

MALMESBURY and DISTRICT GARDEN CLUB



May/June NEWSLETTER 2022

www.malmesburygardenclub.org.uk

Chair and Secretary - Ellie Church



JOTTINGS FROM THE CHAIR . . .

Today the sun is shining and the bluebells are in full bloom, looking beautiful. I think it will not be too long until we have some warm evenings when we will be able to enjoy sitting in the garden, or maybe pulling the weeds which seem to grow much quicker than the plants that we have deliberately planted!

It will soon be Saturday 28 May when we shall be holding our Plant Sale. Just a reminder that we need as many plants as you can spare and some people to help us sell them. We usually have a busy but fun morning doing our best to boost the club funds.

Our last speaker gave us tips on the preparation of entries for our horticultural Show which will take place on Saturday 30 July. The more exhibits the better the show, so please enter your plants and flowers. Look at the Schedule and choose whichever and as many entries as you fancy. We have the entries, judging followed by the exhibition to view. With luck we shall have good weather and be able to sit outside and enjoy a delicious afternoon tea.

I look forward to seeing you all at both of these events.

Ellie Church – Chairperson



SUBSCRIPTIONS – FINAL REMINDER!

Attached to this Newsletter is the form to fill out to renew your membership of the Club for 2022.

This form has been included in previous Newsletters. It will not be published after this edition.

The subscription income is a disappointment so far this year. Members who have not renewed will not receive future editions of the Newsletter – whether electronic or printed.

Thank you

Sean O’Shea (Treasurer)

Saturday 28 May 2022

ANNUAL PLANT SALE

This is Club's main fund raising event and with costs always increasing we need your help, either by donating produce or buying produce donated by other members.

If anyone needs help in collection of plants on the day please let me know and I will do my best to help.

Graham Rees

*Plant Sale Organiser
01666 823093*

Remember our motto: "**If you can grow, it we can sell it!**"



MEETINGS – EVENTS – ACTIVITIES

Saturday 28 May 2022
Malmesbury Market Cross

Annual Plant Sale

Saturday 30 July 2022
1.30 – 4.00 pm in the Charlton Village Hall

Annual Show

Admission free

Refreshments



Altons and Honeystreet Open Gardens

Sunday 12 June, 11.00 am – 6.00 pm

Open gardens across three villages, lunches, teas, vintage car rides, plant sale, live music.

Entrance: Adults £5.00/U16 accompanied children free. Proceeds to humanitarian aid in Ukraine, All Saints Roof Fund, the Springs Fund and the Coronation Hall. www.altonsandhoneystreet.org.uk

Worton and Marston Open Gardens

Saturday 25 June and Sunday 26 June, 12.00 – 5.00 pm

£5 for 1 day, £8 for both days. Lunch at the Rose and Crown. Teas at the Church from 2.00 to 4.30 pm. Plant Sales and other stalls. In support of Julia's House Children's Hospice.

Malmesbury Carnival Open Gardens

Sunday 7 August, 1.00 pm – 5.30 pm

If any members are interested in participating in the **Carnival Open Gardens Afternoon** on Sunday 7 August between 1.00 pm and 5.30pm, please contact **Sue Poolman** at sue.poolman@yahoo.com for more information.



Tasks for May/June

- Apply rose fertilizer 2 oz per sq yd
- Complete planting of half-hardy annuals
- Tie in tall growing perennials
- Prune early flowering shrubs, Forsythia, Ribes etc
- Sow hardy biennials, wallflower, Sweet William etc
- Plant out dahlias and chrysanthemums
- Sow annual seed in flowering situations
- Earth up early potatoes, cover if frost forecast
- Plant out courgettes, celery and sweet corn in late May
- Sow perennial seed, delphiniums, lupins, hollyhocks etc



CLUB SHOW (at last !)

SATURDAY 30 JULY at Charlton Village Hall 1.30-4.00pm

After all the misery of the past two years we are going to have our Show! Members will all have had access to the show schedule on our website or received a 'hard copy'. If anyone would like a hard copy please contact me. I have set out the 'on-line' schedule so you can just print the pages you want but please remember ALL the information is important if you intend to take part in our Show. I should also add here that if you need a second Entry form we will accept entries written on plain paper as long as you include ALL the details.



