

# CSGGA Newsletter

## March 2022



RHS Affiliated Membership Number: 10570237

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### Clematis Peter Skeggs-Gooch

Peter was an inspiring and entertaining natural speaker whose knowledge of clematis, not surprisingly, is extensive given he and his family run [Thorncroft Clematis](#), a mail order company specialising in this beautiful and varied plant.

He began with his 'Complete Guide' – taking us through 21 different types of clematis providing colour and interest throughout every season of the year. As well as the scramblers with which we are all familiar, and of course, some with a gorgeous scent, clematis can be herbaceous and evergreen. Certain types are best grown up and over to enjoy the full beauty of the flowers, and flamboyant seed heads often provide a spectacle after the flowering period is over. Clematis doesn't always have to have a lot of room, as you can grow it throughout a bush or tree and there are some whose

height is as little as 3-5ft which can be grown in a pot.

Alba Luxuriens (shown right) was recommended by Peter if you've ever had problems growing clematis before, as it is very easy to grow, has prolific small flowers from July to October, and grows to 10ft.

Peter then gave us a tour of "Different Ways with Clematis" which included ideas / for growing it in pots. 'Pixie' prefers being grown in a pot as long as it is not waterlogged and it has a lovely fragrance. A short obelisk of around 3ft can be used to enable it to grow up and cascade down. The longer stems that have dropped below the rim of the pot can then be cut to encourage it to bush out and an added bonus – its hardy so can be left out in winter.

Be imaginative with pots and supports if you have the room. Peter's company exhibit at Chelsea Flower Show and he showed us a fabulous display in an old bath that held 30 plants (we can scale this down to 8!) tumbling over a rusted gate. On a smaller scale, 'Pat Coleman' will grow in a 20" pot with a 5ft support. Cut the plant down to 1ft after flowering to get a second showing. The right soil mix should be three quarters John Innes No 3 and one quarter multi-purpose.

Clematis and roses make a lovely combination but give some thought to the colour of the rose bud as well as the flowers and grow the rose for a while before introducing the clematis. Continuity of flowering can be achieved if their flowering seasons overlap.

'Planting and Care' advice includes deep planting as this will result in more flowers and less stress. Plant them 2 or 3 inches deeper than the existing pot level so that you cover the first leaf point. Tease out the roots and put plenty of well-rotted organic matter under the roots (not around them).



The pruning guide is simple, when you know how! It's all based around when they flower:

Jan-May = tidy after flowering.

May-Jun (group 2) = light prune in Feb/Mar. Remove the top quarter of the plant and, two weeks later, prune to viable buds. If these are at different heights, the flowering won't be restricted all to one level.

Jul – Dec (group 3) = hard prune in Feb/Mar from the bottom of the stem at the second leaf joint with a viable new bud.

"If it flowers after June, prune hard" is a good rule to remember and prune harder than you think is necessary.

When it comes to feeding, we don't do this enough. Give them bonemeal around February or March and in mid-April, put a handful of potash at the base of the plant. Epsom Salts leaf tonic helps with any magnesium deficiency. This is better than trying a general clematis feed which is formulated mostly for large flowered clematis.

Peter finished the evening with inspiring photos from past entries at the Chelsea Flower Show. His talk definitely encouraged me to think again about clematis. I'm wondering if the holly bush in my front garden might not benefit from a little something extra growing up and around it! **Eleanor O'Connor**

## The Gardens Association Spring Show – 14th April



After two years of a virtual Spring Show we are delighted to be able to welcome members back to the Memorial Hall to exhibit the real thing! We would like to encourage all members to enter at least one class and hope everyone will find something they can enter, perhaps a beautiful tulip or a stick of rhubarb, a foliage pot plant or a flower arrangement. While some classes are formally judged, it's about entering for fun, as well.

This year the Committee agreed to award prizes of garden vouchers to the members with the three top points and the

Edwards Cup is awarded to the member with the most points overall. **Another highlight is the raffle for every member who comes along where one lucky member will win a garden voucher.**



