



MALMESBURY and DISTRICT GARDEN CLUB

March/April NEWSLETTER 2019

www.malmesburygardenclub.org.uk

Chair and Secretary – Ellie Church

JOTTINGS FROM THE CHAIR

The lighter nights are now approaching which delights me. Snowdrops are blooming in the garden and along the grass verges. They look so pretty and a sign that spring is on the way.

Sadly each year we have fewer members of the club. The committee have been puzzling how we can keep the numbers up. Can I appeal to members to bring a friend to the meetings? Membership is still only £7.00 per annum and this is easily recouped from the generous discounts that we are able to obtain. Malmesbury Garden Centre offers a discount of 10% when you show a current membership

card, Dobies give us about 45% off the purchase of seeds and 10% off other items, and the E&S hardware shop in Malmesbury also gives 10%. Throughout the year the club has excellent speakers who talk on a variety of themes relating to gardening. Keith provides us with many informational themes in the Newsletter. Membership offers exceptional value for money. If you have any suggestions to attract members, please either ring or speak to me or one of the committee members.

Happy gardening and may all your seeds be prolific.

Ellie Church – Chair



SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2019!

Many of you have yet to pay your subscription for 2019.

If you wish to remain a member and to take advantage of all the discounts listed in the Chairman's Jottings above, please use the renewal form at the end of this Newsletter.



Tasks for March/April



- Plant out early sown sweet peas
- Cut back winter flowering heathers
- Cut back autumn flowering shrubs, fuchsias, buddlejas, etc.
- Sow half hardy annuals
- Prune bedding roses, hybrid teas and floribundas
- Spray roses against black spot
- Spray fruit trees with spring spray
- Put slug bait around tender plants, delphiniums etc.
- Complete planting of lilies
- Apply general fertilizer to the borders
- Sow under cloches early carrots and lettuce
- Sow herbs under glass: basil, coriander, etc.
- Plant onion sets, potatoes
- Sow wrinkled peas
- Sow late summer cabbage and leeks
- For April: sow Brussels sprouts, kale, etc.

MEETINGS – EVENTS – ACTIVITIES

<p>Monday 11 March 2019 7.30pm in the Charlton Village Hall <i>A Curious History of Vegetables</i> Bill Lawes</p> <p>Bill is an author from Hereford. He has written several books, one of which is <i>A Curious History of Vegetables</i></p>	<p>Monday 8 April 2019 7.30pm in the Charlton Village Hall <i>A talk by</i> <i>Piers Lavan</i></p>
<p>Saturday 25 May 2019 The Market Cross <i>Annual Plant Sale</i></p> <p>See the note from Graham below</p>	

Malmesbury Garden Club Annual Plant Sale 25 May 2019

Although 25 May seems a long way off, now is the time to think about the plant sale. You probably don't need reminding that this is the main fundraising function for the club.

Plants that sell well are: all forms of bedding plants (eg marigold, begonias, petunias, antirrhinum, impatiens), fuchsias, dahlias, chrysanthemum; vegetables, eg brassicas, leeks, runner beans that are ready to transplant, and tomatoes suitable for growing outdoors.

Remember: if you can grow it we can sell it!



*Graham Rees
Plant sale organiser*



Further details of these open gardens can be found in the 'Yellow Book' or on the NGS website: <http://www.ngs.org.uk/gardens/find-agarden.aspx>

Sunday 7 April

Stourhead Garden, Stourton, Warminster BA12 6QD.

Saturday 13 April

Job's Mill, Five Ash Lane, Crockerton, Warminster BA12 8BB.

Sunday 14 April

Foxley Manor, Foxley, Malmesbury SN16 0JJ.

Wednesday 24 April

Hazelbury Manor Gardens, Wadswick, Box, Corsham SN13 8HX.

Friday 26 April

Bowood Woodland Gardens, Calne SN11 9PG

Saturday 27 April

Allington Grange, Chippenham SN14 6LW.
 Iford Manor, Bradford-on-Avon BA15 2BA.

Sunday 28 April

Allington Grange – as above
 Corsham Court, Corsham SN13 0BZ.
 Oare House, Rudge Lane, Oare, nr Pewsey SN8 4JQ.

Grittleton Plant and Spring Fair

Grittleton House, Grittleton, Chippenham SN14 6AP

Monday 27 May 2019, 11.00am-3.00 pm

In aid of Action Medical Research



Malmesbury Garden Club Annual Show

27 July 2019

Members will now have full details of our Summer Show – a full schedule is available to be downloaded and hard copies are also available. We have a date Saturday 27 July and I hope you will make it a 'date'. There are very few changes to the classes, mostly to clear up any small confusion. We have changed 'Class 5: Six cherry tomatoes' to now become 'Cherry type tomatoes'. Members will have noted that there have been a large number of new varieties of 'small' tomatoes, which come in various shapes, some are long and thin others heart- or pear-shaped. Our intention is to encourage as many entries as possible and we know some of you are drawn try these new varieties. In the same way we have divided 'Class 8: One cucumber' into those fruits grown outdoors and those grown under protection.