Funny Face Cakes

Not to be beaten we are having all the classes we would have had before Covid struck. Last year we even planned to use the prize cards which had been prepared for the 2018 Show, but we are pleased that Ron has designed and printed a new set of cards.



Cabbages awaiting the judge



Garden Peas

So the classes are the same with just the addition of two changes. We have changed the Children's class of a 'Decorated Plate' to 'Five Funny Face Cakes' which should be fun and we have an extra class in the Floral Art classes – as this is a very special year we have a class for an arrangement to mark "A Royal Occasion".



Sweet Peas

So all we need is your support. Please put in some entries and get any of your friends to do so as well, and of course we look forward to seeing everyone at the Show.



A delightful arrangement

We will be having a Grand Raffle and there will be Teas and Cakes served all afternoon – hopefully out on the lawns.

Finally if anyone wishes to help there are plenty of jobs to share.

Derek

01666 823944

Show memories . . .



Sean, our Treasurer, is laughing because he thinks we're in profit



George recording the winners



'Who would be a judge?': Keith makes someone happy



All is calm



What we all came for!



HELP! Your questions answered by resident expert, Keith

Please send your queries and problems to: info@malmesburygardenclub.org.uk

Q *My mint has a problem. Other years it has been fine. Can I still use it or is it best to leave it for another year?*



A Your description of the problem is undoubtably mint rust, lax growth and orange marks or bumps on leaves and stems. This disease is generally only found on old plants. There is no remedy to get rid of this dig out and dispose of, do not compost it if planting a new one plant in another position. Sometimes if you cut back all growth to ground level it will re grow virus free, remove all fallen leaves.

Q *I am thinking of using a mulch in my garden. Can you advise the best mulch to use as there are a lot of different ones available.*

A First of all, if you have a lawn, grass cuttings are a good mulch (as long as it has not been treated with weed killer). Use under hedges, between your potato rows and around fruit bushes to conserve moisture. Only put down a small layer of grass; you can always add more at a later time. I have used forest bark for years. It is a dark colour and plants stand out well above it. Other mulches available are composted bark, mulch mats, coir chip mulch, ornamental bark mulch, decorative bark chips, composted straw mulch, spruce bark chippings . . . the list goes on. Mulch will retain moisture in hot weather and save watering; it also reduces weed growth, although if you have perennial weeds such as bindweed (*Convolvulus*), ground elder, mare's tail or couch grass, these will still come through your mulch. Mulch does not last forever; it will compost down and need replacing. It will however last for two or three years.

Q *With the blue slug pellets no longer available, can you recommend an alternative?*

A In the past I have tried soot, gravel, ground coffee and a few other ones without success. I have even put down slug pubs (small containers containing beer); they work to a certain degree. What I have done is to put a collection of small stones, pieces of wood, upturned buckets, anything that will obscure the light: this is where the slugs will hide during daylight. You can easily then lift up your traps and remove the slugs. One slug and snail deterrent which is 100 per cent child and wildlife friendly and contains no chemicals is a product called Slugless, available from D T Brown. This product is made from straw: it also holds moisture, suppresses weeds and adds nutrients; it creates a dry spiky surface which the slug and snails' feet do not like.



At this point I would like any members of the club who have an alternative solution to the slug and snail problem to let us in on the secret.



FROM THE GARDEN by KEITH

Comments from the garden

A couple of new plants I added to the garden that I failed to mention, have given a good show well worth adding to the garden. The first is *Erigeron*, variety *Azure Fairy*, also known as Mexican daisy, fleabane or Oregon daisy. It is a herbaceous perennial; during summer semi-double lavender daisy-like flowers with a yellow eye appear on strong stems. A good perennial for the cutting border, ht 2½ ft (75cm). The second one I added was *Trollius europaeus*, also known as globe flower or bolts. A herbaceous perennial growing between 3 and 4 ft (60-90 cm). A clump-forming plant with lobed leaves. Erect strong stems rise up during late spring or early summer, topped with clear lemon yellow, ball-shaped flowers.



A herbaceous perennial growing between 3 and 4 ft (60-90 cm). A clump-forming plant with lobed leaves. Erect strong stems rise up during late spring or early summer, topped with clear lemon yellow, ball-shaped flowers.