## The Spring Show Schedule

**Foliage does not need to be attached to the stem for Classes 1-5a**

**Classes 1-3 are for single-headed blooms only.**

**Class 1 Daffodils/Narcissi** – 1 Stem, Own Foliage.

**Class 2 Daffodils/Narcissi** – 3 Stems, Own Foliage.

**Class 3 Miniature Daffodils/Narcissi** – 3 Stems, Own Foliage – less than 13"

**Class 4 Multi-headed Daffodils/Narcissi** – 1 Stem, Own Foliage

**Class 5 Tulips** – 3 Stems, Own Foliage

**Class 5a Tulip** – Single stem, Own Foliage

**Class 6 Flowering Shrubs or Trees** – 1 or more varieties

**Class 7 Pot of Primulas, Primroses or Auriculas.** (max pot size 8 inches)

**Class 8 Petite flower arrangement** – to fit within a 6" cube

**Class 9 Any other flower** - 1 Kind, 3 Stems

**Class 10 Rhubarb** – 3 Sticks, forced with leaves OR 3 sticks natural, leaves trimmed

**Class 11 Any other Vegetable.** (Any quantity)

**Class 12 Flowering Pot Plant** (in flower) including bulbs & orchids (max pot size 8")

**Class 13 Foliage Pot Plant** – (No flowers) max pot size 8 inches

**Class 14 Flowers From My Garden** (Not shrubs)

**Class 15 Mixed Foliage Display** (No Flowering Material) in a vase or jug.

**Class 16 Cactus or succulent.**





## Guidance

- You should collect an entry card for every exhibit when you arrive.
- Please be careful to observe the Class specifications.
- Bikini vases are available and should be used for all entries in classes 1-6 and class 9.
- Make sure you exhibit your entry in the correct class and that your name is on the entry card.
- There is a maximum of TWO entries per person per class
- Members may set up at 7.30pm. Judging starts at 8pm. Refreshments served at 8.20pm.

Further guidance, photographs from previous shows and hints and tips can be found on our website <https://www.csgga.org/spring-show.html>



## Gardening in a Warming Environment – Tom Cole

After judging the daffodil and tulip classes, Tom will give an illustrated talk looking at the ways in which gardeners can combat the causes and effects of climate breakdown. Tom is always a popular and very knowledgeable speaker. He was Head of Horticulture at Capel Manor College, he regular broadcasts on BBC Radio Essex, marks RHS level 2 exams and has his own soft landscape business.

## Pashley Manor, East Sussex and Heathside, Wednesday, 20th April 2020



**Pashley Manor's** award-winning gardens, on the border of Sussex and Kent, are family owned and maintained and include all the ingredients of the English Country Garden – sweeping herbaceous borders, ha-ha, well maintained lawns, box hedges, espaliered rose walk, historic walled garden, inspiring kitchen garden, venerable trees and the Grade I listed house as a backdrop. The gardens are a haven for wildlife – bees, butterflies and small birds as well as moor hens, ducks and a black swan. We will be visiting during their annual Tulip Festival which this year features more than 48,000 tulips.

Our visit includes an introductory talk, time to wander and enjoy lunch – either take a picnic (can only be eaten in car park) or sample the homemade and locally sourced food in their café. Don't eat too much

as we will be enjoying afternoon tea later (see below).

There is, of course, also a gift shop to complete your visit and you can order any of the tulips on display for planting next year. For more information go to: [www.pashleymanorgardens.com/events/tulip-festival/](http://www.pashleymanorgardens.com/events/tulip-festival/)

**Heathside's** beautiful third of an acre garden in Cobham, Surrey, is owned privately and has featured on TV including BBC's Gardener of the Year, Making Gardens with Joe Swift, Japanese Gardener's World, and Love Your Garden with Alan Titchmarsh.

It has been planted for year round interest and spring brings hellebores, trilliums, erythroniums & unusual varieties of snowdrops, followed by tulips with a different colour scheme each year.

It is described as a terraced, plants persons garden, designed for year-round interest all set off by harmonious landscaping. Several water features add tranquil sound and topiary shapes provide formality. Our ticket price includes afternoon tea provided by the owner and this is a private group booking. For more information go to: <https://ngs.org.uk/view-garden/15009>



The cost for this outing will be £49 for members (or £54 for guests and non-members) which covers entrance to both gardens, introductory talk at Pashley, cream tea at Heathside, coach and driver's gratuity.