Getting the terms right is a problem – a few years ago we might have used the word greenhouse-grown, but what is a greenhouse? Is it a poly tunnel? Would growing a cucumber in a



frame be outdoor? I was asked 'What is a Strig?' (Class 25: 'Strig' of Blackcurrants). It is a term relating to currants – a strig indicates a bunch, a complete raceme or panicle of berries, for showing best detached from the plant with scissors without including any of the woody section at the base. Also useful in Scrabble!

Do you remember the terrible winds when we held our Show last year? We thought the hall door was going to be torn off! Gardening is for optimists. It's going to be a lovely July day and we will all be sitting out on the field drinking tea.

Derek

Dobies' Seed Catalogue 2019

If you have not received your 2019 catalogue of seeds, plants, bulbs, fruit and equipment, and would like one please email me at jnghughes@tiscali.co.uk. There are wonderful bargains to be had with 45% off all seeds (postage £1.99) and 10% off everything else. There is a huge range of veg and flower seeds including heritage varieties and it is not too late to order super plugs and potted plants for your hanging baskets.



Dobies' trials manager, Tony Connabeer, gives great tips on growing veg. It is worth having this catalogue just to learn some pointers.

You can also sign up for new offers, exclusive offers and special promotions. Visit dobies.co.uk/sign-up to subscribe.

Happy gardening!

Gail Hughes

Reports on meetings

January: Stumperies, Ferns and Shady Friends

Derek writes: Our first speaker in 2019 saw the return of Andrew Tolman who gave a fascinating illustrated talk on 'Stumperies, ferns and shady friends'. We learnt that the first stumpery was built at Biddulph Grange and the largest in Britain is at Highgrove, a stumpery built into an arch made from sweet chestnut roots. Andrew showed, stage by stage, the planning he had been involved with and the building of a modern

stumpery in a London Park. His talk concluded with a series of photographs of unusual ferns and plants which are associated with these horticultural oddities.



February: You would be surprised about the poisonous plants you grow in your garden

Gail writes: In February, Jenny Tidmarsh introduced us to poisonous plants. How could this possibly be interesting, you ask? But Jenny, with her wealth of experience from Kew Royal Gardens and a beautifully coloured brochure, led us through a fascinating journey discussing plants many of us know – hellebores,

delphiniums, euphorbias, wisteria. to but name but a few. We learnt how they could hurt us but also learnt how important they can be in healing us.

With anecdotes and sometimes lurid details, Jenny entertained us and certainly broadened our knowledge. A lovely evening!

Anyone for compost ?

We have received an email from Chris Garbutt who works as a barista in Coffee #1 in Malmesbury High Street, and also has a qualification in permaculture design and an MSc in Green Economy. Chris is very passionate about sustainability, permaculture and a circular economy.



Chris writes that at Coffee#1 *"we get through a lot of coffee grounds, and provide bags of used grounds for customers to take away with them for compost, but we are producing much more than is collected. I was wondering if perhaps anyone local might be interested in having our surplus coffee grounds and other compostable waste in bulk on a regular basis?"*

.

"We also throw away quite a lot of napkins, loose tea leaves, blue paper towel, wooden stirring sticks, some newspaper, and lots of cardboard which I can also put aside for compost mix if wanted. Our waste takeaway cups are compostable, I don't know if they need special processing, but can endeavour to find out if anyone is interested to have them as well."

"Also, perhaps someone might be interested to re-purposed our waste empty plastic single portion soup pots as flower pots?"

"I was very inspired to visit Fungilocal in Stroud that uses coffee grounds to grow oyster mushrooms, and learned that they provide an ideal growing medium."

If anyone is interested, please contact Chris Garbutt on 07984199810 or at cgarbutt@gmail.com.



FROM THE GARDEN by KEITH

Comments from the garden

I recently had to remove many climbers from an 8ft x 80ft wall which was leaning badly and was being demolished and rebuilt. The wall had two varieties of jasmine, climbing roses, honeysuckle, clematis, cotoneaster and everlasting sweet pea, all of which had been there over 40 years. Happily I was able to save most of them; the roses however were far too old.