Black flowers

Over the years a lot of black or nearly black plants have been bred, here are just a few: *Heuchera* Black Magic and Black Pearl; hollyhock variety *nigra* Black Giant; *Ophiopogon planiscapus nigrescens*, with black ornamental grass-like leaves; *Agapanthus* Black Magic; hyacinth Midnight Mystic; tulip Queen of Night; *Sambucus* (elder) Black Lace; *Oxalis triangularis*; iris Black Dragon; *Phormium* Black Velvet; *Cosmos atrosanguineus* chocolate cosmos; dahlia Blackjack (large dinner plate); dahlia Verrone's Obsidian



(cartwheel); dahlia Soulman (anemone flowered); *Gladiolus* Black Velvet; calla lily Odessa and Black Forest; Asiatic lily Black Charm; hellebore or Lenten rose New York night; cranesbill or *Geranium* Black Widow.

This colour is not everyone's choice but can look good planted amongst yellow or white flowering plants.

Keith's choice plant

Lunaria annua (honesty): a fast growing biennial (sow one year, flowers the next), flowers can be rosy magenta, white or violet purple. Flowers are highly scented giving a good show in spring and early summer. *L. rediviva* is the perennial honesty. All varieties 2-3ft in height.



Pests paradise

Carnation tortrix moth: caterpillars of a small brown moth. The caterpillars are pale green with brown heads, they feed between curled up leaves which bond together with silk webbing, causing the leaves to dry up and turn brown. This pest can occur on many shrubs and herbaceous plants, both in the garden and greenhouse. The caterpillars can be found in most seasons of the year. As you can imagine, the caterpillar is protected by the silk webbing, but infestations are generally light, and removal by hand will help to control the problem.

Plants to enjoy in May/June

Iberis (perennial candytuft), *Laburnum*, *Syringa* (lilac), *Dicentra* (bleeding heart), *Aubrieta*, *Lavatera* (mallow), *Cistus*, *Deutzia*, *Weigela*, *Dianthus* (pinks).



FROM THE VEGETABLE PLOT by KEITH

Comments from the veg plot

I have grown a fig, variety Brown Turkey, in a large pot for a number of years. It has produced but could be better. It has now been planted in the ground in the vegetable area and I am hoping for a better crop.



Potatoes

What can I say? It has been five years since I touched on this subject, countless new varieties have been bred, not everyone grows potatoes though. My vegetable plot is too small to grow main crop potatoes so I only grow an early variety that is good for boiling and for using with salads. I have grown potatoes in large pots

which I still do occasionally, just to try out new varieties. All you need is about six potatoes in the large pot with some compost or

farmyard manure beneath the potato; fill the pot with soil as the potato grows. This is how I now grow the second early potato Charlotte. This variety has a light yellow flesh and is slightly elongated, it also has good resistance to blight and scab, and improved slug resistance.

As I said, where to start. Many of you will have made your choice over the years but new varieties being bred have more resistance to pests and disease. First early potatoes will need some protection from the weather as they break the surface of the ground, here are a few first earlies you might like to try:

- Casablanca: oval tubers, white flesh, good disease resistance.
- Rocket: round tubers, white flesh, good for exhibition.



- Duke of York: oval tubers, red skinned, yellow flesh.
- Premiere: oval tubers, thin skinned, yellow flesh, good disease resistance.
- Sharpe's Express: kidney shaped, white fleshed, good disease resistance.

Many of the above varieties are good for salads, boiling, steaming and roasting.

Second early varieties worth trying include:

- Wilja: round/oval, all round use, good disease resistance.
- Vivaldi: large potato, oval/round, good disease resistance.
- Elfe: yellow flesh, rich sweet and buttery taste.
- Acoustic: good all rounder, good disease resistance.
- Kestrel: long white tubers, show bench variety, good disease resistance.

I have tried many of the above with good results. Should you have space most main crop varieties are good for storing, here are a few.

- Isle of Jura: round/oval, all round use, good disease resistance.
- Picasso: large oval tubers, drought resistant, heavy cropper.
- Stemster: oval, pale red skinned, all round use, good disease resistance.
- Rooster: round/oval, good flavour, all round use, good disease resistance.
- Sapro Mira: large oval, red with yellow eyes, good disease resistance, especially to blight.
- Apache: small round, red dotted cream skin, good disease resistance.

