

CSGGA Newsletter

November 2023



RHS Affiliated Membership Number: 10570237

Inside this Issue

- Meeting Report November
- M's Monthly Action Diary
- Green Gardening Tip of the Month
- Holiday to North Wales and RHS Bridgewater
- Christmas Party
- CSGGA Christmas Tree
- Holiday to Wales and Cheshire
-

Practical Wildlife Gardening Dr Steve Head

Steve took us on a very interesting journey through his Top Tips for wildlife gardening at the last meeting. Did you know that British gardens are more diverse than any other part of the UK and have more species than the Rainforest? You can find around 2,200 species of insects in a garden!

Gardens have numerous functions, of which wildlife is only one and there is a balance to be had. Whilst there may be conflicts between gardeners and wildlife, he pointed out that any garden is better for wildlife than intensive farming (he doesn't blame farmers, rather the policies that have led to this situation).

His Top Tips include:

If you're encouraging pollinators, avoid highly cultivated flowers as they don't provide pollen and nectar. Aim to grow flowers throughout the year, eg, aubretia and wallflowers in spring, lavender, thyme and thistle in summer, chrysanthemums, hebes and sedum spectabile in autumn, and winter aconite, viburnum, witch hazel and mahonia in winter, as well as native snowdrops. Pollinators will come out in late winter/early spring.

Grow a variety of trees and shrubs. Mature trees are very good homes for wildlife but a mixed species hedge can replace trees in a small garden.

Have a pond or water of some sort and build an open compost heap. Provide food and water for birds. Steve suggested five days' worth in feeders, so you can regularly clean them to avoid disease.

Relax - don't feel your garden must be tidy everywhere as wildlife will love the untidy areas, for example, where there is a pile of logs. Allow a patch of grass to grow long and, if you want a wildflower patch, consider wildlife turf as an easy option, although this can be expensive.

Garden sustainably – no chemicals/pesticides, and no peat.

If you want to learn more, the Wildlife Gardening Forum website is a great place to start, with a number of 'how to' guides and further information, at <http://www.wlwf.org/>

www.csgga.org



Finally, he encouraged us to take the time to watch and enjoy the wonderful wildlife we have in our gardens.

Steve was an excellent speaker. He was entertaining and informative and clearly very knowledgeable. We will be looking to invite him back to speak on another topic in due course.

Eleanor O'Connor

A scanned copy of the handout Steve gave us at the meeting is attached or can be found on our [website](#).

Monthly Cup Winner



Caroline Jackson won the monthly cup with her peace lily. Caroline returned from an extended holiday in Namibia to find a rather sad looking plant (left) but with some TLC and the power of water, she revived it and won the cup this month! (right)



Please remember to bring anything that you have grown that pleases you and/or you think will be of interest to other members. Flower arrangements, using home grown materials only, many be entered. Entries are judged on quality, freshness, presentation and interest.

M's Action Diary for November

- Check tree ties and loosen them if they are too tight.
- Mulch soil around trees and shrubs to give them a boost.
- Plant new deciduous trees and shrubs, and move badly positioned ones.
- Prune apple and pear trees once the leaves have fallen.
- Penstemon can be trimmed back by one third to tidy, but delay main trim until April/May. This also applies to Salvia Hotlips.
- Cut back old fronds of deciduous ferns and place on compost heap.
- Cut back oriental ellebores to ground level, taking care not to damage emergin flower stems. This reduces problems with fungal leaf spot and makes it easier to see the blooms when they open. This does not apply to helleborus foetidus because their flowers could be lost.
- Plant tulips.
- Insulate outside taps.
- Raise patio pots onto feet for better drainage.

Green Gardening Tip – Helping your Worms Flourish!

Worms are the gardener's best friend and are essential food for other wildlife. They turn the soil, allow it to breathe, recycle and enrich it. Charles Darwin thought that few other animals played so important a part in the history of the world than worms? He dubbed them 'nature's ploughs' for the way they mix soil layers and enable plants – the basis of all terrestrial life – to grow. A worm can eat its own weight in soil in one day.

