

# CSGGA Newsletter

## February 2023



RHS Affiliated Membership Number: 10570237

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### Dig for Victory Matthew Biggs

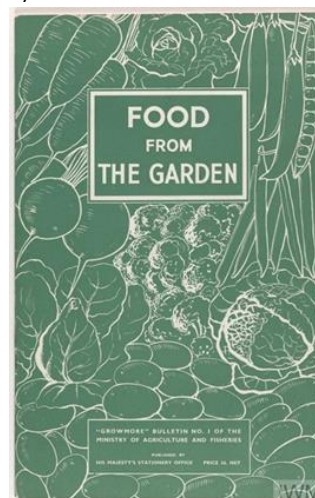
Our planned speaker cancelled at the last minute concerned about the weather conditions having experienced a nightmarish journey in the snow two days beforehand, Very serendipitously, we were able to enjoy a talk from Matt Biggs, of GQT fame, who had been due to visit to Derbyshire but postponed because of the snow there!

Matt started his talk with the famous 1939 recording of Neville Chamberlain announcing that Britain was at war

with Germany. He explained that at that time, and as today, Britain was very reliant on imported food, 55 million tons of food were imported by shipping and, an almost unbelievable, 90% of all onions came from Europe. Within days of Chamberlain's announcement, it was clear that shipping food into Britain was going to be nearly impossible and a young Michael Foot coined the phrase "Dig for Victory" in an article in the Evening Standard. This became the rallying call for everyone to grow their own food.

Prior to the war, Edward Bunyard, who had written books for the RHS Council, had been stockpiling seeds, carrying out vegetable trials in different areas, and testing food for its nutrient value. The RHS began to publish leaflets to provide guidance on what to grow and how. The number of allotments available was increased to a million, spare land on airfields and army bases and open spaces everywhere, even the moat at the Tower of London, were transformed into vegetable patches.

As a result of EA Bunyard's report Food from the Garden – Growmore Bulletin no 1 was published by HMSO in September 1939 costing 3d. Aimed at novices it sold 400,000 copies. It was a collaboration between RHS, MAFF, research stations like East Malling, Hort Education Associations, National Allotments Society, and contained detailed all year cropping and rotation plan, list of fertilisers and alternatives, readily obtainable vegetable seeds and the volumes required. It was roundly criticised, the Scots complained too little space was given over to potatoes, spacings were too close and there were ridiculous typographical errors, also it was published when it was too late to sow anything outside and there was not enough regard given to conditions in the north and Scotland. To correct the errors in the first edition, it was revised and republished and the guidance in the second edition is still relevant today.



As a follow up, in 1941 the RHS published their most successful book of all time – "The Vegetable Garden Displayed" The photographs of digging and growing in the booklet were taken at Wisley. The images used



had been put to use as slides for gardening lectures across the country almost as soon as war broke out. Later, they were transformed into travelling exhibition boards sent out to town halls, schools and other public spaces. Amazingly one set of boards survived the war and turned up more than 60 years later in a scout hut on the Isle of Wight.

It was interesting to learn from Matt that the BBC's radio gardening slot has not changed since the war. Gardeners' Question Time is still at the same time on a Sunday afternoon as "In Your Garden". Mr Middleton, the "In Your Garden" presenter, was the son of the gardener to the Sitwell family.

Before the outbreak of the war, he had become a household name, having been recommended to the BBC by the RHS. When the war started, he was happy to lend his support to the Government's Dig for Victory campaign, encouraging listeners to grow vegetables on every spare piece of land. Mr Middleton was listened to by 3.5 million but the traditional gardening weather forecasts were not permitted in case the Germans were listening.

The onion family were considered very important to the wartime diet by the Government and Onion Clubs were established to encourage members of the public to grow extra crops of onions. When mature, they would be sold to the armed forces to feed serving personnel, a need that the Ministry of Food was finding hard to fulfil.

Matt finished his fascinating talk by telling us that he had grown some of the varieties of vegetables promoted in the Dig for Victory campaign, and our own Alan Clarke topped that by telling us he had found some genuine Dig for Victory seeds in a tin and had planted them, although only one variety germinated!

## M's Action Diary for March

- Check variegated shrubs and remove shoots that have reverted. If plain green shoots are left to develop they usually grow more vigorously than the variegated shoots and so take over the whole plant.
- Tidy bamboo by cutting out, at ground level, the oldest canes and any discoloured ones.
- Prune forsythia after flowering
- Camellias and other acid loving plants will benefit from a sprinkling of slow release ericaceous fertilizer around their base.
- Repot house and greenhouse plants and apply slow release fertilizer.
- Deadhead fading daffodils but allow foliage to die down naturally.
- Lift, divide and remove blackened leaves from sisyrinchiums and replant.
- Feed climbers, hedges shrubs and trees with granular fertilizer such as Growmore or pelleted chicken manure.
- Cut back penstemons to allow new shoots to grow.
- Move or plant evergreen shrubs, trees and hedging.