Sweet potatoes

Did you know they are no relation to potatoes; they are in fact a member of the morning glory (*Ipomoea batatas*) family and do not contain as much starch, but are rich in vitamins A, B, C and E, with traces of iron and calcium. Over the years they have become very popular. They also give a good crop and store well. Many varieties are now available, here are just a few:

- Beauregard: salmon orange flesh, sweet flavour.
- Murasaki: sweet nutty flavour, purple skinned, edible leaves.
- Erato Orange: bright orange red skin, good flavour, orange flesh.
- Erato Gusto: large oval tubers, white cream flesh, sweet flavour.
- Erato Violet: small tubers, purple skin, rich sweet flavour.



These sweet potato varieties will only be available in plug form for planting in pots. When well rooted, plant into vegetable plot. These sweet potato plugs will be dispatched early to mid-May from most catalogues.

Seasonal activities

At last the season of production begins. I hope you are all ahead of the game and have all your seeds, and putting together vegetable and flowering plants for the coming plant sale. I hope, like me, you are trying some new vegetable varieties, only one for me this year. Last year I grew an outdoor tomato with good blight resistance called Mountain Magic; they were a lovely orange/red colour with large trusses of medium-sized fruits with a good flavour. This year I am trying the variety Mountain Merit, a beefsteak variety. These will also be planted outside.

Nearly all vegetable varieties can be planted now. With the weather now (Easter weekend) perfect for gardening, I have spent nearly all day in the garden and have already planted up half of the vegetable plot. I have planted red onion sets, potatoes, carrot seed, spring onion seed, beetroot seed and fennel seed. Broad beans were in pots and planted out, also perpetual spinach and Swiss chard variety Bright Lights were planted, which were also in pots.

Preparation is now going ahead for the leeks, dwarf french bean and brassica beds, in which their will be cabbage, green sprouting broccoli, kale and Romanesco. Preparation is everything: compost added for the leek bed and dug deep, fertiliser and compost raked in for the brassica bed, no digging – ground needs to be firm for cabbage etc. The dwarf french bean bed needs

fertiliser and compost lightly forked in and firmed with the foot. All brassicas, french beans and leek plants are growing in pots.

A deep hole needs to be filled with compost, first lined with paper to preserve moisture for the roots should it be a hot summer; this will be for the runner beans or climbing french beans. I do not have room for a sweet corn bed, but if I did, the preparation would be the same as for dwarf french beans. The onion bed would also be treated in the same way: they prefer firm ground.

Keith's choice herb

Garlic chives: a little taller than ordinary chives, they also have flat leaves. A perennial with a mild garlic flavour with small white flowers, best grown in a pot.



No vegetable nightmares

Celery leaf miner: many plants will show symptoms of this pest, such as parsnip, parsley and a few other herbs. It shows as brown dried up patches. The interior of the leaf will have been eaten by white maggots. Stems of celery will have a bitter taste, if badly affected, the stems will also be thinner. Larvae of the leaf mining fly are the cause and will show from late spring to late summer. Infestations are usually light and can be dealt with by picking off the leaves when seen.

Some vegetables to enjoy in May/June

Spring cabbage and cauliflower, spring onions (autumn sown), salad leaves, radish, potatoes and peas (frame sown), young spinach leaves, last of stored potatoes (these will now be shooting growth badly), stored onions (these will also be starting into growth and becoming soft to the touch).

'I'm in the Garden': 80 years of gardening

Ron Bartholomew

This year, 2022, will be something of a watershed in my life. The increasing infirmity of old age compels me to employ a gardener to take charge of our garden. Though I can't pretend this change will be welcome, I have no cause to complain as it is now 80 years since I first wielded a spade and my time in various gardens started.

Way back in 1942, when I was 14 years old, a family friend handed over to me a half of his 10 rod allotment. I think he would cheerfully have given me the lot if his wife would have allowed it. To say he was not a keen horticulturist would be a considerable understatement.

