

CSGGA Newsletter

August 2020



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Next Speaker via Zoom

10th September: Timothy Walker - Sex, Lies and Putrefaction

Yes, we will have a meeting but it will be virtual, I'm afraid, though it's a start! We can invite non-members to join too. **Details of how to join the meeting will be sent to you shortly with clear instructions about all things Zoom!**

We're delighted that Timothy Walker, who used to live in Chalfont St Giles, is able to offer his talk via Zoom. Timothy is the former Director of Oxford University Botanical Gardens and a popular speaker.

Gardeners are well aware of the need for pollinators but for many people this important area of plant science begins and ends with bees. In fact pollination can be carried out by animals as different as bats and snails – the former is limited to night flowering species and the latter is only for plants with time on their hands. Many trees, grasses and others do not use a pollinator trusting in fate but

releasing their pollen into the wind and hoping that the grains land on a suitable female flower. This lecture looks at the variety of animals and other vectors that are exploited by plants and explains why this knowledge is so important.

The Village Show goes Virtual, too!

The Chalfont St Giles Show 2020 is open for virtual competitions and it's all GO!

We are holding a virtual competition show for various categories such as photography, creative writing, art and junior competitions this year. Submit your entries and see if you win. Those of you who entered the CSGGA Virtual Spring Show will be familiar with the process of uploading photographs into PollUnit but Caroline has written some handy instructions which are attached to the newsletter. Also attached is a list of the classes. Martin Edwards our judge in pre-COVID times will be judging. Photos of your prize fruit, vegetables and flowers should be taken ON or AFTER Saturday 22nd August. I do hope you will all participate.

Visit the Show website www.csgshow.org/competitions for further details and good luck!



A Pleasant Evening Judging the Allotments

In late sunshine, on a warm evening, during the recent heatwave, Margaret Dykes and I spent a very pleasant time judging the allotments that had been entered into the Village Show, while respecting social distancing and good hand hygiene. We were asked to award points for condition of plot, good workmanship, quality and variety of plants, environmentally friendly practices, condition of sheds, cloches, etc and most uplifting appearance. Well the latter was a very tricky call as we both felt uplifted by all the allotments we judged – so virtually all scored the same number of points - 90 out of 100! It was really encouraging to see the amount of effort the entrants had put into their plots and they were rewarded by healthy plants and plentiful produce. Congratulations to all the winners, you delighted and inspired us!

Restore Hope Latimer



Do you have a glut of tomatoes or too many plums? Are your lettuces in danger of bolting or your courgettes turning into giant marrows? Please don't let them rot on trees and in vegetable patches or go to waste. Restore Hope Latimer are providing cooked meals to the fuel and food poor in the area and will be delighted with any excess, good quality fruit and vegetables. They are open for excesses on Mondays and Tuesdays between 10 am and 5 pm or Margaret is happy to take them along, just give her a call to arrange to drop them in or she will collect. Margaret 874511

Restore Hope also run FoodLife courses which incorporate fun, cooking, gardening, budgeting and health & wellbeing using foods that have been grown in their Community and Market Gardens and other on-site facilities. These courses in turn help them to continue to support families

in need by growing vegetables that we can use in the FoodLife Boxes.

For more information about Restore Hope see <https://www.restorehopelatimer.org/foodlife/>

M's Action Diary for August

- Lift and store gladioli
- Start planting trees and shrubs whilst the soil is still warm. Shrubs in the wrong place can be lifted at the end of the month as re-sited.
- Plant hyacinth bulbs for indoor display and place the containers in a cool, dark place until about an inch of growth appears.
- Tidy penstemons but do not trim back until March or April next year.
- Begin a general tidying of the garden to help prevent pests and diseases overwintering. Fork over border soil and spread a good layer of compost.
- Take cuttings of fuschias, geraniums, penstemons and lavender.
- Continue deadheading spent blooms of bedding and container plants to keep them at their best.
- Give lawns an Autumn feed to boost growth before cold weather sets in.
- Top up ponds and keep weed free.
- Keep feeding wild birds and give them fresh water to drink and bathe in.



