in the reference box.

New committee members were voted on for two years. Husband and wife team Katie Bailey and Daryl Phillips have taken on the role of Show Secretaries. The idea was that they would have had the opportunity of shadowing the retiring show secretary, Peter Turner, during 2020. Of course this couldn't happen and so they are having to swim before they can paddle!. When our shows become non-virtual again, I am sure that we will all lend them every help and support.

I also got a chance to become 'official' as Publicity Secretary. I started this role in February last year, having taken over from Lynn Potts.

Things to note

1. Our next meeting is on the 1st March when Graham Harding will give a talk entitled "Sandhurst Walk". This will be held over Zoom.
2. Trading Hut – now closed till the 7th March (subject to lockdown easing).
3. Member's articles. See in newsletter for more details.
4. See inside newsletter for the results of the photo competition. March competition will be entitled 'Spring has Sprung'.

A few weeks before lockdown last year, I went around numerous noticeboards putting up posters about forthcoming club events. I also posted them on several websites, all bright-eyed and bushy-tailed about my new role. Of course, we know what happened next but, on the plus side, it has led me to new advertising venues on social media, such as Next Door and Facebook. Talking of which, did you know that the club has its own Facebook page? You can join this now if you are au fait but more details will follow soon.

Our Programme Secretary, Hermione Lewis, always finds the most interesting speakers. Evidently, this was halted for a while but the club is now holding meetings via Zoom, starting with a wonderful talk from Stuart Slocombe in December and one from wildlife photographer Tom Way in January. Hermione has lined up further great online talks until we can meet again in person. Our Chairman, Dick Hawes has had to adapt to not only holding committee meetings via Zoom but also to hosting the talks this way, as well as the AGM.

In normal times, our AGM in the Ratepayers Hall is followed by a social with cheese and wine. Several members entered into the spirit of this remotely. I'm not sure if cheese was involved but definitely the spirit!

Julia Goodall

February Photograph results

Well done and thank you to all those who entered and voted.



First place goes to Inge Salter with 46 points



Second place goes to Sylvia Hawes with 26 points



Third place goes to Jill Gillott with 19 points.

Editors notes: Gentlemen, we did not do too well. The ladies took all three top places.

Virtual Spring Show coming soon

Spring is coming and for all of you, wanting to show off this year's Spring flowers, we are holding a Virtual Spring show at the end of March. There will be a limited number of categories to cover daffodils, tulips, camellias, hyacinths and a vase of Spring flowers. Photographic entries will be judged by one of our usual show judges.

Further information will be sent out to all members in the first week of March so look out for further details coming soon. The show will also be open to non-members so you will be welcome to pass the details on to friends and family.

Katie (Show Secretary)

RHS card

Our club has a RHS Card which we can make available to members from the beginning of March this year.

It enables two people to gain entry to all RHS gardens throughout the country.

Presentation of this card will give you and your friend a 30% discount on the entry fee.

From March, as a member of our club, you will be able to borrow it by contacting Chris Spinks (number at the end of newsletter) and arranging to pick it up.

Members emails

Following the interesting and amusing article by Maurice May in last month's Newsletter on the subject of worms, I thought I would refer the problem to an old book previously owned by my Father.

This was 'Mr Middleton's Garden Book,' published in 1941.

In addition to his book, Mr Middleton wrote a regular gardening column in the Daily Express during the Second World War. He was very much involved in the 'Dig for victory' campaign.

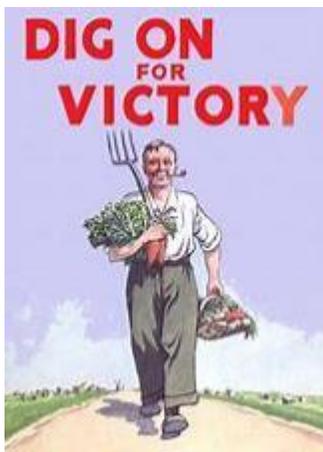
His answer to the problem of worms was to apply a solution of commercial corrosive sublimate to the turf. This would bring the worms to the surface which could be swept off the surface of the lawn when they could be disposed of by either burning or burying deeply!