The site was on the southern edge of Croydon at the top of a chalk cliff some 25ft high. My 5 rods, measuring 45ft x 30ft (no metric in those days), comprised something like 1½ spits of topsoil over chalk which probably went all the way down to Australia. The position looked out toward the south and west and Purley Oaks railway station. Before the war, although the allotment area had been in use since the first world war, there had been no allotments near to the cliff edge as it was thought too dangerous but, during the war, to 'Dig for Victory' was the cry and what was there to worry about possibly falling off a cliff edge? In 1944 it was a good place to watch the V1 Flying Bombs (doodle bugs) coming in toward London and many actually landed in Croydon. In ones teens you are immortal and never thought there to be any danger.

After my description you will understand that cultivation was not easy. About the only things that grew well were Brassicas. Beans and peas grew moderately well but root crops were mostly a disaster. As you would expect, the soil dried out very quickly so watering was a problem. There was just one standpipe for the whole site of some 30 allotments and, as this was near the centre, it was quite a long way to carry cans to my plot. There was little in the way of herbicides and fungicides at that time. Soot was said to deter bugs like carrot fly and a product called 'soft soap' was the only pesticide. This, I remember, came in 5 gallon cans and was mixed with water for spraying. I think the aphids and caterpillars enjoyed this although we seemed to suffer no more from their damage than we do today. For fertiliser I only remember Growmore, although I

think there must have been others. There was 'slaked lime' but obviously this was quite unnecessary on our plot. For gardening advice I don't recall any magazines, although I suppose there must have been some. Due to a shortage of paper they, like all other magazines, would have been difficult to obtain. At 2 o'clock on Sunday afternoons a Mr C H Middleton gave a 15 minute talk on the radio (or should I say wireless?) titled 'In Your Garden'. This was compulsory listening in our household and was probably the raciest programme of the day. Sunday radio was very straight-laced!

My time on the allotment came to an end with the arrival, on Christmas Day 1945, of my call-up papers (in those days there was a post delivery on Christmas Day). King George needed me to help with matters military and, with the war now safely over, I was happy to answer the call. It was 2½ years later when His Majesty decided he no longer needed my services and I was de-mobbed in July 1948. We only had a quite small garden at home which, by this time, my mother had allowed to become over-run with Lilies of the Valley, a plant which I regarded, and still do, as being nothing more than a weed. Just a word about my mother; she always proclaimed herself to be a keen gardener which, as a child, I unquestioningly accepted. It was only some years later I realised that I had never seen her do anything in the garden herself.

In February 1952 Jackie and I married and we were fortunate to buy a small house in Tolworth on the south-western outskirts of London, near Kingston-on-Thames. There was a shortage of housing after the war (it is even worse now after 75 years of peace!) so we were lucky. It really was tiny, what an estate agent would refer to as 'bijou'. The garden, front and back, was only about 15ft wide and most of this was in the front as the house lay back quite a long way from the street. Tolworth soil conditions were quite good but there was not much one could do in such a small garden. I grew some roses to line by the front path and a few perennials in the back garden. The next door neighbour had an allotment and offered to let us have half which I accepted (are all allotment holders trying to find



others to work their plot?). Geographically the plot was quite near to the house, but between us and it was a branch line of the Southern Railway. The route round by road and footpath was quite a long walk, especially as one had to carry all tools needed that day as there was nowhere to store them on the allotment. To my neighbour this was no problem, he worked on the railway and so thought nothing of walking across the line and expected me to do the same. The trouble for me was that the electric power for Southern Railway trains was carried on a third rail so, when crossing the track, one had to step over this lethal obstacle. Clearly I survived but the trespass was definitely illegal.

In the summer of 1958 I joined the RHS. I say joined but in those days one had to be nominated by an existing member and I was lucky in that Jackie worked in an office with a lady who was a member and she was persuaded, I think with some misgiving, to nominate me. At that time we were not members but 'Fellows' no less and could, if vain enough, attach the title FRHS after our names. After a few years the RHS stopped this and we became 'members'.

We only lived in Tolworth for 6½ years before moving to a larger house with a larger garden in Ascot, Berkshire, continuing the trend of moving west with each move and where we were to live for the next 27 years. The house was part of a small 'new-build' estate on ground which had been bought in 1936 by the local community to provide a recreation area as a celebration of the coronation of King Edward VIII. As it turned out this was a poor decision as Edward abdicated before he was crowned so the recreation development never happened. To build the houses the land was cleared of Scots pines and these were quickly replaced by thousands of gorse seedlings.

