

Kingswood, Walton and Tadworth Horticultural Society

Early Summer
2022 Newsletter



This is the second of your 2022 newsletters.

Chairman's Jottings

Well! We have just come through the driest April in 20 years according to the Weather Man, but this last week or so we have had a few little sprinkles of lovely rain.

Everything seems to be late this year although we have had a few very vicious storms in March-April, we had the March winds but not the April showers.

All the Dahlias are planted with good growing points, I have not taken any cuttings to form new plants but have divided some of the large tubers and hope to encourage other people into growing dahlias, the professionals say you get better blooms from cuttings but you would need a professional eye to tell the difference. The most important thing is to make sure they have enough water as the tuber is like a potato, 80% is made up of water, then staking and disbudding to get great blooms. I trust all the dahlia enthusiasts will attend the outing to Withypitts Dahlias® growing area in August.

My sweet peas are putting on strong halms and lots of flower buds, they have been fed with fish blood and bone and sulphate of ammonia. Fingers crossed for a few nice vases, all other veg etc, are looking good, hopefully the weather is kind and nice gentle rain at night.

Josie and I were very impressed with the lovely selection of bedding plants and shrubs at Buckland Nurseries, with our 10% discount for members and the good advice from David Hogg we cannot go wrong.

Happy gardening, see you at the shows.

Graeme

Dates for your 2022 Diary

Gardeners Delight
25th/26th June 2022

Early Summer Show
2nd July 2022

Wisley Coach Trip
14th July 2022
(See page 3)

Withypitts Dahlia Visit
18th August 2022
(See page 2)

Late Summer Show
10th September 2022

Annual General Meeting and Talk

10th August 2022

Church Hall of Christchurch

United Reformed Church

Walton on the Hill at 7.30 pm.

The Committee are mindful that many members do not wish to go out on cold November evenings so we have scheduled the AGM for an evening in August followed by a talk about the National Garden Scheme. The Societies financial year end will need to be amended so that accounts can be presented. Everyone welcome, the more the merrier.

Talk on Dahlias by Richard Ramsey

On an unseasonably cold Thursday evening at the end of March, Richard Ramsey and his wife Hazel entertained 30 or so members on a talk about Withypitts Dahlias® Limited, a renowned grower based in Turners Hill. Richard has appeared on Gardeners' World several times in the past. He covered the history of Withypitts, how to look after, propagate, different types, predators and bugs affecting dahlias. He even bought a few dahlia tubers to sell. A very enjoyable first talk for the society in a number of years.

We are organising a visit to Richard's nursery (where he is opening just for our group) on 18th August to see the dahlias in their full glory. The visit will start at 11 am and last about 1 – 1 ½ hours. This will be a self-drive outing and if you are interested, please let us know as we have committed to inform Richard of the number attending. In addition, if you are able to offer a lift to someone else, please also let us know. The cost will be £5 per person and non-members are welcome.

In the afternoon both Wakehurst Place and Borde Hill are quite close so you may wish to consider visiting one of these gardens.

In addition, we may organise a 2nd talk probably at the beginning of next year as demand this time around exceeded the seating capacity of the meeting hall. Maximum 30 attendees



Cathy and David

Flower Arranging Workshop



On a lovely sunny afternoon in the middle of April we ran a flower arranging workshop. It was well attended, and we were delighted to have Lynis Williams, an active member of the Ashted Flower Arranging group, come to spend the afternoon with us, to demonstrate how to create simple flower arrangements.

She started by asking us to introduce ourselves and to state our favourite flower. A tricky question for garden lovers. The rose, not unexpectedly, came out favourite. Lynis then demonstrated how to create a round table arrangement, first by adding the foliage, followed by adding flowers. Then everyone had a go. Lynis gave us all tips and great encouragement. Most members had brought flowers and foliage from their own gardens, and it was interesting to see how different every arrangement was. Lynis gave us hints on different ways to display our arrangements. We then went on to create an

arrangement in a mug. The two hours flew by and at the end everyone hopefully felt they had gained more knowledge of the subject and had fun.

