

CSGGA Newsletter

February 2023



RHS Affiliated Membership Number: 10570237

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Gardening in Dry Conditions Terry Cann

Terry explained that we need to think about drought-tolerance in planting our gardens. Drought occurs when we lack normal rainfall, when we have sandy or chalky soils, when we live in a rain shadow or when we plant close to a wall or fence. We can adapt to these conditions by using plenty of mulch, by choosing drought-tolerant plants and by sensible watering of young plants.

It is generally between April and September that plants become stressed when evaporation and transpiration exceed the water supply. Water is essential to plants as transport for food and minerals, structural support of stems and leaves and for metabolic processes. The water moves from the roots to the stems and leaves where transpiration takes place. A plant under water stress will show little growth. Root systems may be fibrous which are near the surface or tap roots which go deep.

Many plants have adapted to water shortage with leaves that may be hairy or covered in waxy material, stems may be enlarged for storage and tap roots can seek out deep water.

Our soil is composed of minerals 50-60%, water 5-40%, air 5-40% plus organic matter. Silty soil with high organic matter is the best. Moisture is best conserved by applying two and a half inches of mulch with minimum disturbance of the soil. The soil should be saturated before applying the mulch.

Beth Chatto's Gravel garden was created using graded gravel and only supplemented by watering of new planting

On the Kent coast, Derek Jarman created and cared for a shingle garden with gorse, sea kale, sea holly, Herb Robert, sea pea, yellow horned holly, Californian poppy and helianthemum.





Terry gave us a list of suitable plants supplemented by beautiful photographs. These included box, lavender, conifers, succulents, muscari, scilla, crocus, cyclamen, rosemary, euphorbias, yucca, pittosporum, sedum, red hot poker, iris Santa Elena, alliums, aquilegia, verbascum, arabis, eryngium, arbutus, Pinus cembra, godetia, cotinus, genista, iris pallida, California poppy, carpenteria, hemerocallis, echinacea, penstemon, pulsatilla, alliums, bergenia, hebe and roses.

In summary, Terry reminded us of using grit and sand for drainage, improve structure with compost and mulching, supplement with water at critical stages and choose drought-resistant plants. **Jan Bradley**

M's Action Diary for February

- Cut down ornamental grasses before new shoots appear.
- Remove old hydrangea flower heads down to large bud once danger of frost has passed.
- Prune shrub roses.
- Sow sweet peas now.
- Prune winter flowering jasmine after flowering and tie in any long stems.
- Trim winter flowering heathers after they have finished flowering to keep them neat and compact. Do not cut into old wood.
- Cut all tatty, brown fronds of ferns back to the base of their stalks to make way for new foliage which will unfurl.
- Cyclamen coums can be lifted and replanted to encourage spread.
- Also lift and divide clumps of snowdrops after flowering, and replant to the same depths as before.
- Prune mahonias after flowering, removing old stems to make room for new growth.
- Dogwoods that have been kept for their colourful stems need cutting back to their woody base.
- Willows, cotinus and buddleia also require cutting back now.
- Continue feeding wild birds, not forgetting to ensure that they have fresh water to drink and bathe in.

Next Month's Talk 9th March, 2023 – Acers and Their Companions



George Lockwood

George will look at acers for smaller gardens and appropriate companion plants to grow with them.

Change of format for meetings – We have introduced a change to the format. We will not have a refreshment break during the talk, instead we will be serving drinks and biscuits from 7.45 – doors are generally open from 7.30. We hope this will allow members time to chat while enabling the speaker to set up their presentation with a

little less pressure. There will be a short pause after the talk before

Discounted entry to RHS Gardens

Jan Bradley is the custodian of a discount card which allows members of Affiliated Societies 50% discount on entry to Wisley, Bridgewater, Harlow Carr, Hyde Hall and Rosemoor but excluding flower shows and Glow events. The card is for entry for two adults. So, if you're planning a visit to one of the gardens and would like to take advantage of this benefit, please contact Jan – contact details below.

the Q&A Session.

www.csgga.org

Green Gardening Tip – Prepare your Pots for Planting

Growing plants in containers is a great way to bring life and colour into otherwise dull spots in your garden. Most of us have room for a pot or two or a window box. Plants will live longer and look better if your pots are clean and have good drainage.

If you are reusing old pots, it's a good idea to clean all pots immediately before use, including those left in the garden or stacked in the shed. Undisturbed pots can be breeding grounds for pests and diseases - especially baby slugs. Scrub with detergent and rinse well. [Get growing with the RHS: How to prepare pots for planting / RHS Gardening](#)

Giving Nature a Helping Hand – Add a Nest Box or Two

According to the RSPB, one of the biggest causes of wildlife declines is a lack of suitable habitat. The British Trust for Ornithology have officially declared this National Nest Box Week, making it the perfect time for you to put up a nest box (or two!) in your outdoor space. In addition to providing insect attracting plants on which they can feed, we can give birds a helping hand by offering cosy bird boxes and nest sites. Whatever the size of your outdoor space, this is a really easy way to help the nature on your doorstep. [Our ultimate guide to nest boxes | The RSPB](#)



Dates for the Diary

Eleanor is currently planning the following outings:

- Wednesday 3rd May – Borde Hill Gardens, Sussex
- Wednesday 28th June – Mottisfont, Hampshire
- Friday 22nd September – Adwell Estate, Oxfordshire
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We are also exploring the feasibility of a trip to the Hampton Court Flower Show between Tuesday 4th July and Sunday 9th July. Once all the details are confirmed, we will send the usual booking forms. ,

Your CSGGA Committee

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