Green Gardening Tip

According to a new report from the Wildlife Trust, "Reversing the Decline of Insects", there has been a sharp decline in the number of insects and as much of our life depends on them this is serious. The Wildlife Trust is calling upon everyone to take action to help reverse this decline. To help insects thrive throughout the year we need to create spaces where they can live, feed and breed and which help them to move around more easily. There are some simple measures that we can take to help such as:

- Creating a water source – just a small shallow pebble pond will help.
- Leaving some dead and dying plant material to provide safe havens for insects to hibernate over winter or shelter in poor weather
- Choose plants that provide food for insects – nectar rich flowers with a variety of simple structures are best.
- Encourage a variety of insects to act as your friend and rid you of other pests – ground beetles love slugs and snails and ladybird larvae will enjoy greenfly for lunch!

More information can be found here

<https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/take-action-insects>



Caroline's Glut of Plums

This year, not only have I had a glut of splendid strawberries – with the aid of struch, but I have also been frantically freezing plums. With everything else that has been going on this year, my garden has been going from strength to strength. I pruned my plum trees properly last year, the



first big prune since I planted them about 8 years ago. I have 4 varieties at home: the Opal plums have now finished, they are very similar to Victoria plums, but ripen before the wasps get going. My Marjorie's seedling and Denningson greengage are just starting to ripen nicely. While they are not as overloaded as the Opal (no I didn't thin them as much as we are told to) they still have more fruit than I have ever seen before. My last tree is a Victoria, it only has a few plums on it .. but they are whoppers. This tree was given to us by a friend, a seedling from his own tree. It isn't grafted on to a rootstock to limit its growth and I don't know how big it will get if I stop the pruning!

Maybe the trees are just maturing, maybe they have over fruited this year and I will have a dry time next year. You never know with plants! One thing I will be doing again next year (assuming I do get ripening plums), is to hang up a plum moth trap. I did this at home for the first time this year. I bought the trap last year but never got around to using it. The plums I have picked from the garden this year have been perfect, not one little visitor waving at me when I have cut them open. Sadly I can't say the same for the plums from the plot.

Meanwhile the raspberries are still plodding along, we have another wave of strawberries on their way and if anybody has recipes for runner beans, I would be most grateful. **Caroline Jackson**

Lucky you, Caroline, I too used a plum moth trap this year, but the vast majority of my very heavy crop have a small visitor inside and my youngest granddaughter found the first one, much to her horror – she may never eat plums again! **Briony Wickenden**

Courgette Chocolate Cake

120g butter (at room temperature)
3 eggs, beaten
180g brown sugar
125ml sunflower oil
100g caster sugar
120ml whole/semi skimmed milk
350g self-raising flour
3-4 tbsp cocoa powder
400g courgettes, grated

Put all the ingredients except the courgette into a mixer and mix until smooth.

Then turn out into a mixing bowl and fold in the grated courgette.

Pour the mixture into a greased cake tin (approx 25x25cm) and bake at 180c for 30-40 mins until a knife/skewer comes out clean when you insert it into the middle of the cake.

Courgette Chutney

2 kg courgettes
75 g coarse salt
1 kg cooking apples
500g shallots or onions
500g granulated sugar
Mixed bruised ginger, chilli and black pepper
corns tied in a muslin bag
1 litre white vinegar

Peel the courgettes and cut into small chunks. Place in a bowl, sprinkling each layer with salt and leave overnight. Wash and drain thoroughly.

Put in a pan with a little vinegar, the final chopped, peeled and scored apples, chopped onions and spices.

When soft add the remaining vinegar and sugar and simmer until thick. Remove the muslin bag before potting.

Margaret Dykes

Your 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 interested in joining us.