Finally, Lynis produced what appeared to be a glass tankard of frothy beer to say 'cheers'! It was in fact a glass filled with brown pebbles and topped with white chrysanthemums.

Lynis went to a great deal of trouble to prepare for the afternoon, and we were very pleased to give her a donation to her flower groups chosen charity, MND.

We do hope that some more members will be encouraged to 'have a go' and enter the Flower Arranging section at future shows.

The society hope to hold another workshop later in the year.

Jasmine

Visit to Wisley by coach

Each year, the Society is permitted by the RHS to visit one of its gardens. For 2022, we have agreed a visit to Wisley on **14th July** and we have arranged to hire a coach for 36. If you are not a member of RHS this is a superb opportunity to visit their 'flagship' garden which has been significantly changed over the last two to three years. As this will be a small coach we will operate on a 'first come first served' and will be open to KWTHS members and friends. The charge will be £10 for members and £12 for friends with payment to be taken on the day.

We will aim to leave Walton Ponds at 10 am, Tadworth Bridge at 10.05am and Lower Kingswood at 10.10 am with a view of arriving at Wisley about 10.45am. We would aim to leave Wisley at 3.30pm

THERE ARE STILL PLACES AVAILABLE SO IF YOU WISH TO RESERVE A PLACE, please

contact Cathy and David (kwkst@btinternet.com or 020 8660 9242, 07531 822547, 07932 899757).

For those with mobility issues, we are able to reserve mobility scooter at Wisley so please let us know in advance if one will be required, they have 8 available.

The Sociable Gardeners Group 2022

If you would like to join, please contact Jasmine on 01737 814291 or email jasmine.heath@btinternet.com

Jasmine

Gardeners Delight 2022

A full list of the gardens that will be open is shown on the last page.

Spring Show

A bright sunny spring day saw the first full show in the last 2 years, it felt a little strange and certainly took a little while to get back into the flow as it was difficult to remember exactly how everything should run.

20 exhibitors provided a wonderful selection of flowers, domestic, decorative, craft and photography which looked lovely in the hall and gave the judges plenty to consider. The daffodils looked stunning, which was surprising considering the changeable weather that we have had.

Numbers were slightly down, pleasing though for the 1st show and hopefully for the next show on 2nd July we will be able to encourage a few more people to start showing again or even having a go for the first time.

A couple of exhibitors need special mention especially the junior entries by Tom and Ella Pitman and Bonnie Stevens. The craft entries by Jenny Page and Jannette Walls and the golden wedding arrangement by Linda Bellamy although

it would be nice to see more entries in the decorative section.

Visitor numbers were 43 members and 41 non-members during the afternoon enjoying the cakes, plant sales, raffles and flowers on show. We raised £41 in door receipts and £146.60 for the teas and cakes however with the associated costs of the Show we had a slight loss. Thanks to all of the helpers, it was much appreciated. Winners and cups as follow:

John Grant Memorial Trophy awarded for the best exhibit in the show – John Barlow and Linda Rowles

Kemp Narcissi Cup awarded for the most points in the Narcissi Classes, excluding the nominated varieties – Pat Webster

Spring Cup awarded for the most points in the nominated Narcissi Classes – Shirley Basset

Spring Floral Cup awarded for the most points gained in the Decorative Section – Linda Bellamy.

E. Bonsor Challenge Cup awarded for the most points in the Domestic Section – Jasmine Heath. (Hopefully everyone knows who the Bonsor family were).

Anne likes to have a minimum of 10 different cakes for the Shows and unfortunately over the last couple of years we have lost a few of our regular bakers. If anyone would be prepared to bake for a Show would they please contact Anne on 01737 212519 or annebance3@gmail.com.

Jan Allum

It is with great sadness that we have to report the death of Jan Allum. Jan was a very kind and considerate friend. I remember so well thirty-five years ago when I was grieving for my husband, she helped me to pick myself up and start again.

When I first met her, she was working in a nursing home in Kingswood. Soon after she joined our team of district nurses at Tattenham Corner. She was bright and cheerful, treating her patients with kindness and respect. Always willing to go the extra mile or to stop and have a chat and a cup of tea if she wasn't too busy. When a computer was installed in the office most of us did not have a clue. We had a few rushed lessons and were left to get on with it. Jan hated the computer and I hated taking blood. So, I did her computer work and she went out and took bloods for me. They were happy days and Jan was very much part of them.

