

# CSGGA Newsletter

## July 2020



RHS Affiliated Membership Number: 10570237

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### An update from the Committee

Sadly, we are still unable to meet face to face, but the committee had its first virtual meeting earlier this month. We all agreed that despite the disruption caused by this wretched virus we had enjoyed some successes and overcome some challenges. The pop up plant sales raised a phenomenal sum raising a total of £1,372. Members seem to have enjoyed the challenge of the Virtual Spring Show, but I sensed members had lost their enthusiasm when the entries dwindled to only a handful and fewer votes were cast – this seemed to coincide with the relaxation of the lockdown. As a last hurrah I'm including the final photos submitted to Pollunit below

Some challenges were proved more difficult to overcome including the cancellation of so many meetings, but, I'm delighted to advise that we have a solution for September! Timothy Walker was going to be joining us to talk about "Sex, Lies and Putrefaction" but we will now be holding it by Zoom. I know it will not be quite the same as meeting each other face to face but understand that U3A had a talk from Timothy and it went down very well. So, we'll let you have the details once they have been finalised. We hope to roll over the other talks that we have missed to 2021 and are keeping our options open at the moment for the AGM in October and meetings later in the year.

The other main frustration was the cancellation of both the holiday and many of the wonderful outings we had planned. We are still hoping that we can go to Wisley but it may be that we all have to go independently rather than using a coach, which sadly, I know will not suit everyone but let's hope for the best. We are planning to re-arrange all the other outings for next year at about the same time and the holiday will go ahead next year.

### The last of the entries to Pollunit – there was no voting but they all look like winners to me!



Class 36  
Moiya Stroomer



Class 36  
Moiya Stroomer



Class 39  
Caroline Jackson



Class 39  
Caroline Jackson



Class 37  
Chin Fenton

## M's Action Diary for July

- Prune wisteria by shortening long side shoots to 2 or 3 buds from old wood. <https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?pid=242>
- Some varieties of penstemon are not fully hardy so take softwood cuttings.
- Trim rock roses to remove dead flowers but do not cut into old wood, some may flower again.
- Plan autumn flowering bulbs or colchicums, sternbergias and hardy cyclamen
- Lavenders require trimming to maintain shape, never prune back into old wood as lavender will not produce new shoots from woody stems.
- Dig up and divide congested clumps of bearded iris immediately after flowering. Discard spent rhizomes that have no shoots, select health vigorous rhizomes from the outside with a fan of leaves, cut back the fan to 15 cms and plant the prepare rhizomes in a sunny spot with the tops just visible.
- Trim hedges after making sure there are no nesting birds, keep bases week free
- Continue dead-heading rhododendrons, azaleas and camellias and ensure that they are watered now to encourage next year's flowers. if your rhododendrons have black buds then remove them too. These were probably caused by lack of water during July and August last year when buds were forming to flower this year – which they did not. (Merida has had a large number to remove)



## Green Gardening Tip

Making compost is often considered to be complex but all you need to do is provide the right ingredients and let nature do the rest - however, a little know-how will help you make better compost, more efficiently. As you add material to the compost heap, mix greens (nitrogen rich) with browns (carbon rich) at a 50/50 ratio. Dry heaps will need watering. Turning the heap will aerate it and speed up decomposition. For more details see <https://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/compost>

### Greens (nitrogen rich)

- Grass cuttings
- Young weeds
- Nettles (not roots)
- Comfrey leaves
- Urine (ideally diluted 20:1)
- Uncooked fruit and vegetable peelings
- Tea bags (Many teabags contain small quantities of plastic. Ideally empty bags first and use only the leaves on the compost.) Tea leaves and coffee grounds
- Soft green prunings
- Animal manure from herbivores eg cows and horses
- Poultry manure



### Browns (carbon rich)

- Cardboard eg cereal packets, toilet roll tubes and egg boxes
- Waste paper and junk mail, including shredded confidential waste
- Paper towels & bags
- Bedding (hay, straw, shredded paper, wood shavings) from vegetarian pets eg rabbits and guinea pigs
- Tough hedge clippings
- Woody prunings
- Straw
- Old bedding plants

## NGS Virtual Garden Tours

If you are still not going out much and the weather is inclement you might like to know that the NGS has collated an array of garden tours which provide an introduction and summary of the main features of each garden. The virtual tours last 10 minutes on average and visit gardens throughout the United Kingdom. Please click on the link to enjoy at your leisure. <https://ngs.org.uk/virtual-garden-visits-collection/>

**Jacqui Greenham**

### Some gardening products tried by Committee members

#### Grazers – pest deterrent



My brother told me about the success he is experiencing against pigeons by using the product Grazers so I thought I would give it ago.

