

# CSGGA Newsletter

## August 2023



RHS Affiliated Membership Number: 10570237

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### Kitchen Gardening – Is it worthwhile? Hazel Roberts

Hazel's interest in kitchen garden started in the late nineties when she was studying for a PhD. She and her husband started growing in their own garden and this then grew (pun intended) into taking on 2 allotments.

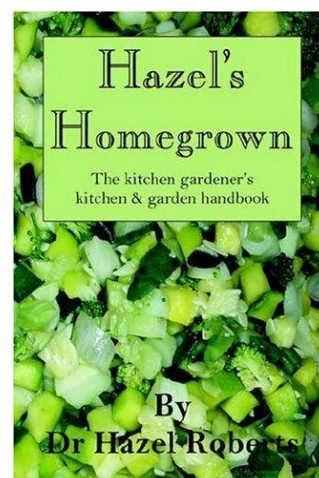
Their back garden was initially turned over to growing vegetables with a herb garden in the front garden. In 1999 Hazel wrote an article for Kitchen Garden where she compared the costs of growing vegetables against buying them in a supermarket. At that time, with the cost of allotments at £12 per plot and the costs of seeds, compost, and incidentals the cost of growing worked out at £159.33

against a cost of buying what she was able to harvest at £592.88. So financially, it was worthwhile! But growing her own food also gave her a new lifestyle and career after her children were born. She first wrote "Hazel's Homegrown" while on maternity leave and this was followed by "All Gone" a guide to weaning children.

In 2007, Hazel was producing so much that she started to sell to the public; she took a kitchen hygiene course and created labels which were so well received that she started selling bespoke label shop online. This soon became a huge offshoot of the business and was soon outselling her produce! She also started working part time as a science teacher and started an afternoon garden club, gaining satisfaction from teaching children where food comes from. The children used to celebrate the end of the summer term with a party using all their own produce.

During the pandemic her daughter took up her passion and started to blog about the food they had grown and compiling recipes. Hazel also became part of the local food scene, offering a delivery service and helped develop the [MK Food Fest](#). She also revisited her original article for Kitchen garden and carried out another comparison between growing and buying the same produce. While it was still cheaper to grow than to buy, she has concluded that it makes more sense to grow produce that are expensive or impossible to buy in the shops, such as blackcurrants, Victoria plums and globe artichokes.

At the end of Hazel's talk, we discovered that the vast majority of our members present "grew their own" and we had a quick discussion about why they did. The number one reason was because of the taste, but other reasons mentioned were the benefit to mental health – "feeding the soul", good for the environment, creating food and habitats for wildlife and a great hobby to enjoy with children.



## Next Month's Talk – Thursday, 14<sup>th</sup> September

### Amber Hine – Winter Wonderland

Amber will focus on the joy of the winter garden and what plants can be added to make the most of what can be a barren time.

### M's Action Diary for August

- Keep dead heading faded flowers from summer bedding, roses and container plants, so they do not expend their energy on unwanted seeds.
- Evergreens and deciduous hedges require their final trim.
- Borders will benefit from a general feed, such as blood, fish and bone or Growmore.
- Generally tidy the garden to prevent pests and diseases overwintering. Fork over border soil and spread a good layer of compost.
- Start pot cyclamen into growth.
- Lift and store gladioli bulbs.
- Birds still need feeding and being supplied with fresh water.

### Green Gardening Tip – Save your own seeds



Growing plants from seed is generally straightforward and inexpensive and if you collect your own seed, it's an opportunity to increase the number of plants in your garden for free. Harvesting your own seed is fun but takes a little understanding and planning:

- Seedheads can ripen quickly, and must be watched carefully in order to collect the seed before they are dispersed
- As a rough guide, seed is set about two months after flowering

- Some seed is collected when well-developed but immature and green, such as *Anemone nemorosa*, *calendula* and *Ranunculus*
- Berries need to be collected before they are taken by birds
- The plants from which you collect seed must be healthy and vigorous. This will help ensure good quality

For more information see [Seed: collecting and storing / RHS Gardening](#)

### Or save the seedheads for the birds

Resisting the urge to pick up the secateurs and clear up at the end of summer will allow nature to have its encore. Under the crispy frosting of winter mornings, seedheads can be an absolute joy. Seedheads are great for birds and other wildlife at a time of year when pickings are thin. Birds will eke out the seeds, while standing stems can hold a myriad of insects, larvae and eggs. As an added bonus, stems also shield your garden soil from winter elements too. You can still tidy flopped stems or those toppled over paths. A tidy garden can still be a wildlife-friendly garden.

[Leave Seedheads Standing \(rspb.org.uk\)](http://www.rspb.org.uk)





## Outing to Adwell Estate Garden and Waterperry Gardens Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> September, 2023 – 10.00 – 16.30 approx

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. £25.75 per member, £30.75 non-members and guests. Non RHS members will need to pay the Waterperry admission fee in addition of £10.50 or £9.00 depending on the numbers. Full booking details can be requested from Eleanor O'Connor on 01494 875646 or 07946 629076 or can be found [here](#) on the website

## Holiday to North Wales and RHS Bridgewater Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> June to Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> June, 2024



Tailored Travel are currently working on the itinerary for next year's holiday, but the dates are set and the hotel in Wrexham is booked. So if you want to join us, please put the dates in your diary and I'll circulate the details as soon as they are finalised. We aim to visit RHS Bridgewater, both Liverpool and Chester, as well as some of the best gardens in Wales and a couple more enroute.

## Appeal for more Committee Members

The October AGM is fast approaching and we would welcome new members to join the committee. If you are interested in joining a friendly group and help us keep the Gardens Association going, please let us know.

## Chalfont St Giles Village Show Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> September



Don't forget to enter the competitions – there's a class for everyone from Fruit and Veg, to flowers and flower arranging, jams and preserves, to craft projects.

**On-line entries must be received by midnight on Monday, 28<sup>th</sup> August using the link below.**

[All Competition Classes \(dolphin-app-w45yh.ondigitalocean.app\)](https://dolphin-app-w45yh.ondigitalocean.app)



### Your CSGGA Committee

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