Jan was also a member of the Horticultural committee for many years together with Joan Timpson and Eleanor Schulz and between them they kept us all in order. She and Clive, her Husband, opened their lovely garden in Walton for our spring coffee mornings. We sold lots of bedding plants in the days before garden centres and it was a very enjoyable social event. Those were great days when life went a little slower.

Our thoughts are with her husband, Clive.

Joan Timpson and Keith Lewis

My Garden by Keith Lewis (part 6)

Sorry, you have to wait until the next newsletter!

Subscriptions and Spring Show

We are pleased to tell you that there are currently 225 members of the Society. We are pleased to welcome Joanna Cartwright, Lisa Griffin, Nancy Kooyman, Julie Oakley, Lynne Petterson, Rowena Richardson and Jackie Stone as new members.

The Committee recently discussed ways of encouraging new members in view of the number of developments in the area and whilst we can put adverts in the local publications following discussions with our printers, who work with a number of organisations, we concluded that the best way to encourage new members was by

'word of mouth'. If you have any neighbours who are keen gardeners could we please encourage you to ask them if they wish to become members. Ask them to contact Cathy and David at 101 Foxley Lane, Purley, CR8 3HQ for more information or look on our newly updated website.

If anyone has any old gardening books or tools that they wish to donate to the Society, we would be happy to sell these at our Shows.

Tarragon

Tarragon is from the family Asteraceae. It is a Herbaceous Perennial with aromatic, long narrow smooth, green leaves that have an anise flavour. Its flavour promotes appetite and complements so many dishes; such as chicken, veal, fish, stuffed tomatoes and, of course, it is the main ingredient in sauce bearnaise and the traditional ingredient of Fines Herbs. Its name, *Dracunulus*, means 'little dragon', which could be the result of the shape of its roots or, as we believe, its fiery flavour. In ancient times the mixed juices of Tarragon and Fennel made a favourite drink for the Kings of India. There is also a story that Henry VIII divorced Catherine of Aragon for her reckless use of Tarragon.

Is tarragon easy to grow and how do we get best results?

Only the Russian and wild varieties produce viable seed. A lot of growers are propagating it and selling it as French Tarragon. The taste is not comparable, the Russian Tarragon tastes like '*upper class grass*'. Both French and Russian Tarragon can be propagated by cuttings from both growing tips or roots in spring.

French Tarragon is the more tender of the two; it grows best in a warm, dry position and will need protection in winter. The plant should be renewed every three years as the flavour can deteriorate with age.

Tarragon grows well in containers. As it produces rhizomes, choose a container that gives it room to grow so it will not become pot bound. Makes sure the plant is watered but note that it hates being over wet. Keep foliar feed to a minimum as it effects the flavour, too much feed makes fleshy leaves with poor flavour.

In winter, Tarragon dies back into the ground. You should protect it and prevent it from getting over wet. It is the wet that kills not the cold. If it is in a container, move it into a cool, frost-free environment.

For those without a garden or outdoor space can it be grown in a pot on a windowsill inside the home?

Herbs, in general, prefer to be grown outside but some of them can be grown indoors if you provide them with the correct conditions. Unfortunately, French Tarragon is not one of them.

When is French Tarragon ready to pick and eat?

Tarragon can be picked as soon as it appears. At the start of the season pick sparingly so it has a chance to grow. You can pick the leaves from early Spring to early Autumn. The flavour varies throughout the season, with sweetest anise flavour in early spring, so this is the best time to make Tarragon vinegar. In summer the flavour becomes more intense with a slightly bitter anise flavour. This is the best time for longer cooking such as in baking or with roasts.

Coffee and gardening.

Unless you're drinking a cup in the potting shed it's an unusual combination, but the link goes much further than that. If you're a coffee enthusiast with green fingers, then your beverage of choice could also be a fantastic asset to your garden.