- Please make your own arrangements for lunch (picnic in car park only or use the café at Pashley)
- Departing Chalfont St Giles Village Green at 09.15
- Departing Pashley Manor Gardens at 1.45pm and Heathside at 16.30

## M's Action Diary for March

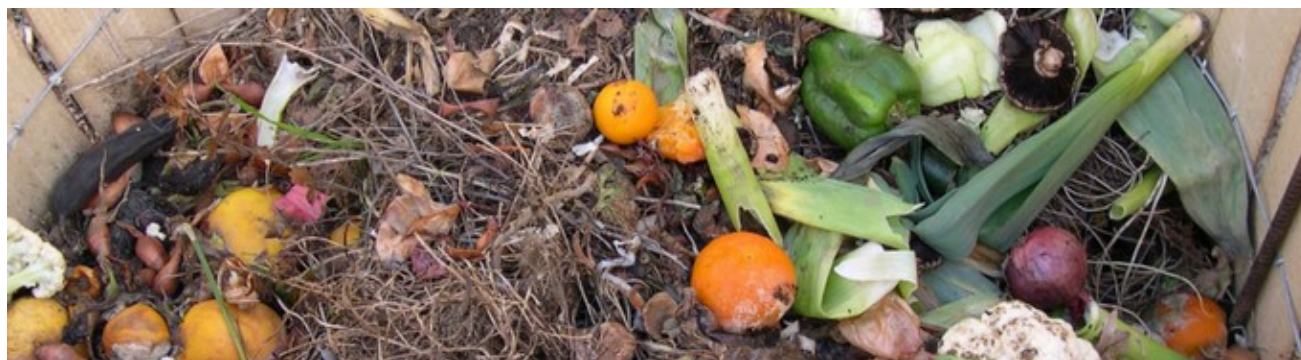
- Give ericaceous plants such as camellias, rhododendrons and azaleas a boost with acidic plant food. Trim spent flowers from winter flowering heathers.
- Top dress containers to keep plants healthy. Trees and shrubs planted permanently in pots need a boost, so use a hand trowel to scrape away the top 5 cm of compost from the pots, taking away weeds with it. Add slow-release fertilizer, top up with fresh compost and water in.
- Prune mahonias, taking out top leaf rosette to promote a branching habit.
- Apply moss killer to lawns for short term control, then rake or scarify to remove thatch. Start to mow on a high setting.
- Repot house plants, apply slow release fertilizer pellets.
- Cut back penstemons to allow new shoots to grow.
- Dead head fading daffodils, but allow foliage to die naturally.
- Improve the soil in established borders by mulching the surface with a layer of organic matter such as garden compost.
- Plant summer flowering bulbs.
- Feed hedges, shrubs and trees with a granular fertilizer ie Growmore or pelleted chicken manure.

## Green Gardening Tip – Compost

Take Merida's advice and improve the soil in your borders by using the compost in your bin/heap. Extract below taken from Garden Organic's very informative and comprehensive website.

- March is a good month to empty out any compost that is already well-rotted. Store in bags ready for use around the garden where needed.
- Give your compost heap a 'spring turn' to aerate and stimulate the contents. But if you heap is open, take care - hedgehogs, slow worms and other creatures often creep in to hibernate. Check you are not disturbing them before turning the contents. See [Home Composting](#)
- If you have a worm bin, it can be put outside at the end of the month.

See <https://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/what-do-march>



## Plant Sale – Saturday 14th May

We will be holding the Gardens Association Plant Sale on the Village Green. Now is the ideal time to start splitting plants, sowing seeds and taking softwood cuttings. We welcome any contributions of plants as well as offers of help with the sale on the day – setting up the stall, selling plants and clearing away afterwards.

Simon Coleman, Coleman & Co, is kindly advertising the plant sale on boards around the village. If you live in a prominent position on a well-travelled road, please get in touch if you are willing to have a board outside your house. Simon is also allowing the committee some space in his car park to price the plants before they are put out for sale, this will make the so much easier.

**Some of the seeds you can plant in March indoors or in a greenhouse (and see the list February's newsletter, as most can still be planted this month, too.**

- Lettuces
- Courgette
- Broccoli
- Sweetcorn
- Morning Glory
- Sunflowers
- Asters
- Zinnias
- Basil
- Chives
- Parsley
- Sage

### Your Committee

#### Chairman and Membership Secretary:

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#### Committee Members:

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Eleanor O'Connor	01494 875646
Sumatra 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.

### Dates for the Diary

**National Memorial Arboretum, Staffs, and Hill Close  
Gardens, Warwick**

**Saturday, 30<sup>th</sup> July, 2022**

Our summer visit to the National Memorial Arboretum includes entry to the Plant Hunters Fair, followed by a visit to the restored Victorian Hill Close Gardens in Warwick: two unique and unusual venues.

*Full details will be provided nearer the date – please contact Eleanor O'Connor, if you'd like to know more in the meantime.*