

CSGGA Newsletter

October 2020



RHS Affiliated Membership Number: 10570237

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Speakers via Zoom

Sadly much of our programme of planned speakers for 2020 has had to be curtailed but we seem to be getting into the swing of holding meetings via Zoom. If you haven't yet joined us please do give it a go – it really is very simple and we've had 2 very different events. If there is a small silver lining to the coronavirus pandemic, then it might be the emergence of speakers happy to share their knowledge via Zoom, so we're able to book speakers from further afield, who would have been prohibitively expensive, previously, because of their travel costs. However, even if the talks continue to be virtual, we hope that we may soon be able to offer members a choice of going to the Memorial Hall or using zoom.

AGM and Gardeners' Question Time

The AGM also had to be held via Zoom this year but we were delighted to welcome 31 members virtually. The Minutes of the Meeting are attached to those who receive this newsletter by email, and those who receive it by post will be sent then upon request – just let me know. We were delighted to welcome Sam Patel to the Committee but very sorry to say goodbye to Jacqui and Ravi – they will be missed.

Following the success of the Q&A session after the 2019 Spring Show, it was decided to have a regular slot after the AGM for our own version of Gardeners' Question Time. Members were able to put their gardening queries to Alison from Rowan's Garden Centre and our own Alan Clark, both happy to pass on their knowledge to those of us with less experience. Questions included problems with apples, how to deal with weevils, the timing of pruning roses and raspberries, as well as general care of the latter, the growing popularity of sensory gardens and the favourite plant of both the panel members. This was then opened out to "the floor" for members to share their favourite plant – Alison's favourite is Sarcocolla, (or winter box) and Alan's a magnolia stellata, Leonard Messel, as their favourites members also named snowdrops and a Himalayan musk rose with special memories.

We are most grateful to Alison and Alan for their time and expertise. For workshops and shopping at Rowan see below or keep an eye on their Facebook page.

<https://www.facebook.com/rowangardencentre/>



New Sensory Garden, Old Amersham Memorial Gardens

Christmas Workshops at Rowans Garden Centre

Rowans are holding their popular Christmas wreath workshops this year, and have added table centrepiece workshops, but understandably there will be some changes:

- There will be 5 places per workshop.
- Each participant must bring their own secateurs. (Available to buy on the day.)
- Each participant must wear a mask.
- Each participant must book their own slot. You cannot book for a friend. (They need to go through all the detail with each participant.)

DATES: Wreath making every day Tuesday 1st December - Saturday 5th December and Tuesday 8th December - Saturday 12th December.

Table centrepiece workshops Tuesday 15th December- Thursday 17th December.

TIME: 10am - approx 12pm

COST: £40 to include all 'ingredients' and cuppa and mince pie.

VENUE: The polytunnel at the Garden Centre so wrap up well. Fingerless gloves recommended.

BOOKING: At the till or by telephone, 01494 872335. **Please book early** as numbers are so reduced.

All the above is subject to change in line with government guidelines.



Next Month's Speaker via Zoom - Jane Perrone

Starting your own indoor jungle: a fresh look at houseplants

Jane Perrone, a freelance journalist, presenter and producer of indoor gardening podcast On The Ledge is our speaker for November. Jane writes for a range of publications, including the Guardian, the Financial



Times, Gardens Illustrated, Grow Your Own magazine and The English Garden. She regularly appears on gardening podcasts and gives interviews on the radio about everything from slugs to succulents. She is a member of the Garden Media Guild in the UK and is also on the RHS Advisory Committee on Houseplants and Cut Flowers.

Houseplants are undergoing a huge revival: Jane Perrone looks at the reasons behind the trend, examines some of the plants stealing the spotlight and offers up some tips on making the best of your collection, from styling your plants to making sure they are pest-free.

Christmas Party – Change of Plan – 10th December

While we won't be able to enjoy our Christmas Party feasting on "To Dine For's" delicious food this December, we have been fortunate in securing **Matthew Biggs**, best known for his appearances on the long running BBC Radio 4 programme Gardeners' Question Time to join us and give a talk via zoom. Details will follow in November, but please put the date in the diary and be sure to join us, Matthew is an engaging speaker. You might also like to invite friends to join in too – the more the merrier!

M's Action Diary for October

- Lift and divide summer flowering herbaceous perennials every 3 to 4 years to ensure healthy, vigorous plants.

- Pot up treated hyacinth bulbs singly or several in a large bowl, then place in a cool dark location. Check them regularly and bring them into the light when developing shoots are 5 cm. Keep them cool and in the light, only bring them into a warm room once the flowers are opening.
- Clear summer bedding plants from beds and borders and place on compost heaps.
- Dig up gladiolus corms and store over winter in a cool dark place.
- Sow sweet peas.
- Lift dahlia tubers after frost. Cut back stems and stand them upside down for a couple of weeks to dry before laying in a tray of dry compost. Store somewhere cool and frost free.
- Plain leaves appearing in variegated plants should be cut right back.
- Keep lawns free of fallen leaves and fruit.
- Bring tender plants in pot under cover or wrap in fleece.
- Empty ceramic pots and bring under cover to prevent frost damage.
- Apply a patio cleaning product to paving.



Green Gardening Tip

I recall a speaker telling us that gardeners can be too tidy, especially, at this time of the year when beneficial insects need safe hibernation sites. Ladybirds, ground beetles and lacewings can find homes in tussocky grass, leaf piles and hollow stems. Spiders often lay their eggs in the corner of greenhouses and sheds, if left until next year, the babies will emerge and feed on insect pests. Earwigs too can be valuable predators, though they can eat ornamental and vegetable plants. Earwigs are actually omnivorous, and are beneficial in compost heaps where they primarily feed on decaying organic matter but they also eat pest insects like fruit tree pests, aphids, mites, as well as other insect larvae. The female earwig will guard their eggs during the winter in crevices in walls or under stones.