Used coffee grounds (leftover from using a cafetiere, filter or industrial coffee machine)

contain a substantial amount of nitrogen, as well as potassium and phosphorus. These properties make them perfect for garden activities such as composting. It's an innovative way to make use of something that would've otherwise ended up in a landfill.

1. Slow-release fertiliser

Coffee grounds have a varied amount of essential nutrients in each batch, but they all contain nitrogen, potassium and phosphorus alongside micronutrients. Plants such as carrots, azaleas and roses would appreciate a nice boost from coffee grounds. However, tomatoes do not like the grounds.

To use coffee compost, simply sprinkle the grounds directly onto your soil and lightly rake it in. Coffee grounds add organic material to the soil, helping water retention, aeration and drainage. Leftover diluted coffee can create a liquid plant fertiliser too. Simply mix two cups of brewed coffee grounds with five gallons of water in a bucket overnight.

2. Feed your worms

If you practice vermicomposting with a worm bin, coffee grounds are a must as worms love them. For a small bin, add a cup of grounds per week to feed their addiction. Avoid adding too much at once because the acidity could negatively impact your worms. Paper coffee filters can even go in too.

3. Deter slugs and snails

Coffee grounds are a great repellent for slugs and snails. Simply spread the grounds around vulnerable plants to create a barrier against the insects. Research shows that caffeine is effective in repelling slugs and snails when applied to foliage or the growing medium of plants. This is because of the naturally abrasive properties of coffee: soft critters tend to avoid rough surfaces.

4. Add to compost

Good compost contains a mixture of 'brown' and 'green' ingredients. Brown materials such as dried leaves, sawdust and newspaper bring carbon to the mix. Green materials such as tea leaves and grass clippings offer nitrogen and protein. (Our rule of thumb is to have a 4:1 ratio of brown to green compost material). Compost is a great way to make use of something that would've ended up in landfill. Coffee grounds, paper filter included, fall into the green category which means they are rich in nitrogen at approximately 1.45%. They also contain magnesium, potassium and other trace minerals.

5. Mulch

Mulch is helpful in reducing weed growth and keeping soil moist. Coffee grounds work best as mulch when mixed with other organic matter such as leaf mould. The combination will reduce the risk of clumps forming which can become a barrier to water and suppress the growth of your plants. As plants could be sensitive to the caffeine in the grounds, avoid creating a thick layer. Using a mix of particle sizes will promote good structure.

Book Review

Finding good books to encourage children's interest in gardening and nature is always a challenge

RHS Nature a Magical Journey Through the Year by Sara Conway and illustrated by Lee Foster Wilson

This is a delight of a book. It is a colourful, well written and a thoughtful journey through the seasons highlighting the wonders that each phase of the year brings. Sara encourages us to look, notice and observe. She tells us what is happening and why. The writing is elegant and leans towards narrative poetry at times, this is not your run of the mill 'there is a bird, there is a flower' type of book.

Towards the end of the book there is a section of gardens of the world with a few interesting examples. I admit to not really seeing how this part of the book fits with the rest, but if it encourages people to go and find a garden then I am all for it. There is also a section encouraging you to interact specifically with nature: such as create a terrarium, build a bird feeder or get out and cycle more (and recycle too).

I have to admit I am not certain what age group this book is aimed at. I want to say it is not for young children except I could imagine myself reading sections aloud to children. I do not think I would give it to my granny, but maybe I would give it to parents of young children and try and influence them all through it by stealth. It is a lovely book and a worthy gift to probably the younger end of the spectrum.

RHS Nature: A Magical Journey Through the Year by Sara Conway available in all good bookshops or on Amazon for £10.00

Three Cheese and Chard Tart

Serves: 4-6

PREP TIME: 30 MIN COOK TIME: 30 MIN TOTAL TIME: 1 HOUR

A hearty vegetarian centrepiece filled with chard, feta, cheddar and parmesan. Simpler than a shortcrust quiche, the filo base in this chard tart also brings welcome crunch to accompany the pillowy savoury custard filling.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 tbsp olive oil, plus extra for brushing
- 700g chard, leaves and stems separated and finely shredded
- 2 eggs
- 2 egg yolks
- 100ml double cream

