



Newsletter May 2021

www.californiagardenersclub.co.uk



'Fuchsias', talk by Derek Dexter via Zoom, 3rd May 2021

Derek is an amateur grower who has been exhibiting fuchsias very successfully for over 20 years, including at Championship shows and the Hampton Court Palace flower show. He was so knowledgeable and generous in the tips that he gave us that our heads were positively buzzing! He encouraged us that we can all have success with growing fuchsias for pleasure and even for showing. The berries are even edible!

In order to house his plants over the winter, he has set up a smaller polytunnel inside his greenhouse which he double fleeces and just heats that, as it cuts down on the costs. In spring, he removes the extra polytunnel but fleeces the plants if needed. In summer, he puts up shading as fuchsias do not like too much direct sun and heat. His greenhouse has two sets of double doors and vents for air.

Derek's general tips for tender fuchsias:

- *To keep them for the following year, cut them back to 6 to 8 inches ready for winter. He removes all the leaves. They need to be kept frost free.*
- *In spring, spray the bare stems with warm, tepid water to encourage new growth.*
- *Remove them from their pots and check the roots, looking for small white fleshy ones. If there are none there, it is probably due to vine weevil grubs. Wash all the soil off the roots and repot. He also saws off one third of the roots.*
- *To take softwood cuttings, cut a small shoot just below a leaf node and take the bottom leaves off. He finds that they grow well in 6-space seed modules, in ordinary compost without any hormone rooting powder Place in a warm place with plenty of light.*
- *Avoid botrytis by keeping space between cuttings and plants. Keep checking them for signs.*
- *Treat aphids with SB Plant invigorator which also acts as a foliar feed.*
- *Avoid rust by keeping the greenhouse door closed on windy days, as it is carried by wind. Spray with a fungicide if you do get it.*

Things to note

1. Our next meeting is on the **7th June** "**Light-hearted look at life and garden**" by Mel Trouserpress
This will be held over Zoom.
2. **Trading Hut** – Now open Sundays from 11-12 noon.
Except for 9th May when it will be 11:30 to 12:30
3. **Member's articles.** See in newsletter for more details.
4. June photo competition will be "**Summer has arrived at last in the Garden**" I will remind you all a week before.
5. May photo competition results are on the web and enclosed in this newsletter.

- *Avoid red spider mite by keeping up humidity in the greenhouse. Wet the floor.*
- *Hardwood cuttings can be made in the autumn by taking a 6 inch cutting just below a leaf node for the soil end and just above a leaf node at the top end.*
- *Feed once a week in the growing season. He uses Chempak 3.*
- *For best results in pots and hanging baskets he uses slabs of farmed moss such as Big Moss which soaks up and retains water, to act like swell gel.*
- *If the plants start to look sad, check the compost and only water if needed. They may just need a spell in the shade out of the sun in order to recover.*

For showing fuchsias:

- Start spraying for re-growth in January and once the new shoots appear, turn regularly for even growth.
- You can put several young plants in one pot, to create an effect.
- Pinch out the growing tips of every two pairs of leaves.
- Count back the number of days from the show you want to enter. For doubles (eight petals), pinch out 80 days before. For semi-doubles (six petals), it's 70 days and for singles (four petals), it's 60. For species fuchsias, it's longer at 110 days.
- To dome up the growth, use a plastic peg on an outside leaf to weigh that stem down in order to create more lushness on the inside.
- 14 days before the show, snip off any open blooms, as they will be spent by show day.

For hardy fuchsias (the ones that you can plant in the garden):

- *If vine weevils become a problem, use a proprietary product that you water in.*
- *Fuchsia gall mite can leave the leaves with a burnt look. The only thing you can do is to cut the bush by half and place the affected part in a plastic bin bag and place in your general bin. Do not put in the garden waste bin.*
- *Cut back hardy fuchsias in April to encourage new growth and keep them in shape. They can be sprayed too to encourage new growth.*
- *Leaf mould makes good mulch and protects the plant from frost in the winter.*
- *Most fuchsias like dappled shade. White varieties will keep their white colour if planted in full shade.*

Some good varieties:

He mentioned many but Popsi Girl and Time after Time are good for hanging pots and baskets. Fantasia holds its flowers upwards. Gillian Althea and Sophie Rose are among his favourites. Mini Rose has two flowers per node, rather than one which is the usual. Elma is a compact, bushy hardy variety.

Julia Goodall Publicity Secretary

Topical Tip – May 2021

Topical Tip – May 2021

‘O to be in England now that April’s here.’

When Robert Browning wrote these lines, he would not have been expecting to look out of his bedroom window and see a couple of centimetres of snow. This is what happened to me and indeed many of you experienced similar conditions when you looked out on to your garden on April 12th!



I understand that cricket was cancelled at Headingley because the Yorkshire ground was covered with snow. However, it is worth remembering that on the 2nd of June 1975, cricket was also cancelled by snow – this time at Worcester. Perhaps, like me, you also remember 1975 being one of the hottest summers on record – only to be eclipsed the following year by an even hotter summer. Perhaps we are, after all in for another scorcher!

