



California Gardeners' Club

Newsletter June 2017

www.californiagardenersclub.co.uk

Last Club Meeting

On Monday we had the welcome return of Paolo Arrigo to give us a talk on Franchi Seeds. He entertained us with Italian music on his accordion until it was time to begin.

Franchi Seeds (pronounced Franki) was founded in 1783 and has been in the family for seven generations now. Franchi are seedsmen and commission over 90% of their range themselves, locally in Italy. Their seeds are traditional regional varieties and some come from the mountain areas, so are used to much colder climates than the UK. Many are not globally available; the produce may have odd shapes, but taste very good. The company had a stand at Chelsea.

He talked about how the Romans brought many food plants like asparagus, dill and basil to this country. He went on to say how growing your own was first encouraged after men were found to be malnourished in the Boer War. Then came Dig for Victory following shortages in the two World Wars. Now more people than ever enjoy growing vegetables.

He then produced basil, pine nuts and parmesan, and proceeded to make Pesto, and samples were handed round for us all to try! His tip is to never cut basil with a knife, as it oxidises and turns black. Always tear it.

We had the opportunity to buy some of the unusual seeds to try for ourselves, as well as recipe books, and there was quite a crowd around them!

Lynn Potts

Things to remember

1. Next meeting is on 3rd July when our own Stuart Slocomb will be showing us the Flora and Gardens along Africa's Garden Route.
2. Trading hut now open Sundays 10:00 to 12:00
3. Subs are now due for 2017
4. July meeting should have the hall filled with wonderful aromas as it is the Sweet Pea and Rose competition.

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.

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.

Trading Hut

The Hut remains open 10.00 – 12.00 every Sunday throughout June & July before we take a break in August. We are well stocked at the moment – so pop down for all your gardening goodies! As tomatoes begin to set fruit and flowers really get going remember (as recommended by Carol on last night's Gardeners World) to give them a weekly high potash feed – two products we stock fit the bill here: Chempak 4 or Tomorite. We have some special new packs of Tomorite in offering an extra 30% free and still only £4!

We've sold a lot of bamboo canes in the last 2-3 weeks and we have plenty left! They are also very good value with our 8' canes at 50p each and 4' canes at 20p each (or 11 for £2). For smaller plants we also do 12 x 30" green split canes for only 50p. If you are buying the shorter 30" or 4" canes please do remember to also buy some cane caps – at only 10p each they can save an eye!

On our return from a week's holiday this week we found the greenfly have "been at it" whilst we were away! We have plenty of trigger packs to keep the "bugs at bay".

Hope to see you at the Hut soon.
Stuart

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).

This month's winner was Betty Mold with 26 points, Hermione Lewis, Peter Radband and Ian Gillott all with 24 points, Ann Blakeman 23 points and Jean Potter with 21 points

The subject for July 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.

Rose and Sweet Pea Competition

Unfortunately missing from your membership details the Rose and Sweet Pea show is being held as usual at the next meeting which is on July 3rd.

Classes are: (1) A vase of Sweet Peas. Your choice on how you display them
(2) A single stem Rose i.e. a hybrid Tea type, no bunches or Sprays.

Both Classes to be shown in the Club green vases which will be provided.

Judging will be as usual by a members vote held at tea time.

There will be a cash prize for the winner of each class

N.B. As reported previously we are short of green vases. We know we used to have a lot more. I am aware of one or two that members have at home. If you do have any of the club vases please return them. This will be an admirable opportunity as the box will be lying on the floor near the Show bench. You could slip them in anonymously.

Please support the Show

Peter Turner, Show Secretary

Begonias

So how are your begonias coming on?

Mine is quite large at the moment and looking totally different to the one my wife bought. Both very healthy with Sylvia's already showing a flower.

I'm looking forward to seeing how it develops especially as we get closer to the September Summer Show.

If you also bought into the Deputy Chairman's challenge, let us know how your begonia is getting on.



West Dean Outing

This is a reminder about 20th June West Dean trip. Please remember to let Chris Spinks know if you change your mind about your chosen bus stop (see below for phone numbers).

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).

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 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	Committee Member: Judy Thomas 0118 9780108	Co-opted Member Shirley Brown 0118 9734571