- 100g feta
- 50g cheddar, grated
- 55g parmesan, grated
- 5 sheets filo pastry

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Pre-heat the oven to 180C.
2. Warm the olive oil in a large frying pan. Sweat the chard stems for 2 minutes in the oil then stir in the leaves and cook for 5 minutes until wilted.
3. In a large bowl, whisk together the eggs, yolks and cream and season generously. Crumble in the feta. Add the cheddar, 30g of parmesan and the wilted chard then stir to combine.
4. Brush an oven-proof dish with some oil. Use a tart tatin dish, but a shallow, loose-bottomed cake tin is perfect if you want to serve your tart 'freestanding'. Line the dish with a sheet of filo, leaving any extra overhanging. Brush with oil then place another sheet on top of the first at a 90-degree angle. Repeat with the remaining sheets, making sure the dish is completely sealed. Pour the tart filling into the filo base then sprinkle with the remaining parmesan over the top. Scrunch the overhanging pastry up around the sides of the tart and brush with more oil.
5. Bake for 30 minutes, turning half way. You can take it straight to the table if you are serving it in the baking dish, but give it 10 minutes to firm up before you release it if you're going for the showier un-dished option. It's just lovely at room temperature too.

Dandelions - I have a few, but then again....



Of course, some plants are very reliable, you know that they will be there, doing their thing, year after year and this reliability is celebrated. We need this level of stability and predictability in our gardening world. They reflect the rhythm by which the rest of the plants are hopefully dancing to. Even when that predictability makes me sigh a little, such as the emergence of the annual and perennial weeds that tell me there is a lot of weeding to do. The first flowers on the dandelions are sign that the growing season is well and truly upon us. You have to admire their resilience and cheek, their beauty and their attractiveness to pollinators.

Dandelions (*Taraxacum officinale*) must be the best players of hide and seek in the garden, they can hide in plain sight until the moment they start to flower. It is a skill, a real skill. Even when they flower, you can sometimes carefully weed around them before you realise that I was meant to be removing them. You can remove them from the flower borders but they run rampant in the Wild Garden and even in the formal lawns for all I care. You can mow them in the formal lawns but generally ignore them. For what is a weed but a plant in the wrong place. Of course, this means that dandelions pop up in the flower borders. You can even grumble about them sometimes, but generally just put up with them. They smile, they are cheerful and did I mention that bees love them?

They are also edible, well, pretty much edible all apart from the stems apparently. Beware though if you do decide to have a munch as they are known as 'wet the bed' for a reason, they are used as a diuretic.

You can use their leaves in salads, you can grind their roots to make coffee, they are a very useful little plant. A dandelion is what is known as an acquired taste!

Apparently, the dandelion gets its common name from the French 'dents de lion' or lion's teeth, which relates to the shape of the foliage. The seed head, which is a wonderful sphere of seeds attached to their own parachute that will fly in the breeze to find where it will set roots and grow, is also known as a dandelion clock. Apparently (allegedly) if you blow the seeds the number of seeds left attached are the number of years you have left to live (cheerful!) They are one of the most perfect creations when the clock is still pristine just before a breeze breaks it up releasing the seeds like tiny spinning parasols across the garden. It was a favourite thing as a child to blow the seeds to make a wish and to watch them fly away. This was usually to the tune of my parents admonishing me (gently) saying that each seed would germinate as I spread them around the garden. I am pretty sure they were right.

So, smile at the dandelions, like most plants they are more than just what they appear superficially. When you think about them, start singing the song of the lion from the Wizard of Oz, who was just a dandy lion. You see the bees enjoying them or just pull off the heads to try and reduce the seeds (pull the heads off the dandelions, not the bees).

Why grow dahlias?

When you receive your tubers, it will be too cold to plant them straight out so pot them up into a 3-litre pot using some good multi-purpose potting_

compost. Place in a light and frost-free place, keeping the compost just moist and grow on until all danger of frost has passed (normally by the end of May). If you've no space to grow potted plants, wait until mid-May to plant directly outside.