With the lovely weather we experienced following that strange snowfall in April, there is always a temptation to plant out tender bedding plants at the beginning of May. Hopefully, by then, we may have seen the last of the frosts – but don’t count on it, as spring may well have a sting in its tail! Earlier this year I mentioned how useful it is to know the pH of your garden soil.

When visiting Squires Garden Centre at Heathlands recently, I saw there was a notice informing customers that they could bring in a sample of their garden soil where it would be tested to ascertain the pH – and that is for FREE. Now that is a good tip – something for nothing!

Ian Gillott

Club Facebook Group

Don’t forget our Facebook group! It is a private group which means that only club members can join and post. You can join it at: www.facebook.com/groups/207934410581605/ You will need to first read and agree to the group guidelines. We really would like more members in this group to make it a lively forum. We are looking for gardening related posts and club news.

Julia Goodall – (Publicity Secretary)

RHS card

Our club has a RHS Card.

It enables two people to gain entry to all RHS gardens throughout the country (this includes RHS Bridgewater from Sept).

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.

Monthly Competition Results

Thank you to the thirteen members who submitted photographs. Below are the top four places. As you will see by the scores, it was very close for the runner ups.



1st with 37 points
Roland Cundy



Joint 2nd with 20 points
Julia Little



Joint 2nd with 20 points
Sylvia Hawes



3rd with 18 points
Geoff Sutton



Joint 4th with 17 points
Kris Turner



Joint 4th with 17 points
Pauline MacBrayne

By the way, I would like to thank the person who voted for entrant 10 (it was mine). Even though they placed it third, it saved me from receiving nul point (I still came last). Many thanks – Dick

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. If you would like to pay your voluntary subs at the Trading Hut then Stuart will be willing to take your details etc.

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

Member's email

Do you remember in the last newsletter, one of our members mentioned a tip he had found on an American website about aspirin and tomatoes? He asked in his article for Ian Gillott's opinion on this. This is what Ian had to say:

"There have been several papers published on the use of salicylic acid used as a fungicide.

In laboratory experiments, it has been shown to have an effect on some fungus diseases. Much of the work was done in America and Egypt.

At the rate of 5mg/ml it has been shown to have some effect on rusts, *penicillium* and *fusarium*.

No effect was observed on *phytophthora infestans* (potato blight) which is the main disease of tomatoes late in the season.

The use of salicylic acid has never been developed commercially for several reasons:

- 1) Although widely available as aspirin, it would prove to be very expensive to apply on a commercial scale
- 2) If it were to be used as a fungicide it would have to go through a full registration process which would cost many thousands of pounds. As it exists as a generic material, it would not be possible to patent it therefore any organisation would have access to any date available. so it would not be a commercial proposition for any company to invest in.

I am sure you are aware that it is illegal to use a material as a fungicide unless a full approval is issued for the use of a substance when applied to a horticultural or agricultural crop.

However, as you would be using it as a stimulant - this would be outside the law! If you use it again this year, leave one plant untreated so that you can notice any obvious difference in disease levels.

One thing is certain Francis, your plants won't get a headache!!"

Ian Gillott

Member's email

Foxy Business.

Adjacent to our bungalow is a grass verge that runs between the road and the footpath. There used to be an almond tree in the verge which flowered every year and produced a few impenetrable nuts. One day it got tired of standing upright and decided to lay prone on the road snapping its stem off at ground level. The council were duly informed and the arboreal funeral directors came and removed the body, or to be more accurate the trunk.

From the stump left in the ground grew some shoots, which I hoped would be a new almond tree. So, I nurtured the shoots, staking the strongest and pruning out any side shoots until eventually there was a ten foot tall tree.

It soon became apparent that what had grown was not an almond tree. This is an unprepossessing tree. A nonentity of a tree. An ingrate of a tree. A lazy tree.

Not for this tree the frothy spring blossom of the Japanese cherry trees or the fiery coloured leaves of the New England maples. This tree just managed small dirty green leaves and nothing else. It can't even be bothered to keep its leaves during winter but divests itself of them at the first sign of autumn.

This tree sulks.

Or maybe I am being too harsh, perhaps it is grieving for its almond friend who it was attached to for so many years. To cheer it up I planted daffodil bulbs around its base. These were either surplus from the garden or were relocated recalcitrant bulbs, which like the tree, refused to flower.

Flushed with the success of the daff display, I spent my pocket money on some crocus bulbs which were planted in the grass next to the daffs. They didn't do as well as I had hoped and needed replenishing every year. Two years ago, I decided to abandon the crocuses and spent my pocket money on aniseed balls and sherbet dabs instead.