A keen gardener should never move to Ascot or to that end of Berkshire or the adjacent part of Surrey. The local soil is known as Bagshot Sand and has a thin covering of poor soil over a fine greenish coloured sand. Digging into the sand releases trapped methane which smells awful. The pH value of the soil is very low at anything between 4.5 and 5.5. The only cultivated plants that grow well in these conditions are rhododendrons and azaleas and the district is covered in these bringing a lot of colour in late spring. Growing almost anything else is a challenge. I sent soil samples to the RHS and the

message that came back was that every desirable component was missing. Using all the compost and manure that I could get hold of I struggled to grow a range of flowers and vegetables but never with much success.



The one gardening bright spot was the purchase of a greenhouse. This, at least, didn't depend on the local soil. We grew many things in the greenhouse; Jackie raised and maintained collections of cactus, African violets and Streptocarpus while I specialised in chrysanthemums and carnations. I much enjoyed these although the chrysanthes especially were a lot of work, taking cuttings in January, potting on at least five times during the spring and summer, watering and feeding and 'stopping' at the appropriate times. The reward in late December was some really lovely incurves and reflexes which, in those days would last indoors for at least three weeks. All was well until the 1960s when the then-new system of central heating with small bore pipes and pumped water became generally available. Gone were the days of cold rooms with warmth only to be found near the fireplace in the sitting room and in the kitchen. Life suddenly became much more comfortable but the chrysanthes didn't like it. They now lasted only for about 10 days or not even that. It seemed a great deal of work for so little reward so, reluctantly, I gave up growing them in the 1970s but I continued with carnations for several more years.

One notable feature of gardening from the 1950s to the 1980s was the plethora of chemicals that were on sale to the amateur gardener. There were several manufacturers offering something for just about every problem imaginable. Many were highly toxic for the environment but we didn't know that. I still remember that on the morning of the Prince Charles - Princess Diana wedding I was sprinkling DDT on the lawn to get rid of leatherjackets, of which there was an enormous number. During the 90s and the Noughties the vast majority of these products

became illegal, some because they were dangerous and many because the manufacturers couldn't justify the high cost of the trials that were now required to prove the product was safe, for a relatively small sale volume.

I had the good fortune to be employed in work that I enjoyed but, nevertheless, looked forward to retirement and the opportunity to do the other things I wanted to experience. Thus, when early retirement was offered in my late fifties I grasped the opportunity with enthusiasm and started to make plans for the future. Ascot is a typical outer London dormitory area and no place to live when one no longer had to make the daily commute. But where to move to, that was the question. I won't bore readers with the specification we drew up to clarify what we were looking for, but an early purchase was a set of Soil



Survey maps for southern England; I most certainly didn't want to repeat the challenge of Ascot's poor horticultural conditions. Armed with these we visited a number of possible places and several were eliminated due to soil conditions alone. I also went armed with a spade in the car boot. Winchester, for instance, had always held attractions but the soil there was much like Croydon; a thin layer of top soil over a great depth of chalk, so Winchester was out. It was pure chance that brought us to Milbourne and Malmesbury which, if I am honest, was a town I hardly knew existed. As readers will know the soil in this area is mostly loam over a limestone brash and one can get good results with a little effort. There are, however, some patches of Oxford Clay and one of these is at Milbourne. Some throw up their hands in horror at the mention of clay but I think it an excellent medium. Providing you treat it well, other than acid loving plants, most things can be grown well in clay. Plenty of compost and other organic materials, together with dressings of gypsum, have worked wonders for me. The only problem I have now is with acid loving plants but even those, with effort, can be grown.

Having read much about deep beds I decided to try these. I have become a complete convert to this method of growing vegetables. The results are excellent and the only failures are, almost without exception, due to the onslaught of caterpillars, slugs, snails and even mice.

I grow several types of fruit and generally these are good value, although last year I lost two gooseberry bushes to grey mould, a disease which causes the branches to die back one by one until the bush is dead. There is no treatment available to the amateur gardener so one just has to watch them die. Other than this the main worry is a late frost more or less wiping out the crop of one fruit or another. The rewards, however, of the usual abundance of a variety of fruits to eat fresh and to fill the freezer more than compensate for the occasional things that go wrong.

