

CSGGA Newsletter

September 2022



RHS Affiliated Membership Number: 10570237

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It was with profound sadness that we learnt of the death of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II on Thursday 8th September. She was a remarkable, inspirational and warm hearted monarch. For me, she embodied the words from the hymn, that I, like many others, learnt as a child - she was bright, beautiful, wise and wonderful.

Her love of the outdoors and nature was well documented. In recent years, CSGGA Members heard from Mark Lane, her head gardener, of her knowledge of the plants in her garden at Buckingham Palace and she was, of course, the Patron of the RHS, attending Chelsea Flower Show from an early age.

On her accession to the throne, one of my favourite roses, the beautiful pink rose, pictured in the heading, was named Queen Elizabeth in her honour. At the end of her reign, we have heard fitting tributes to the Queen from across the globe and her loss will

be deeply felt by many. But I think Paddington Bear set exactly the right tone during the recent Platinum jubilee celebrations, "Thank you, Ma'am, for everything".

Helping the Honey Bee

Darren Lerrigo

The September meeting had a subdued atmosphere resulting from the death of Queen Elizabeth II which was announced earlier in the evening. Our speaker was already on his way from Essex, so the meeting went ahead with a smaller group attending. Darren had met the Queen when she once visited the garden in which he was working: they were busy removing leaves from the bottom of a hedge in anticipation of her arrival when Clare Balding walked by and suggested this was perhaps not necessary!

Darren has been a gardener for 21 years, ever since he left school and is currently writing a book on topiary. For our talk he was focussing instead on Helping the Honey Bee, giving us tips on the very best plants to support these furry pollinators. He recommended Dave Goulson's book "Bee Quest", a humorous tale of the author's search for some of the world's rarest bees across the globe.

We were taken through Darren's list of top plants for bees. Not all are included here but he is providing us with his full list which can be obtained from Jan Bradley.

Helenium is a flowering perennial that he recommends you do not cut down in winter. Different types will flower from June through to autumn and he considers this the first choice for bees in a garden.

Sedum, also great for bees, has edible leaves which taste like cucumber but steer clear of the dark ones as they taste very bitter. Joe-Pye Weed (what a great name) is recommended for damp areas at the back of the border whilst dead nettle works in shade.

Borage is of course a firm favourite with bees as well as Pulmonaria whose flower turns pink when pollinated to tell the bees it's not one they should bother with! Bees prefer darker flowers.

Plants that are bad for bees include Nicotiana as they become addicted to its taste and over-indulge. Rhododendron honey is known as 'mad honey' because, when eaten, it induces delirium. The Persian Army ate honey sneakily left by the Turks and became drowsy, enabling the Turks to kill them all, so maybe best avoided!



The worst plants for bees are ones in which Darren says you can "see the art of the plant breeder", ie, those that have been engineered for appearance and in so doing are far from the wild version. He explained that peonies that are bred to be fragrant and look fantastic are no good for bees and roses have been highly engineered away from the wild versions that are so attractive to bees. Darren noted that there are no bees in the David Austin nursery but across the road, where wild roses grow, the field is full of them! Garden centre annuals are not worth considering if you want to attract pollinators.

Think organic bulbs and blossom. You can encourage bees all year round. Spring crocus are full of pollen and Eranthus opens when it is warm enough for bees to be out. You can be imaginative with hedging too, when it comes to bees: Rosemary is early flowering and can be sited in a south facing dry spot. Bee keepers should always consider planting Phillyrea near the hive. This plant used to be ubiquitous in the countryside but we barely see it now. It has a lovely reflective leaf and is "tough as old boots" so you can topiarise it. Catnip for bees! It can be grown as tree topiary or as a hedge. However, it is very expensive to buy.



June can be problematic for bees as lost wildflower meadows that used to flower in this month are sadly lacking. In days gone by there never used to be such a gap. However, you can fill this with wildflowers even in a small space. Darren suggested plug plants rather than seeds as being an easier option and avoid Yellow Rattle if there is no ordinary grass as it weakens other wildflowers.

In the summer time, consider Bee Balm; new varieties are "brilliant" as they don't get mildew which the older varieties suffer. Teucrium can be used instead of Box (no blight) and Cosmos is very good. Darren recommended having as many of the same plant as possible, ie a small palette but of a vast amount. Plant lots of the same in blocks (advice we have heard before). Shrubs such as

Cotoneaster, Hebe and Escallonia are all good for bees.

Darren recommends reading "Late Summer Flowers" by Marina Christopher. She runs a nursery in Hampshire and is old-school – no website but an old plant list she only sends via email! Her speciality, according to the RHS, is " Perennials, many uncommon & hardy, selected for beneficial insects particularly pollinators. Agastache, Centaurea, Salvia, Sanguisorba, Sedum, Thalictrum, Verbascum, bulbs, prairie plants, umbellifers & late-flowering perennials."

Darren notes that food tastes better and lasts longer if bees have pollinated it. Think right plant, right place. He smiles as he suggests this but "reduce your lawn". Allow dandelions and clover to proliferate.

Darren concluded his talk with the observation that when bees are unhappy, something is not right. Happy bees mean a natural healthy environment.

As a bee keeper's wife, I will endeavour to make some key changes in my planting for next year and I continue to try to improve the wildflower area in the small patch in my front garden, using the good advice from Darren regarding plug plants.

Eleanor O'Connor



Monthly Cup Winner

Chin won the monthly cup with her striking Sunflowers which brightened up the stage area with their happy faces. Thank you Chin!