The UK has 29 different species of worm. Earthworms are hermaphrodites – so each worm has both male and female parts. They don't have eyes and absorb oxygen through their skin and come in a multitude of colours not just pink and brown but deep red, black, green and grey. They provide food for creatures such as hedgehogs, frogs and blackbirds, that in turn, can help keep unwanted pests at bay.

To help worms thrive in your garden:



- Create a compost heap or
- Feed your garden with compost and organic fertilisers.
- Dig up your paving – let the earth breathe and plants grow.
- Lay small stacks of logs or woody prunings directly on the soil. They will eventually decompose into worm food.
- Let plants die down naturally in winter and don't be too quick to clear fallen dead leaves from the soil – unless they are diseased.
- Conserve soil moisture by mulching borders with peat-free garden compost or composted bark once a year, or on a rotating basis in larger gardens. This can be done at any time provided the ground is moist.
- Minimise pesticide use, including metaldehyde-based slug pellets

[Source: Wildlife Trusts](#)

Last Call for the Christmas Party

There is just a time to make a booking for our Christmas Party which is held at **The White Hart Inn**, Three Households, Chalfont St Giles on **Thursday 14th December 2023 6.30 pm for 7.00 pm.**

A 2-course menu will cost £29.00 while 3 courses will cost £32.50. You will be welcomed with a complimentary glass of wine or fruit punch. Further drinks can be ordered, but this will be at your own expense. There will be a customary table quiz and raffle for your enjoyment.

If you haven't booked yet and wish to join us, please contact Sam Patel on the details below.



CSGGA Christmas Tree



Once again, we will be participating in the St Giles Christmas Tree Trail. This is now becoming an annual event organised by the Parish Council. We pride ourselves on being an environmentally friendly Gardens Association, and so our Christmas Tree decorations reflect that by using only natural materials. If you have any natural decorations or plant materials that we could turn into decorations, please let a member of the Committee know. Likewise, please get in touch if you would like to help with creating decorations or decorating the tree. (We have not yet been advised of the arrival date but it is usually before the Christmas lights are switched on). The image shows last year's tree!

Holiday to North Wales and RHS Bridgewater

Sunday 23rd June to Thursday 27th June, 2024



We will be visiting gardens in Wales and NW England staying at a 4* hotel in Wrexham and this year we will have a Blue Badge Guide for days 2-4. Travelling by executive coach, we will stay four nights on half board basis at the [Ramada Plaza Hotel](#)

A double or twin room will cost £574.00 per person, for single occupants there is an additional £99.00 supplement. Lunches, holiday insurance and gratuities are also not included. For more details of the holiday, please click [here](#)

We have agreed a full programme of excursions that will appeal to garden lovers and entry to the gardens is included, except National Trust Gardens, so free to NT members. We will be visiting:

Winterbourne House and Garden
Wollerton Hall
Plas Newydd Country House and Garden
Bodnant Gardens
Liverpool – city tour
Chirk Castle
Chester – guided city tour
RHS Bridgewater
Powis Castle

Your CSGGA Committee

Chairman and Membership Secretary:

Briony Wickenden Mulberry House, 54 Milton Fields, Chalfont St Giles, HP8 4EP 01494879482
brionywickendke@hotmail.com

Secretary:

Gill Aikens, Roughwood, London Road, Chalfont St Giles HP8 4ND 07747 003085 gpaikens1@gmail.com

Treasurer:

Margaret Dykes, 4 Roughwood Fields, Roughwood Lane, Chalfont St Giles, HP8 4AA 01494 874511
margaretrdykes@btinternet.com

Committee Members:

Jan Bradley	01494 874704
Mary Holloway	01494 875793
Vicky Mogford	07876 563980
Eleanor O'Connor	01494 875646
Sam Patel	01494 875319

New Committee members are always welcome. We are a friendly bunch! Please contact a committee member to find out more if you're interested in joining us.