I bought G3 which deters sap sucking beasts ie cabbage whites and aphids. So far so good and for the

first time ever my Shasta daisies are black fly free and not because there are fewer black fly this year. There are 4 products, G1 deters rabbits, deer and pigeons, G2 deters slugs and snails, G3 sap suckers and G4 lily beetles. When applied to green photosynthesising leaves and stems, the calcium-based, environmentally safe Grazers products work to creating a 'plant-mediated effect' that dissuades the pests from eating these plants. The indigenous pests then seek other nearby food sources instead and so leave our plants to thrive, helped in their growth by the calcium nutrient in the product. Therefore grazers benefits not only our plants, which in effect are 'helped to help themselves', but also predators of the plant pests, thereby keeping the natural wildlife food chain in place, so enhancing the environment.

The downsides are you need to respray after heavy rain and new growth. It is not advisable to spray young seedlings, and you do need to know your pest.

Grazers are based in Cumbria and my mail order arrived promptly. I bought direct from Grazers and there was no charge for postage. Check them out on [www.grazers.co.uk](http://www.grazers.co.uk)

Do let me know if you are using Grazers and the success or otherwise you are experiencing.

**Margaret Dykes**

#### Strulch



I first came across Strulch in 2017 when I visited The Alnwick Garden in Northumberland, where they used it extensively. I had a quick chat with one of the many gardeners and he explained that it is a mulch made from chopped wheat straw that has been treated with minerals. So not only does it act as a mulch to suppress weeds and help retain moisture, but it also deters slugs and snails.

At that time it was not easy to find, but in 2018 I used my Christmas gardening vouchers at Rowan Nurseries to buy my first bag. It wasn't quite enough to mulch the whole of my strawberry patch, but it was a good start. That first bag lasted the estimated 2 years and while I shared the strawberries with the birds, none of the strawberries left for me had any slug bites in them.

This year it was time to top up the strulch. I spent more Christmas garden vouchers at Rowan, pushed the boat out and bought 2 bags of strulch. This meant I could use it on all of the strawberry patch at the front of the house, and part of the patch at the allotment. This year both these patches have been protected from the birds. I have now been harvesting non nibbled strawberries since the end of May and there are still more to come.

Next year I will be buying another bag or two to change the mulch on our final strawberry bed. This one had been mulched with leaves and hedge trimmings. The fruit was attacked by the slugs and the woodlice joined in the feast.

And before you ask, Gary loves strawberries but I prefer raspberries.

Cheers & happy gardening

**Caroline Jackson**



## A Gooseberry Glut?



### Quick Gooseberry Dessert

About 6 oz ripe gooseberries

450gm Carton of Greek style yoghurt

3 tablespoons Elderflower cordial

Sugar to taste

Handful of Amaretti biscuits

Cook gooseberries in a splash of water until soft and leave to cool.

Mash them up and add yoghurt and cordial.

Check sweetness and add sugar if necessary.

Serve with crunched up Amaretti biscuits sprinkled over.

**Jan Bradley**

### Gooseberry Tart Serves 10

25.5cm (10") flan tin

450g gooseberries

3 eggs

100g caster sugar

284ml double cream

1tsp vanilla extract

Icing sugar to dust

Sweet pastry:

150g plain flour

50g caster sugar

75g cold butter

1 medium egg yolk

Method:

Put flour and sugar in a food processor and mix together briefly. Chop cold butter into chunks and add. Pulse until mixture resembles breadcrumbs and turn into a mixing bowl. Mix egg yolk with 3tbsp ice-cold water, add to bowl and mix with your hands until the pastry forms a soft ball. Roll out on a floured surface and line the tin. Chill for half an hour in the fridge.

Preheat oven to 180C (160C fan), mark 4. Top and tail the gooseberries. Mix the eggs, caster sugar, cream and vanilla extract in a large bowl.

Prick the pastry base with a fork, cover with greaseproof paper and baking beans and bake blind until golden (about 10-15 min). Remove from oven and take out the paper/beans, then return it to the oven for another 10-12 min. When cooked, allow the pastry to cool slightly.

Add the gooseberries to the pastry case and pour over the egg mixture. Bake for about 35 min until the centre is just firm. Dust with icing sugar and serve warm with thick cream.

**Eleanor O'Connor**

## 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.