When your plants have developed three true pairs of leaves, pinching the growing tips to encourage lots of bushy growth and stop plants becoming leggy and unproductive. Pinching out will help your plants to develop more side shoots, which in turn will lead to more flowers.

Plant out your dahlias into their final positions once all danger of frosts has passed. They love lots of natural light, so plant in a sunny position, ideally close to a little shelter, such as a wall, fence, or hedge. Dahlias are tolerant of most soil types, but will perform best if planted in moist, rich, and free draining soil. If your soil is a little heavy, dig in plenty of well-rotted manure or other organic matter to help lighten it.

Dahlias are brilliant for growing in large pots and containers where they will provide some height as well as plenty of colour. Just remember to keep well-watered and fed.

Dahlias like plenty of water, and to get the best results, plenty of food too. In the early stages, once planted out, use a feed rich in nitrogen to help develop plenty of leafy growth. Do this once a week up until the middle of June. After this time, switch to a high potassium-based fertiliser, such as a tomato food, and continue feeding weekly to around the end of September.

Depending on the height of your plants, they might need staking to give some extra support. A bamboo cane against the plant or a tepee of twigs should the job well enough.

Deadhead regularly to keep the flowers coming – this is the one most important thing you can do to ensure you have flowers through to the first frosts. Also, cut plenty of blooms to enjoy inside

– the more you pick, the more flowers you'll have!

As dahlias are not frost hardy, it's normally best to lift and store tubers over winter. Once the first frost has blackened the foliage, with a fork, lift each tuber and brush the soil away from the roots. Cut back the stems and place upside down, allowing any moisture to drain away freely and naturally. Once dry, wrap in newspaper or pack them in dry sand or compost and place somewhere dry and frost free.

In warmer parts of the country, or areas which are particularly sheltered and if the soil is well-drained, it may be possible to leave tubers in the ground. A good layer of **mulch**, well-rotted manure, straw, or garden compost will help to protect tubers from light frosts.

One last point – **watch out for slugs!**

This edition's poem

Stay Young with me

When my back is too old to bend,
When my knees are too old to knee,
When my hands are too old to tend,
And fingers far too old to feel,
When my ears will not hear again,
Leaves moving or the sound of rain,
When my eyes are too old to see,
The apple orchards ecstasy,
O Memory!

Stay Young with me.

Spinach is good for you

If my personal survival
Depends on the arrival
Of this medicinal mess,
(For which I couldn't care less),
Then all I can say is
I prefer to pass away – whizz!!
Yet it is quite true

Spinach is good for you.
It purifies the blood -
And looks like green mud.

2022 Committee

Chair - Graeme Boast (01737 832395)
gboast@gboast.co.uk

Hon Secretary – Keith Lewis (01737 210707)

Hon Treasurer – Ian Garrett (01737 362610)
lc_garrett@hotmail.com

Membership Secretaries – David Dunning and
Cathy Varney (0208 660 9242) kwths@btinternet.com

Sociable Gardeners and Minute Secretary – Jasmine
Heath (01737 814291) Jasmine.Heath@btinternet.com

Jennie Page

Lesley Milne

Anne Bance

KINGSWOOD, WALTON & TADWORTH HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY
PROUDLY PRESENTS

A GARDENERS DELIGHT

2pm – 6pm on both
SATURDAY 25th JUNE

2022

and

2022

SUNDAY 26th JUNE

3 Nyefield Park, Walton *NEW*	KT20 7QR	Saturday	<i>Teas</i>
Cramond, Chequers Lane *NEW*	KT20 7QD	Saturday	
Mellows, Lothian Wood	KT20 5DQ	Sat &Sun	<i>Plants</i>
Meon House, Meon Close	KT20 5DN	Sunday	<i>Teas</i>
Rozel, Tadworth Street	KT20 5RG	Sat &Sun	<i>Teas</i>
The Firs, The Hoppety	KT20 5RQ	Sat &Sun	<i>Ices</i>
36 Tadorne Road	KT20 5TF	Sunday	
128 Brighton Road	KT20 6AQ	Sat &Sun	<i>Teas</i>
101 Foxley Lane	CR8 3HQ	Sat &Sun	<i>Plants</i>