



CUDDINGTON GARDENING CLUB

NEWSLETTER – AUGUST 2017

While reading last Sunday's papers, I chuckled over an article illustrating the vagaries of British weather. After a lovely early summer, the schools broke up and while most of continental Europe suffered terrible forest fires and health-threatening heatwaves, we seemed set for the coldest, wettest July/August for a number of years – so what's new? My paper confidently went on to tell me we would enjoy a mini-heatwave last Tuesday (22nd August) caused by Gert! What happened, or more specifically where did it happen? A very warm Bank Holiday is also predicted – I hope so.

However, weather conditions aside or perhaps because of them, many things in the garden have prospered this year. Figs – we have had a very satisfying harvest of delicious figs. Beans – in consideration of my back and knees I only grow "climbing" beans, and this year I planted a mixture of purple climbing French beans and various types of runner beans with red, red and white, apricot and white flowers – all very pretty. After a slow start, most of the beans are out-performing themselves – but since I put runner beans on a par with asparagus, I am in seventh heaven! Some have been more prolific than others – in spite of lovely flowers, I won't grow the apricot "celebration" again – highly rated as high yielding, but for me they didn't produce many beans. The borlottis were cut off in their prime by slugs or snails so not a single bean.

Roses have been amazing this year, and so have my various clematis. One variety, an early blue clematis macropetala (Pauline?) of its own volition has flowered twice with no pruning – not had that before. The bell-like blue flowers weaving through the bearded seed heads have been lovely. However I have a May/June flowering clematis – very beautiful with large pale lilac flowers, and whose name I can no longer recall, and the label has been removed by Sinda, my daughter's black Labrador puppy! Well, not only did Sinda eat/hide the label, she "pruned" the clematis right down to ground level – I thought she had in fact dug it up entirely! Now said clematis is happily flowering away again! Isn't nature wonderful?

Ditto, the beautiful Gertrude Jekyll rose bush in a large pot, which Sinda almost tore to shreds in spite of the thorns, is also flowering away again defiantly. In the Netherlands where we lived for a number of years, local council gardeners began pruning (by strimming) the Rosa Rugosa bushes that grew all along the pavements in the village from the second day of the year. Here too at Larden, Sinda seems to enjoy attacking my Rosa Rugosas who don't seem to mind at all (what wonderful hips they have). Unlike Gertrude, Rambling Rector doesn't appear to enjoy Sinda's attentions! Still, if you don't relish pruning, a new piece of gardening advice could be "*don't bother pruning, get yourself a Labrador*" and Gilly has done just that – I wonder if Molly will enjoy "pruning" too? I should also say that other members' gardens have all looked delightful this year, with only some now beginning to look just a little tired, including mine.

In June a group of members had a lovely relaxed club outing to the Savill Garden and in spite of many blooms having flowered early, there was still plenty for us to see. **In July**, the fete plant stall looked lovely with a goodly number of plants and flowers, and was also very successful. Thank you to Gilly and all the members who helped make the stall such a success.

Forthcoming Events

Sunday, 3rd September – Adwell House gardens are open to visit from 11 am to 4 pm where they will also be holding a Rare Plant Fair. A flyer in this regard has been circulated to members but so far there hasn't been much interest – still the gardens and plant fair are open anyway.

Monday, 11th September in the CPFC – Davina Wynne Jones will be coming talk to members about Herbs for Healing in her Barnsley Herb Nursery and also tell us about growing up with Rosemary Verey, her mother, at Barnsley House in Gloucestershire. I think she will also be bringing some of her potions and lotions to sell. This will be our first meeting after the summer break and should be an interesting talk, so please come and give Davina a warm welcome.

Enquiries: Thelma on 291075 thelmaparry007@aol.com or Gilly on 292650 gilycottman@live.co.uk

October – there will be no speaker on the second Monday evening.

Sunday, 15th October – The club's 25th Anniversary Lunch. Enough members provisionally said they would be interested in coming to the lunch and so we are going ahead with this event.

Full details are being circulated now. Andrew Mikolajski who gave us a very entertaining and amusing evening a couple years ago will be joining us for a short after-lunch talk, there will be a raffle, a rolling (but silent) slide show of pictures from the club's first 25 years and, in addition to a delicious lunch, there will be an anniversary cake with tea! I hope that many of you will agree that this is something to be celebrated and will come and support the lunch.

Enquiries: Simon at snbarker43@gmail.com or 201249 or Jennifer after 18th September at jschramdejong@yahoo.co.uk or 291501

Monday 13th November – A talk on Orchids by John Cresswell, a serious amateur orchid grower for many years. John also grows tomatoes commercially and I believe hydroponically. Sounds fun!

Contact: Simon and Jean 01844 201249 snbarker43@gmail.com

December – An outing for tea and some Christmas shopping is being planned.

Contact : Gilly on 01844 gilycottman@live.co.uk

2018 The committee is busy putting together ideas for speakers and outings for next year. Suggestions and ideas from members would, as always, be very helpful and much appreciated.

Jobs to be getting on with: Dividing up herbaceous perennials, including primroses, cowslips and perennial geraniums. All the bulb catalogues for Spring bulbs are out and the choice of tulips and daffodils/narcissi is greater than ever, but don't plant tulip bulbs before November/December. Around about September/October, you will need to start planting prepared bulbs in time for Christmas such as Narcissus Paper White, amazing Amaryllis bulbs and "indoor" hyacinths which can be put out in the garden when they have finished flowering. Remember to wear gloves when handling hyacinth bulbs they can be quite toxic. A bowl of grape hyacinths is always very pretty. And speaking of Christmas, now is also the time to plant up a few potatoes (in pots in a greenhouse or shed) in time for new potatoes for Christmas Lunch – Maris Peer are quite delicious and you can find small bags for sale at Haddenham Garden Centre! If not yet done, give your lavender plants a haircut – cut back dead flower stems and then some, but not too much. Prune properly next year in the early Spring. I think that's probably enough to keep you busy!

I am afraid I won't be able to come to the September meeting, but I very much look forward to welcoming you to the 25th Anniversary Lunch on Sunday, 15th October, 2017.

Continue to enjoy your gardens.

With very best wishes, Jennifer