Holiday 2021

The Gardens of Essex and Suffolk

5 days Sunday 27th to Thursday 1st July 2021

Our holiday to Essex and Suffolk, postponed this year, has been re-arranged by Tailored Travel for 2021. Those previously booked will be receiving a letter from Tailored Travel in due course but we have secured a few additional rooms, so if you would like to join us, please let Briony know.

Travelling by executive coach, we will stay four nights on half board basis at the 4* Stoke by Nayland Hotel www.stokebynayland.com on the outskirts of Leavenheath.

The hotel is located in a countryside setting in the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, 10 miles from the centre of Colchester. Facilities at the hotel include a restaurant, bar, spa with swimming pool, gymnasium, sauna, steam room and a Jacuzzi and two golf courses! All rooms are en-suite and feature television, telephone, hairdryer. A double room will cost £599.00 per person, for single occupants there is an additional £99.00 supplement. Lunches, holiday insurance and gratuities are also not included.



We have agreed a full programme of excursions that will appeal to both garden lovers and art enthusiasts. The cost of the holiday includes the services of a blue badge guide for 3 days and entry to all the gardens, except Ickworth (which will be free to National Trust members). We will be visiting:

[Wyken Hall Gardens & Vineyard](#)

[Ickworth House \(National Trust\)](#)

www.csgga.org

Southwold

[Layer Marney Tower – guided tour](#)

[Gainsbrough's House and Gardens](#)

[Marks Hall Gardens & Arboretum](#)

[Adnams Brewery](#) (not inc)

Colchester

Lavenham

[Gibberd Gardens](#)

Ipswich – guided tour

[Green Island Gardens](#)

[Helmington Hall Gardens](#)

The itinerary is attached and full details of the holiday can be found on our website or at Tailored Travel www.tailored-travel.co.uk and quote csgg201 though please note the dates have not yet been amended). **No deposits are due yet but if you are interested in joining us, please contact Briony – details on last page.**

Christmas Shopping

If the thought of Christmas shopping is a cause for concern during the pandemic, I'd like to remind you that our Treasurer, Margaret Dykes, could offer you the perfect solution as she runs a Traidcraft "shop" from her home in Roughwood Lane. Details of all the Traidcraft products can be found on the website www.traidcraftshop.co.uk/ or please contact Margaret for a catalogue. You can either place an order with Margaret and avoid delivery costs or order direct online. Note delivery is free for online orders over £50 made online but charges apply for those under £50. Margaret's contact details are shown below.

Fun with Figs



A few years ago, on Show day, one of judges offered me a fresh fig from his own garden. I declined as I had never had a fresh fig before and I didn't want to embarrass myself. I had no idea how to eat a fresh fig, did you peel it or not? Although I love dried figs at Christmas time, I also didn't know if I would like the flavour of a fresh fig! But a seed had been planted in my memory.

A year or so later I was buying some fruit trees on line and needed to bulk up the order so I added a Brown Turkey fig plant. This variety is described by the RHS as: "The classic fig for British gardens, heavy cropping, producing a mass of tasty fruit. Outdoors or in containers". I planted mine against a sunny wall and waited for it to mature. Being the impatient type I was worried by the third year that I had seen no fruit. Last year I saw a couple of fruit buds, but was some what distracted and they disappeared, possible eaten by wasps.

This year, as we all know has been different. I noticed in late spring, that there were fruitlets at the base of almost every leaf on the plant. I was determined to keep an eye on their progress through the year. As with many gardening projects, there seemed to be conflicting information. The RHS site advocates regular feeding and watering through the summer, Pomana fruits who supplied my plant state that the fig is around the most drought tolerant of plants and that "most garden soils contain sufficient nutrients for a fig to grow healthily, though a high potash top-dressing applied in spring can be beneficial". Being the lazy gardener I followed the Pomana advice.

My fruits grew through the year then, at the beginning of September I started to check to see if the figs were ripening ... they were not. Since I had seen my first fresh fig on the first Saturday in September, I was a bit concerned ... back to the internet for more study. Here I found that figs don't ripen if they are under stress. They stop ripening if they are thirsty and/or hungry. So I should have followed the RHS advice. Since figs have to ripen on the tree, I decided that in order to get any ripe figs this year, I would have to get the watering can out. I also decided to remove half the fruit, to reduce the stress to the plant. After doing that, the rain came ... and lo my figs are ripening. Maybe I will have some ready for the Show next year, fingers crossed everybody.

Caroline Jackson

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Reminder – Subscriptions are due!

Thank you for those of you who have paid your subscriptions and returned your membership forms. If you have paid by bank transfer or standing order then we still need your completed forms, please.

The programme for next year has now been finalised and we will be sending out the membership cards for 2021 as soon as they have been printed.

A couple of adverts from members

Strawberry Plants

Caroline Jackson is lifting a strawberry bed, so will have plants available for sale / giving away. It is a variety that fruits early in the year, then late in the year - but she has forgotten the name!

Probably perfect for a greenhouse or polytunnel, they are flowering at the moment.

She is planning to lift them soon and will pot them up for next year's plant sale, or they are available for a late sale this year!

Ride on Mower

Michael Bates has a Mountfield 15 HP, 32 inch manual ride on mower/ tractor Model 1530M. Hardly used, in excellent condition. Purchased new in 2017. Can be seen running. Buyer collects in CSG Offers over £1,200.

Tel. 01494 873585

Your 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

Treasurer: Margaret Dykes, 4 Roughwood Fields, Roughwood Lane, Chalfont St Giles, HP8 4AA 01494 874511 margaretrdykes@btinternet.com

Committee Members:

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 interested in joining us.