



# California Gardeners' Club

## Newsletter July 2020

[www.californiagardenersclub.co.uk](http://www.californiagardenersclub.co.uk)

### Rose & Sweet Pea competition

What a great competition it turned out to be. Twenty two entries in the rose section and nine in the sweet pea. Forty three members took part in the voting with the last vote coming in at 22:04

The Rose Competition:



The winner (on the left) with nine votes was Kriss Turner with a rose called Darcy Bustle. Certainly a beauty and one to watch out for if you are thinking of buying a new rose . Well done Kriss.



Second (on the right) was Derek Steele with seven votes with a rose named Congratulations. A new member but one we will need to watch if he produces beautiful blooms like this.



These two came joint third with five votes each. Well done Peter North (left) and Stuart Slocombe (right). Two lovely roses.



**The Sweet Peas**, whilst not so many entries, had some lovely pictures.



The entry (top left) of Heritage Sweet Peas won with a total of 17 votes. Well done Sylvia Hawes. A lovely display..



On the right (top and bottom) are the joint second winners with six votes each. Top right is Kriss Turner's entry and bottom right is Pauline MacBrayne's.



Third (bottom left) with five votes was Margaret Wade's entry of perennial Sweet Peas,. Once again, a beautiful display



Interestingly, I asked Peter Allington (the member who gave us the photo tips) to judge the entries from a photographic perspective. His results were:



1<sup>st</sup> Jayne Male



2<sup>nd</sup> Dick Hawes



3<sup>rd</sup> John Kerr



1<sup>st</sup> Sylvia Hawes



2<sup>nd</sup> Pauline MacBrayne



3<sup>rd</sup> Kriss Turner

### Things to remember

1. Our next meeting scheduled for the 3<sup>rd</sup> August is cancelled.
2. **Trading Hut** – is now opening on a Sunday under controlled conditions. Watch out for the weekly emails. Also remember the hut is closed in August so stock up now.
3. Can I encourage those of you who have not yet renewed their membership to do so now. Either **renew electronically or visit the hut on a Sunday morning**.  
If you decide the electronic method then see the 'Membership' section below for bank details.  
**Thank you in anticipation of your continued support.**

### Slug-it-to-me continued from last month

Many predators do well out of slugs which are eaten by virtually every group of vertebrates, including reptiles, mammals, amphibians and even some fish. Many birds will also eat slugs. Foxes, badgers, hedgehogs, slowworms, frogs and toads, as well as ground beetles will also feed on them. So it is helpful if you can encourage wildlife into your garden as a way of control.

When attacked, slugs can retract their body which added to the slippery mucus, makes them hard to grasp. Apparently, the mucus also tastes unpleasant – the mind boggles at how this was discovered!

Unfortunately, slugs can destroy foliage faster than plants can grow. In a season, each slug can eat up to 0.8 kg of plants and each garden on average contains about 200 slugs. So, what can us gardeners do to stop the damage? Slugs are so abundant that they can't be eradicated, so targeting our control measures, is the most effective way.

The RHS is currently conducting a full scientific trial into the various methods of control. Techniques available are:

- Bait; such as a scooped-out grapefruit, or proprietary pellets
- Beer traps either bought or homemade from a buried jam jar. Apparently good quality beer works better than cheaper beer. Who knew slugs had discerning taste in beer?
- Barriers such as eggshells, copper, rough surfaces such as bark etc. A RHS study found no beneficial results from these methods.
- Parasitic nematodes which work by introducing a bacteria into field slugs in the ground and after about three days they begin to stop eating.
- Hunt them out in the day in their favourite hideaways: involve the grandchildren and pay them for each slug. They will soon rid your garden of them. If they find 200 of them, though, it could work out expensive!
- Nightly torchlight patrols. RHS say you can freeze them to kill them and then put them on your compost heap (make sure you label the freezer container clearly!).
- Encourage predators.

With slug pellets; follow the manufactures instructions. Scatter slug pellets thinly around vulnerable plants. It is important to store pellets safely and scatter them thinly as they can harm other wildlife, pets and young children if eaten in quantity.

There are two types of slug pellet approved for use in gardens, those based on metaldehyde and those based on ferric phosphate. **Ferric phosphate** based pellets are approved for use by organic growers. **Metaldehyde** tends to be in the over the counter products.

**Metaldehyde ban;** in December 2018 DEFRA **announced that metaldehyde will be banned from most uses in Spring 2020**. This decision was overturned in July 2019. However, it is likely that a new ban will come through at some point in the future.