A new border

It's only a small area which I have been wanting to brighten up, part in sun and part in shade. When thinking of what to plant remember to put in plants and bulbs to give all year colour. Spring will be its first show so bulbs will dominate. Sadly I am too late to plant, so September will be the time to plant for the following spring. As I write this, on 4 January, snowdrops are in flower. Spring plants however can give various colours and heights; contrasting foliage colours are also important. Polyanthus come in a number of colours with single and double flowers. For instance if you like blue and white,



plant blue forget-me-nots with white polyanthus. If you prefer pink and yellow, plant yellow dornicum with its many petalled yellow flowers which are 3" across, height 2ft, with pink polyanthus or pansies. Moving into summer, *Galtonias var. candicans* (*Hyacinthus candicans*) are 3ft high with stems carrying on average 30 pendant white bell-shaped flowers. Beneath these can be planted hardy geraniums (cranesbill). Pick your colour: there are many blue, pink, majenta and purple varieties to choose from, all of which will look good with the white galtonias. Lilies are a must. My favourite is *L. regale* with its scented white, purple-streaked trumpets; these look good with an underplanting of *Alchemilla mollis* (lady's mantle) with its many yellow-green flowers. Autumn gives us that little extra with its leaf colourings. Silver-grey *Artemisia var. ladbrooks*

silver will stand out well with the late spray chrysanthemums which come in many colours. Autumn crocus (*Colchicum*), 4" high with pale purple flowers and no foliage, stand out well with a backdrop of *Nepeta x faassenii* (catmint) with its tall stems of blue-purple flowers. Winter has its own colour fascination: the red or yellow stems of *Cornus* (dogwood) underplanted with the evergreen *Euonymus fortunei var. emerald and gold*. For a backdrop to the border, try winter jasmine (*J. nudiflorum*) with its many small yellow flowers fronted by *Skimmia japonica*, an evergreen small shrub with white or cream flowers followed by red or black berries. There are hundreds of plant combinations for all seasons and these are just a few.

Keith's choice plant

Tamarix var. tetrandra: an arching shrub with needle-like leaves. In spring, on the previous year's growth, are arching sprays of four-petalled pink flowers.

No disease please

Coral spot: bright orange raised pustules appear on dead woody stems and branches. Many plants can be affected, magnolia, acer, elaeagnus just to name a few. Dieback can occur if not removed. A fungus is the cause from a wound or dead wood lying around. A splash of water is the main way of the disease moving around. Cut affected wood well back into live healthy wood, dispose of affected wood, do not pass through a shredder or put small pieces on compost. No available chemical to prevent this.



Plants to enjoy in March/April

Bergenia, saxifrage, polyanthus, hellebores, camellias, forsythia, *Ribes* (flowering currant) magnolia.

Bulbs to enjoy in March/April

Erythronium (dog's tooth violet), crocus, narcissus, hyacinth, chionodoxa, iris.



FROM THE VEGETABLE PLOT by KEITH

Comments from the vegetable plot

With the weather on the dry side this winter, working the soil has been easy. Areas of the vegetable plot are now ready for sowing and planting with compost and farmyard manure dug in. The winter vegetables have been very good this time, especially the leeks.

Lettuce

With spring upon us I like to start having a salad lunchtimes when at work. In the May/June 2017 Newsletter I covered cut and come again lettuce, this time I will cover the many hearted lettuce now available. Again, over the years, many new varieties have appeared. There are now many Iceberg types. Antarctica is one I can recommend, a very crunchy type with good flavour which will stand well into the autumn if not eaten, and it has good disease resistance. Also the variety Lakeland, with very



tightly packed leaves which are sweet and crispy with good disease resistance. Another variety, Barcelona, has large crispy heads with good resistance to tip burn and all known races of downy mildew; it stands well into the

autumn. Some well-known lettuce varieties which I have grown for many years with no problems include Webbs Wonderful, all the year round, and Tom Thumb for those of you who only need a small lettuce. A slightly bitter lettuce, not everyone's choice, is Radicchio Cesare, an Italian variety with solid heads like Iceberg, red and white in colour. Cos lettuce has also been a favourite over the years. Many varieties are now available, such as Elyburg x gem, a crunchy variety with the flavour of a gem cos.

Seasonal activities

With the weather in our favour at the moment the vegetable season starts to gather pace, greenhouse and frame came into play during February, March is a good time to sow in the frames carrots, spring onions, beetroot, salad, and plant out broad beans sown in February for an early crop. Now is the time

to plant potatoes generally outside in mid-late March, but those late frosts can play havoc. I always start onion sets and shallots in trays to get a good root system: an average seed tray will hold 80 to 100 bulbs. When growth is 2" high plant out. The good root system on each bulb will stop the birds pulling them out of the ground. By the beginning of April some sowings could be made in the open ground, weather permitting. Sow short rows of salad, beetroot, spring onion, which should be sown again at three week intervals so giving a continuous crop. Longer rows of early peas and carrots can also be sown. Remember to sow your carrots alongside your onions so helping to combat carrot fly. Sweet corn is an easy crop to grow so long as you grow them in a block not a long row as they need to be able to pollinate one another. Aphids on my curly kale are still a problem: underplanting with marigolds did not work, so I am growing the dwarf curly kale slightly closer together and underplanting with a lot of basil. Every year I plant basil amongst my tomato plants – not an aphid in sight.