## 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 11a Root Vegetables** (Any quantity)
- Class 11b Brassicas** (Any quantity)
- Class 11c 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 for entries

- Collect an entry card for every exhibit when you arrive.
- Please be careful to observe the Class specifications shown above.
- Bikini vases will be available at the hall 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 from 7.30pm until 7.55pm. Judging will start at 8pm. Refreshments served at 8.00pm.  
**Tom Cole's talk will start after judging has been completed.**

## Green Gardening Tip – Taking Care of the Bees



We all know how necessary pollinators are for the health of our garden and wider environment but did you know that bees provide us with every third mouthful of food we eat, according to the RHS?

Here are four of the easiest and most-effective ways to help your garden become a bee's paradise!

**Plant pollen and nectar rich flowers.** Bees seem to be attracted to yellow and blue flowers the most but look out for the RHS Plants for Pollinators logo at the garden centre and on seed packets or check out the list on the RHS website. Try to provide flowers year round. Winter can be difficult so plants such ivy, mahonias, cyclamen, snowdrops, winter-flowering cherries are invaluable for bees.

**Provide a shallow water source** If you haven't got a pond, a birdbath or even a plant pot saucer with some strategically placed pebbles can help the bees find a place to drink safely.

**Provide a nesting site.** This doesn't need to be as elaborate as a "bug hotel". Mason bees nest in holes in wood, walls and even hollow plant stems but, many of our 270 native species of bees are ground-nesting. They need an area of bare ground where they can dig out nesting tunnels. Leave some areas of grass long or let ground-covering grass alternatives such a clover take over to provide both food and nesting sites.

**Use only harmless fertilizers** Be careful to choose only natural and organic products when feeding your plants and lawn and use organic materials.

For more information see [Attract Bees To Your Garden To Help Protect UK's Rarest Bee Species](#)

## Outings for 2023

Full details will be circulated shortly but in the meantime, take a note of dates and costs:

**Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> May – Borde Hill Gardens and 47 Denmans Lane**, West Sussex. Borde Hill is a 38 acre English country garden paradise for plants with a series of intimate living 'Garden rooms'. 47 Denmans Lane is a privately owned NGS scheme garden where 'plants star'. **£38 per member, £43 non-members and guests**

**Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> June – National Trust Mottisfont and Little Court, Winchester**. Mottisfont is an 18th-century house with a medieval priory at its heart, which was transformed into a Neo-classical home in the 1930s. The walled garden is home to the National Collection of pre-1900 old-fashioned roses, which reach their peak in June. Little Court is an NGS privately-owned garden which totals over two acres on different levels, with one of the best views in Hampshire. In the field are many English wildflowers - a haven for butterflies. **£31 per member, £36 non-members and guests. Non NT members will need to pay the admission fee in addition of £18.05.**

**Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> July – Hampton Court Flower Show**. Needs no introduction! A wonderful day out to visit the world's largest flower show. Includes glorious gardens, fabulous floral displays, allotments, food and shopping outlets. **£56 per member, £61 non-members and guests.**

**Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> September – Adwell Estate Garden, Thame, and Waterperry Gardens, Wheatley**. Adwell Estate Garden is normally open to the public only three times a year but we've got our own private visit at a time that is 'good for colour' including a tour with the head gardener. We then move on to Waterperry Gardens where we can have lunch and enjoy these beautifully landscaped ornamental gardens. **£26 per member, £33 non-members and guests. Non RHS members will need to pay the Waterperry admission fee in addition of £9.**

## Discounted entry to RHS Gardens

As previously advised, 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.

### Your CSGGA Committee

**Chairman and Membership Secretary:**

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**Secretary:** Jan Bradley, 23 The Lagger, Chalfont St Giles, HP8 4DH 01494 874704 [janbradley4@btinternet.com](mailto:janbradley4@btinternet.com)

**Treasurer:** Margaret Dykes, 4 Roughwood Fields, Roughwood Lane, Chalfont St Giles, HP8 4AA 01494 874511 [margaretrdykes@btinternet.com](mailto:margaretrdykes@btinternet.com)

**Committee Members:**

Mary Holloway	01494 875793
Caroline Jackson	01494 876685
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