The plot at Milbourne, measuring about a third of an acre, is now, for the most part, given over to shrubs and a few small trees. In the early years that we were here I gave over several areas to bedding but these were very time consuming and so, in recent years, as my abilities and energy have waned, I have progressively replanted these beds with shrubs. At the last count I now have in my garden as many as 82 different kinds of shrub. Remembering the names of them all has become quite a test.

I haven't mentioned lawns and I certainly shouldn't as mine, although generally weed-free, is not of a quality to deserve that title. Perhaps wide grass paths is a better description as there are no wide sweeping green areas but rather the grass has been designed as a means of walking from one part of the garden to another.

At Ascot we introduced two goldfish ponds. They were side by side with one 18 inches higher than the other and with a waterfall between. It was there that I learned of the predatory habits of the



heron who cleaned out all the fish over two dawn raids. After this our ponds were netted. Soon

after moving to Milbourne I dug a small pond measuring about 11ft x 5ft and made a journey back to Ascot to collect six of what had been our fish. They were introduced to our new pond and no new fish have been added since. We knew they had multiplied but were nevertheless surprised when, a couple of years back, the pond was emptied for maintenance and we counted a total of 134 fish. Must be something in Milbourne water!

After 80 years my gardening career is now almost at its end. Now in my nineties I can no longer do all, or even most, of those things which need to be done and am seeking a gardener who is prepared to take on the task of keeping things under some sort of control. I have been very fortunate to be able to enjoy this hobby for as long as I have and my life would have been so much emptier without it. It has also brought into my life many fellow gardeners who have all contributed to making living worthwhile.

RECIPE . . .

Rhubarb Gin

Ingredients

1kg pink rhubarb stalks
400g caster sugar (don't use golden – it muddies the colour)
800ml gin



Method

1. Wash the rhubarb, trim the stalks and discard the base and any leaves. Cut the stalks into 3cm lengths. Put in a large jar with the sugar. Shake everything around, put the lid on and leave overnight. The sugar will draw the juice out of the rhubarb.
2. After 24 hrs, add the gin, seal and shake everything around. Leave for about 4 weeks before drinking. You can strain the liquor off through a muslin-lined sieve and transfer to a bottle, but I often just leave the rhubarb and booze in the jar and ladle it into drinks that way. Over time the rhubarb and the gin go a much paler colour – this doesn't look as dramatic.

Ellie

Editor's Postscript . . .

Congratulations!

Our congratulations go to Derek who has been presented with The Mayor's Lifetime Achievement Award for his outstanding service to the community, the British Legion, Malmesbury Garden Club, Malmesbury Carnival and the River Valleys Trust. This is a well-deserved award.



SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2022

Subscriptions for 2022 are now due and can be paid:

- at the monthly meetings
- by post to me at Redlands, West End, Brinkworth, Chippenham, SN15 5DA
- by using the Club Post Box at E & S Hardware Store, High Street, Malmesbury
- by Bank transfer to Lloyds Bank PLC; sort code 30 91 99; account 02440789; put your name as the reference so I can track your payment.

PLEASE SECURE CASH/CHEQUE IN AN ENVELOPE WITH THIS FORM

Enclosed £7.00 single membership £10.00 double membership

1. (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms): Membership No.

2. (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms): Membership No.

Tel. No.

Address:

.....
Email address.....

GDPR Declaration:

- I authorise Malmesbury & District Garden Club to hold records of my personal details as necessary for the efficient running of the club. These details include:
 - name and address
 - landline and mobile telephone numbers
 - email address (if disclosed)
 - application/renewal form
 - record of subscription payments
- I am happy for Malmesbury & District Garden Club to communicate with me by email, by post and by telephone.
- I am aware that I can request a copy of the details of my record and that I can ask for any inaccuracies to be amended or for records to be deleted. I am also aware that I can refer complaints to the Information Commissioner if I am not satisfied with the way my complaint has been dealt with.

For further details contact Mr. Sean O'Shea at the address above.

Signed: (1) **(2)**

Thank you

Sean O'Shea (Treasurer)