

MEOPHAM GARDEN ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



Photograph by Jeff.Latimer@veruju.com

Spring 2005

Meeting June 13th 2005

Visit to Southover, Grove Lane, Hunton, Maidstone. This garden is at the home of our May speaker Mr David Way. The 1.5 acre prize winning garden is in a delightful country setting with an ever expanding plant collection in wide range of situations and wildlife habitats. Directions are available and there is plenty of parking. If you would like a ride please let any committee member know. We will meet there at 7pm. The charge of £8 per person includes garden entry and refreshments at the local pub, The Hop Pole afterwards.

Forthcoming Association Meetings & Other Events

- 9th May **Mr David Way** of the Hardy Plant Society will talk about the "Domestic Gardens of Nearby Continental Europe.
- 17th May **At Millbrook Garden Centre:** A talk by a representative from David Austin Roses from 7.30 - 9pm. Entry £3 (in aid of charity).
- June 11th **Woburn Abbey Garden Show/Bletchley Park**
Jackie Fullalove is organizing this trip where you can visit either the garden show at Woburn Abbey OR travel onto Bletchley Park where the Enigma code was broken during WWII. Please contact her for more details.
- June 13th **Visit to Southover, Grove Lane, Hunton, Maidstone.**
Southover is the home of Mr David Way, our speaker in May.
- June 25th **Nurstead Garden Fare**
This annual event is well attended and has been a good fund raising exercise in previous years. We are having a stall and Jennifer Ward has kindly offered to co-ordinate the club efforts this year. She is asking for people to provide tombola prizes, plants and help on the day. Start thinking about this now and sow a few extra seeds or pot-on a few extra seedlings so we have a plant stall fit for a garden association.
- 5th July **Millbrook Garden Centre outing:** R.H.S. Hyde Hall departing by coach from Millbrook at 9am. Bookings now being taken. The cost for RHS Members is £10.50 and £15.00 for non-Members.
- July 11th **Visit to Castle Farm at Shoreham**
Following our talk by Mrs Caroline Alexander last year, we will visit the lavender fields at their peak and be shown the process of drying flowers on their premises. We will meet there at 7 pm and let a committee member know if you need transport. The charge, including coffee and biscuits is £4 per head.
- August 9th **Outing to Higham Park Stately Home & Gardens**
The house is located at Bridge near Canterbury and we will run a coach to transport us there. Pick up from Meopham School at 10am. The cost is £13 per person for entry and coach seat. See Vera Bingham to book your place.

Recent Events

March 14th Container Planting – Mrs Carole Ross of Millbrook Garden Centre

After telling us about the history of Millbrook Garden Centre and how it is still a family owned business, Carole went on to describe the basics of container planting. She brought along examples of the types of containers now available and suggested various ways of lining and planting them. Much of the discussion was about how to deal with common pests such as slugs, snails and vine weevils. She brought along a selection of chemical and biological means of control.

April 2nd Spring Show

This was the largest Meopham Garden Association Spring Show in recent times; 279 entries to the show from 26 entrants which greatly improved both the look of the hall and the attendance numbers.



The snowdrop class was replaced with a hellebore class which attracted 6 entries. The Domestic Section 4 was well supported with 32 entries overall, including 11 teabreads! The judge had particular difficulty deciding which sausage rolls were the best. The steward's notes will provide additional feedback to entrants and essential tips to those entering the Autumn Show. Also this year we had 5 entries into the craft class 50. It was a varied display of a very high standard which attracted a lot of public interest. Jo Latimer took the public-vote prize in this class with her excellent photography.

The Chairman's Cup (1st in class 1 – selected hyacinth) went to Gloria Kinch.

The Meliker Cup (1st in class 2 – selected daffodil) went to Douglas Nicholson.

The Hasler Vase was won by Barbara Macknish who also took the Certificate for the best bloom in show. Barbara also took the Harvel Spring Challenge Cup. She had a total of 42 points, ahead of Katherine Green with 30 points.