The RHS also advises transplanting strong seedlings as they are more likely to survive an attack. On their website there is also a very useful list of garden plants that slugs tend to leave alone.

Personally, I find a mixture of approaches works best. On the allotment, I now apply nematodes in Spring and Summer and have never looked back. Over the years, this has reduced the slug population, but I still sometimes use ferric phosphate pellets as a stop-gap. I hide them under an upturned flowerpot resting on a stone so that the slugs can crawl in, but mammals are less likely to eat them. With the nematodes which you can buy online, the infected slugs go underground to die, so I don't feel so guilty! The downside is that they are quite expensive and only work on damp soil, so you must keep watering if conditions are dry. They would not work well on heavy clay soils.

At home, I try to grow the less affected plants and I am experimenting with some thicker leaved hostas which are less likely to be attacked. For plants in pots, copper tape seems to work, as long as I snip into it as recommended on the packet. I also try to place my most precious ones somewhere high up, on a pedestal for example, hoping that the slugs will think it is not worth the effort: after all, we get the word 'sluggish' from them! By the time they get there, it would be time to set off for home again.

Crushed eggshells do work for me as a barrier if baked first in the oven to make them crunchier. It is a case of trying different methods to see what works.

The club trading hut stocks slug copper tape and ferric phosphate pellets.

Good luck!

Julia

### **Topical Tip – July 2020**



The recent rainfall has resulted in a spurt of growth on runner beans. They should start cropping soon, especially if we continue to get some cooler nights.

Those runner beans which were planted at the end of May/beginning of June will normally crop well through July and into August and perhaps, if you are lucky, into the first couple of weeks in September. It is a good idea to sow some more seeds now and these should provide you with beans from the middle of September and into October.

## National Gardens Scheme

Last weekend, I booked to visit two gardens in Hampshire under the National Gardens Scheme. It made a lovely day out and it was wonderful to find some garden inspiration again. If you haven't heard about this scheme, it is an umbrella organisation for people to open their gardens for charity. There is a huge array of different sizes and styles of garden, although this is more restricted at the moment to gardens that can offer safe social distancing. Visits currently have to be booked in advance and there is usually a time limit on the amount of time you can stay. Be aware also that there are not always toilet facilities. On Mondays, the list and booking open for the following week. Go to [ngs.org.uk](http://ngs.org.uk) for information.

Julia Goodall

## Sad news

It is sad that I have to inform you of a member and a friend of the club who have passed away recently.

Iris Still, who was a great supporter of our club for many years. Iris had given lots of her time to the committee organising the programs and speakers. She had done a wonderful job over the years and that was greatly appreciated. After stepping down from organising the speakers, she continued on the committee supporting other committee members especially the show secretary at the shows. Due to COVID-19 her funeral will be transmitted over the internet. If you wish to follow the service, go to [www.obitus.com](http://www.obitus.com) at 14:25 using username - Miwu2120 and password – 83650

I also have to let you all know that Bob Mould (ex Wokingham Horticultural Association Treasurer) passed away in his sleep in the early hours of Saturday, 20/6/20.

Many of our members will know his wife, Mary Jenno, who has been a member of our club for many years.

## Apple Juice

We are thinking about collecting unwanted apples to be pressed, bottled and sold as a fund raising exercise for the club.

Can we ask those of you who have apple trees, **would you be willing to donate apples** to this scheme? We would need to select apples that are of good quality and that you would be happy to eat, the riper the better (quality of the fruit decides the quality of the juice).

Please let us know, by replying to this email, if you might be interested in the scheme.

## Help Required

Is there anyone in the club, or know of someone, who could advise one of our member's with their garden? The garden is quite long at the back with a large dead lawn; the owner gave up watering it saying "if we are to have long hot summers every year now, I need to re-think the layout". All the member needs is a person to come and have a look and then say "Get rid of that, plant these and put a path here..." - or something like that!

If there is someone who thinks they can help, please contact Dick on the club's email and he can then pass on the details etc.

## Membership

### *Did you know you can renew electronically?*

Just transfer your £5 (£10 for a couple) to the clubs account giving your surname and initials as the reference. Your membership card will then be waiting for you at the next meeting.

**Clubs account number is – 71301608 & sort code – 404709**

## 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).

Chairman: Dick Hawes 0118 979 3730	Hon. Treasurer: Peter Radband 07976 640989	Programmes: Hermione Lewis 0118 989 1671	Committee Member: Jayne Male
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 Secretary: Peter Turner 0118 9730424	Publicity: Julia Goodall 07814 747198	Ass Show Secretaries: Daryl & Katie Phillips