Corrosive sublimate contains mercuric chloride – a substance which is highly toxic to man or beast.

The last substance containing a mercury-based product in horticulture was Calomel Paste. This was used in brassicas where the young plants were dipped in the paste prior to planting in order to control the fungus clubroot. It was highly effective. It was used in both amateur and commercial horticulture. In 1991, it was the last mercury-based product to be banned in horticulture.

So sorry Maurice, you just have to keep spiking your lawn!

Ian Gillott.



Free membership this year

Big thank you to all those members who decided to pay their £5 membership fee this year even though it is a free year. We, the committee, appreciate this demonstration of your support. I must also go further and say thank you to a few who have made voluntary donations on top of their subs. Very kind of you.

The clubs bank details are: Sort Code: 40-47-09, Account number: 71301608 (don't forget to give your name as the reference).

Topical Tip – February

In last month's newsletter, I discussed the fun to be had by growing a few early spuds in potato sacks. The steps are as follows:

- 1) Put around 20 cm of compost in the bottom of the bag and place five newly chitted potatoes on top of the compost.
- 2) Add a further 10 cm of compost and mix in a sprinkling of Growmore fertiliser to cover the potatoes.
- 3) As the shoots emerge above the compost, add some more compost to cover the shoots.
- 4) Continue covering the emerging shoots until the compost is around 5 cm below the top of the bag.
- 5) Try to keep the compost moist and apply a weekly feed of a high potash fertiliser. The Chempak 4 High Potash fertiliser sold in the Trading Hut is ideal.

If you have a cold greenhouse, start the potatoes from the middle of March onwards. If growing outside start in mid-April.

The potatoes should be ready to harvest when the flowers are open and fully matured.

Ian Gillott (Deputy Chairman)

Members' Articles

Why not try your hand at an article for the newsletter.

We have had two great articles from members so far which demonstrates there are members chomping at the bit to be authors. It can be serious, funny or a combination. Share your tricks in gardening; your special way of dealing with garden problems. Just email it to us and we will do the rest.

Trading Hut

We are aiming to open the Trading Hut on the 7th March. Only four weeks away. Have a look at the club's website to see what is available and start your shopping list.

In early April we will have various plants for sale at the Hut. There will be:



Tomato Picolino

A vigorous cherry tomato, that can be used in salads and sandwiches. It is a cordon variety that can be grown in the greenhouse, and also outdoors in a sunny location, in planters on the patio.



Little cucumber

This vigorous plant has excellent fruit. The small cylindrical cucumbers are a nice light green colour with few thorns. They have an intense flavour.



The Cuneo pepper

This is a well-known and appreciated variety by gourmets. Its fruits are yellow, very intense, with a sweet, unmistakable flavour, the pulp is firm and exceptionally thick.



Ailsa Craig - Popular and reliable tomato seeds with medium-sized fruits of fine shape and flavour. Ideal for greenhouse and outdoor growing. Medium fruited variety - an essential element of your summer salads!



A Spanish black tomato

Used in salads, it is a dark chocolate coloured tomato with a tangy yet sweet flavour and excellent texture. Shows good disease tolerance.



My personal favourite is Santini. It is a small plum shaped variety. It has a delicate thin skin, a sharp flavour and a lovely just-picked aroma.



We hope to have geraniums and fuchsias too but this is only if restrictions are lifted and we feel comfortable going out to source them.



Monthly talks

This is a call to all 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).

Members emails



Chairman: Dick Hawes 0118 979 3730	Hon. Treasurer: Peter Radband 07976 640989	Programmes: Hermione Lewis 0118 989 1671	Committee Member: Jayne Male 07967639808
Deputy Chairman: Ian Gillott 0118 9892649	Trading Hut: Stuart Slocombe 0118 9734531	Membership: Kerry Eaton 07736 022361	Co-opted Member: Marise Radband 01344 774310
Hon. Secretary: Chris Spinks 0118 978 1432	Show Secretaries: Daryl & Katie Phillips 07980 160169	Publicity: Julia Goodall	