The floral art section attracted more entries this year. The small arrangement class had three entries and they looked especially cute. Winifred Hughes won the Oldham Goblet in the large arrangement class.



Thanks go to everyone who helped set up and dismantle the show, those who baked delicious cakes, the ladies who sold them and to Vera for running the raffle. I look forward to seeing you all staging your wares again in the hall for the Autumn Show! Please feel free to let me have your opinions of the Shows – suggestions for new classes or changes in the existing ones, ideas for floral art subjects, so that I can endeavor to keep the show interesting.

Jayne Macknish (Show Secretary)

April 11th Bee Keeping – Mr Brian Wood

Mr Wood, a former member of our club and local beekeeper, gave those present an enthusiast's view of the life cycle of bees and how they have been 'involved' with man for a very long time. There are 15000 year old paintings depicting the collection of honey. Aristotle kept bees and at this time the head of the hive was thought to be male. It was only in 1700 that the main bee was found to be the queen. During medieval times wax was more valuable than honey as it provided fuel for lighting. Bees were taken to the USA in 1621, packed in ice and were also transported to Australia and New Zealand by man in the 19th century.

Update on the wildflower meadow

In spite of being neglected last summer due to work commitments, I am pleased to report that at least some plants have survived and escaped being devoured by rabbits during the winter. As the picture shows there are currently masses of red campion in flower. What will follow?

Jo Latimer



Historical Snippet

Broccoli (*Brassica oleracea botrytis asparagoides*)

Broccoli and cauliflower are closely related, as their awful botanical titles signify. The chief difference to the householder is that the broccoli begins to produce its curded hearts when the cauliflower leaves off. From October till the following June it is possible to cut heads from the garden providing many varieties are grown and the weather is kindly.

I generally grow about eight varieties of broccoli. Varieties that will provide a sequence are chosen, Those that are supposed to mature in autumn and early winter are sown upon a warm border outdoors in March. Another sowing of mid-season kinds is made during early April, and still another batch is started in early May. These include the latest varieties and a few of the mid-season sorts. Mid-season varieties are given two chances by being included in early and late lots, but they are not as satisfactory as the extremes. A rough spell of weather comes at the wrong time and spoils a whole row quite often, The latest of all are most welcome because there is a long break between their season and the autumn cauliflowers. In nearly every case, too, late spring broccoli grow biggest and best.

It must be remembered that only a row or two of each is needed, therefore small packets of seeds will suffice. Some firms supply collections containing small packets of several kinds that will provide a sequence, and they can generally be depended upon.

In any case, the following six will give a succession, Vitch's self protecting, Winter Mammoth, Roscoff No. 1, Snow's

Winter White, Knight's Protecting and Late Queen.

Quite apart from these are Purple Sprouting and White Sprouting, They bear tiny heads on long stems and are generally very hardy.

The best sites for broccoli are those where the ground is open to the four winds, is rich and solid. As with all members of the brassica family, firm soil is essential. The later the variety, the more solid the ground should be. Roots should find it hard work to burrow and yet find enough food to build up a tough body. If young plants are dibbed into a bed that has just been cleared of potatoes or onions, or peas, the site should be well firmed beforehand. The most satisfactory distances for those plants when dibbed out is 2 ft. apart in all directions.

Broccoli can follow almost every crop except any belonging to its own family, These are kales, Brussels sprouts, cabbages, cauliflowers, savoys and turnips.

Artificial feed is not generally resorted to for broccoli. There should be no need to do anything in that way if the soil is up to kitchen garden standard.

From 'Plain Vegetable Growing' by George Whitehead, 1941. (Courtesy Ann Knief)

Spadework at Offam and Hildenborough

I would like to draw attention to a plant nursery that is working to help vulnerable young adults become independent. The Offam site can be reached from the start of Seven Mile Lane by turning left towards Offam immediately after passing under the railway bridge. Drive through the village (past the green with its old jousting post) and the nursery is on the left.

For further information see Bill Roberts