Next to the tree in the footpath is an inspection cover (manhole cover in old money). In March this year it over-flowed and a pond of grey water formed on the footpath and over the grass verge. The water company man was summoned, cleared the roots blocking the pipes and went away contented. That night the foxes arrived and began excavating all around the tree, throwing earth, grass and daffodil bulbs over the road and footpath. I filled the holes, replaced the bulbs and grass and swept the road and footpath. But the foxes returned night after night and so I have decided to delegate the problem to the council. Having spent 14 years at war with worms I have no wish to do battle with foxes.

PS. Yes, clever logs, I do know that crocus have corms not bulbs. I just couldn't think of it during the literary flow. Lockdown + Old age etc.

War of Worms – The Finale

The frosts and snow we have had this year has achieved in a month, what I and the world's agro-chemical companies failed to do in 14 years.

The worms have departed from my lawn.

Having scarified it and applied a top dressing I now have to overseed it with lawn seed to match my original turf which, you may recall, came from Yorkshire, on a Tuesday in a refrigerated lorry!

Maurice May

Member's email

I was going to send a 'Get well' card to a member who was in Wokingham Hospital. I called the hospital to make sure the person was still there and explained why I was calling.

To my pleasant surprise, they told me about a service they were providing through emails.

You can email messagetoalovedone@berkshire.nhs.uk giving the name of the patient in the subject and a message. They would then print the email out and pass it to the person to read.

What a great service.

Dick

Member's email

For those of you who prefer using old money, here are two invoices from a nursery in Exeter. Our son came across these when clearing out a house he had bought. Standard apple Bramley for 25 bob (for those youngsters among you - £1.25p), Victoria Plum tree 22/6 (£1.12½p) Imagine stocking a whole orchard for £30. By the way, our son had to ask us what 17/6 meant!!

TELEGRAMS: BRIDGET, EXETER

ST. BRIDGET NURSERIES
EXETER

ALL COMMUNICATIONS TO
HEAD OFFICE & NURSERY
OLD RYDON LANE
EXETER

Som.

No.S 6938 / 063662

YOUR ORDER No.	HGH/	DISPATCHED PER	Rail	DATE			
				6. 3. 63.			
1					Std. Prunus Kansan.	@ 30/-	1 10 -
1					" " Dulcis.	@ 25/-	1 5 -
1					" Pyrus John Downie.	@ 27/6	1 7 6
1					" Salix Babylonica aurea.	@ 21/-	1 1 -
2					Cupressus Stewartii 2 - 2ft.	21/-	2 2 -
1 Doz.					Escallonia Pride of Donard.	@ 20/6	2 10 -
1					Std. Apple Bramley.	@ 25/-	1 5 -
1					" Plus Victoria.	@ 22/6	1 2 6
1					" Laxton Superb. 4ft.	@ 22/6	1 2 6
1					Bush Apple Laxton Superb.	@ 16/6	16 6
1					" " American Mothas.	@ 16/6	16 6
1					" " Blenheim.	@ 16/6	16 6
1					" " Charles Ross.	@ 16/6	16 6
1					" " Cox's Orange Pippin.	@ 16/6	16 6
1					" " Ellison's Orange.	@ 16/6	16 6
1					" " James Grieve.	@ 16/6	16 6
							9 16 -
					DELIVERY/PACKING & CARRIAGE		1 5 6
					RETURNABLE EMPTIES		
FOR TERMS, CONDITIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS SEE REVERSE							
2618	PN/				TOTAL £		30 12 6

3. January 63

IMPORTANT - CHEQUES ACT, 1957
To facilitate the clearing of your Account, PLEASE DETACH AND RETURN THIS SLIP with your Remittance.
No Receipt will be issued for payment by Cheque unless requested.

Name _____
Address _____

No.S 6938 / 063662

TELEPHONES: TOPHAM 3673/4
TELEGRAMS: BRIDGET, EXETER

INVOICE

Bush Nurseries: CLYDE ST. PARK, No. EXETER
and EXETER BY-PASS

**ST. BRIDGET NURSERIES
EXETER**

ALL COMMUNICATIONS TO
HEAD OFFICE & NURSERY
OLD RYDON LANE
EXETER



Williton.

No.S 6940 /

YOUR ORDER No. **HGH/** DISPATCHED PER **Rail** DATE **6. 3. 63.**

			90/- Per 100		
60	Raspberry Malling Promise.	1 Doz. @	22/6	2	14 -
1	Thornless Logan.	@	8/-		8 -
2	Red Currants. Loxton's No. 1. (2 year available only.)	Each @	4/-		8 -
1 Doz.	Black Currant Seabrook's Black.	Each @	34/c	1	1 -
1	Bush Pear Conference.	@	17/6		17 6
1	" " Doyenne du Comice.	@	17/6		17 6
1	" " Pitmaston Duchess.	@	17/6		17 6
1	" " Winter Nellis	@	17/6		17 6
1	" " Santa Claus.	@	17/6		17 6
1	Bush Cherry White Heart.	@	17/6		17 6

If only we could buy at these prices now.
Did you note the date – 6th March 1963 (what were you doing then?)

Sylvia Hawes

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).

Member's email



Lynn Potts

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