Keith's choice vegetable



Courgette var. Black Forest f1: slightly different, this is a climbing variety and needs the support of trellis or wire. It will produce an abundance of medium-sized dark green courgettes.

No vegetable nightmares

Tip burn: not a disease or pest, but something that occurs when there is a heatwave. The leaves of lettuce and other vegetables lose water rapidly and the edges are scorched. There is no treatment, just don't forget to water when it's very dry; evenings are best.

Some vegetables to enjoy in March/April

Late Brussels sprouts, curly kale, savoy cabbage, turnips, swede, parsnips, leeks, perpetual spinach. From store; potatoes, onions, shallots, cooking apples.

Recipe

Mary Berry's Easter Lemon Pavlova

Ingredients

For the meringue

- 6 free-range egg whites
- 350g/12oz caster sugar
- 2 tsp white wine vinegar
- 2 level tsp cornflour

For the lemon curd filling

- 6 free-range egg yolks
- 350g/12oz caster sugar
- 4 lemons, juice only
- 225g/8oz butter
- 450ml/¾ pint double cream

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 160C/325F/Gas 3. Lay a piece of baking paper on a baking tray and draw a 25cm/10in circle on it.
2. Put the egg whites into a bowl and whisk on the fastest speed with an electric hand-whisk or in a free-standing mixer until stiff. Gradually, still whisking on maximum speed, add generous teaspoons of sugar until the mixture is stiff and shiny and stands in peaks.
3. Blend the vinegar and cornflour together in a cup and mix until smooth. Stir this into the meringue mixture.
4. Spread half of the meringue mixture onto the paper to give a 25cm/10in circle. Fill a piping bag, fitted with a rose nozzle, with the rest of the meringue mixture. Carefully pipe about 10 separate little nests positioned equally around the edge of the circle.
5. Slide the meringue into the middle of the oven, turn the heat down to 150C/300F/Gas 2 and bake for 1½-2 hours (check after one hour), or until it easily comes off the paper. The pavlova will be a pale creamy colour rather than white. Turn off the oven and leave the pavlova in the oven to become cold.
6. Meanwhile, make the lemon curd for the filling. Place a heatproof bowl over a pan of hot water, simmering gently on the stove. Add the egg yolks, sugar and lemon juice to the bowl and whisk. Gradually add the butter, whisking continually until it starts to thicken. It should coat the back of a spoon when it reaches the correct consistency. It will firm up further once cooled.
7. Whisk the double cream in a large bowl until thickened, then swirl it through the cooled lemon curd.
8. Spoon the lemon curd and cream mixture into the middle of the pavlova and spread over the base of the meringue nest. Spoon a lemon filling into each of the mini nests. Decorate by placing three chocolate mini-eggs in each of the 10 mini-nests around the edge of the dessert.
9. Put 100ml/¾ fl oz water and the caster sugar in a pan. Bring to the boil, stirring. Add the zest and boil for 2-3 minutes, or until syrupy. Drain on parchment paper, roll in extra caster sugar and leave to dry in a warm place for a couple of hours, or overnight. Place a delicate mound of candied zest in the middle of the pavlova and serve.

www.bbc.com/food/recipes



To serve

- 30 chocolate mini-eggs

For the candied lemon zest

- 100g/¾ oz caster sugar, plus extra for coating the zest
- 4 lemons, zest only (in long thin strips)

Ellie

Editor's postscript

Well, what a bumper issue this is! It is wonderful to have so many contributions to the Newsletter. The reports on meetings remind us of the fascinating range of topics that we cover in our programme, and of the rich diversity embraced by those simple, everyday terms 'gardens' and 'gardening'.

I was particularly pleased to get Chris Garbutt's offer of used coffee grounds and other compostable materials. Sustainability is something that we should all be striving for, and it is good to know that younger people are so engaged in working towards a healthier planet. I do hope someone is able to take up this offer.

Alison

SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2019

Subscriptions for 2019 are now due and can be paid at meetings or direct to
Mr. Sean O'Shea, Redlands, West End, Brinkworth, Chippenham, SN15 5DA or
The Club Post Box, E & S Hardware, High Street, Malmesbury.

PLEASE SECURE CASH/CHEQUE IN AN ENVELOPE WITH THIS FORM

Enclosed £7.00 single membership £10.00 double membership

1. (Mr) (Mrs) (Miss) (Ms):.....

2. (Mr) (Mrs) (Miss) (Ms):.....

Tel No.....

Address:.....

.....

Email address.....

Thank you

Sean O'Shea (Treasurer)