Don't forget to bring a plant to the meeting - cut flowers, pot plants, vegetables - all are eligible. Don't forget also, that we will be holding an Autumn Show at the AGM in October this year, following its success last year. More details to follow.

Village Show 2022

After two years of cancellations, the Village Show returned on 3rd September. It was scaled down mainly to one field which was generally very well received. Competition entries were slightly down, probably due to the weather with regard to horticulture. The Show Committee is very grateful to GA members for all the hard work judging, stewarding or entering. The Show AGM will be held in the GA Hall at 8pm on Tuesday 8th November.

Next Month's Annual General Meeting – 13th October, 2022 8.00pm

Our AGM will be held in the Memorial Hall, starting at 8.00pm. We will be serving wine or a soft drink and nibbles before the proceedings begin. I do hope you will be able to join us, this is your Gardens Association and we do need sufficient members attending to form a quorum. Reports from the Chairman and Treasurer will be emailed to you shortly together with the Audited Accounts, Minutes of the last meeting and Agenda or may be obtained from the Hon Secretary Jan Bradley. If you have any points that you wish to raise please contact Jan as soon as possible. 01494 874704 or janbradley4@btinternet.com

Autumn Show at the AGM

Following the popularity of the event in 2021, we have decided to repeat the Autumn Show. It is just for fun, please bring your exhibits to the Memorial Hall between 7.15 and 7.30. We might have a number of very talented gardeners within our membership, but it is such fun to see what others have grown regardless of their level of experience. So, please, try to bring at least one exhibit.

- Class 1 Vase of Asters**, 3 blooms
- Class 2 A spray of Fuschia blooms**,
- Class 3 Vase of Roses**, 3 blooms, 1 variety
- Class 4 Chrysanthemums**, 3 blooms of any kind, may be mixed
- Class 5 Any other flower from your garden**, at least 3 stems, can be a mix of varieties
- Class 6 Dahlia**, 3 blooms, 1 variety
- Class 7 3 Apples, dessert or cooking**, 1 cultivar
- Class 8 Any other fruit**
- Class 9 Tomatoes, same variety or 1 truss, any type**, with calyx in a dish
- Class 1 Trug or basket of salad plants**, at least 3 varieties, not more than 60cm x 30 cm, judged for variety appearance and freshness
- Class 11 1 Pumpkin / Winter squash or Gourd**
- Class 12 Cook's Delight, trug or basket of mixed vegetables**, at least 3 varieties not more than 60cm x 30 cm, judged for variety appearance and freshness
- Class 13 Flowering Pot Plant** (in flower) can be indoor or outdoor, including bulbs & orchids (max pot size 8")
- Class 14 Foliage Pot Plant** – (No flowers) can be indoor or outdoor, max pot size 8 inches
- Class 15 5 bunches of culinary herbs**, different kinds, not varieties, named and displayed in individual containers.
- Class 16 Mixed Foliage Display** (No Flowering Material) in a vase or jug.
- Class 17 Cactus or succulent**, pot no to exceed 20 cm
- Class 18 Bonsai tree**, pot not to exceed, 15 cm
- Class 19 Carnivorous plant**, any variety, pot not to exceed 15cm

M's Action Diary for September

- Cut down border perennials when foliage starts to die back. Lift and divide every three years.
- Tidy penstemons but do not trim back until March or April next year.
- Water asters to avoid mildew infection.
- Prune Summer flowering jasmine by cutting back to strong side shoots below the flowered stems.
- Plant Spring bulbs, except tulips which should be planted in November.
- Rake out, or scarify, dead grass and moss in the lawns, and aerate. Reseed bare patches or lay turf.
- Feed permanent container plants with a high potash feed, such as tomato food, even though they may have been given slow release fertiliser earlier in the year.
- Dig up, pot on and bring indoors, tender perennials ie. pelargoniums.
- Plant spring flowering biennials such as foxgloves and wall flowers.

Green Gardening Tip – Hedges

Hedges can be a mini paradise for animals, full of fruit, shelter and cover. In fact, for every foot of hedge height, there are ten horizontal feet of shelter! Trimming hedges and trees should be avoided between March and August as this is the main breeding season for nesting birds.

Most hedge plants, such as hawthorn, flower and fruit on the previous year's growth. Cut them every other year, or a proportion of them each year to allow flowering and fruiting. Cutting should be carried out in late winter after any berries have been eaten by birds. Keep the hedge free from rank grass and weeds for the first few years. A mulch of grass clipping or bark chippings along the bottom can suppress weeds and reduce water loss in dry weather. This greatly enhances the survival of the plants.

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/advice/gardening-for-wildlife/plants-for-wildlife/garden-hedges/>

Christmas Outing to Wisley Glow – Thursday 15th December

£26.50 (extra £5 for guests) for coach travel and entry to Glow. We will visit the gardens in the afternoon and stay on for Glow in the early evening, exact timings tbc. There's a festive buffet afternoon tea, £15 pp, or cream tea, £6.50 pp and I am checking if those who come could book this for themselves, subject to availability. They usually have food stalls at Glow. Full details to follow. **Eleanor O'Connor.**

Holiday 2023: Torquay, 26th – 30th May

We have provisionally booked to go to Torquay, Devon for 5 days from Thursday 26th to Monday 30th May, 2023. The itinerary is being finalised and will be sent by email to all members as soon as it is available. If you receive the newsletter by post, please let Briony know if you are interested in joining us.

Your Committee

Chairman and Membership Secretary:

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Committee Members:

Mary Holloway	01494 875793
Caroline Jackson	01494 876685
Eleanor O'Connor	01494 875646
Sumitra 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.