

# MEOPHAM GARDEN ASSOCIATION

## NEWSLETTER



Photo Jo Latimer

### Autumn 2008

Christmas Social Monday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2008 at 7 for 7:30pm

Tickets priced at £17.50 each will be on sale for our Christmas supper until the 23rd of November. Please let Hazel know your choice of main course and dessert from the menu on the next page. Again this year we ask that you bring your own 'wine' but water and glasses will be provided. Our entertainment this year will be provided by Dr. Mick Lynn and Dr Geoff Doel entitled 'A Kent Christmas'.

## Christmas Menu

### Starter

Pea Soup

### Main Course

Roast Turkey with trimmings & seasonal vegetables

or

Melanzane alla Parmigiana (V)  
(Aubergines in cheese & tomato sauce)

### Dessert

White Chocolate & Mascapone Fruit Tart

or

Triple Chocolate Brownie with Seville Orange Marmalade Ice Cream

or

Lemon Posset with Shortbread

or

Cheese & Biscuits

Coffee & Mints

### Forthcoming Association Meetings & Other Events

8<sup>th</sup> December 2008

Christmas Supper

12<sup>th</sup> January 2009

AGM with Cheese & Wine and Exhibition of Photos

Please bring along some photos for the rest of us to enjoy.

9<sup>th</sup> February 2009

The Vegetable Garden

Mr G Francis

9<sup>th</sup> March 2009

Britain in Bloom

Mr J. Buttress

### 2009 Outings:

We are proposing to visit the RHS gardens at Wisley early in May and the Cambridge Botanical Gardens in August. More details will follow once the dates are confirmed.

## Recent Events

**11<sup>th</sup> August**

### **The Story of the Honey Bee**

Mr March gave us a brief history of the honey bee and told us how badly the viroa virus has affected the population.

**8<sup>th</sup> September**

### **Alpines**

Mr Wiseman gave us a practical demonstration of planting a container with alpines as well as showing us slides of his garden and how he grows his large collection of alpines.

**13<sup>th</sup> September**

### **Autumn Show**

An heroic effort by members produced 247 entries to the show which was the most since Spring 2005. The trophies were awarded as follows:

Championship Cup	Jo Latimer
Townsend Vase	Claire Williams
Goodwin Cup (best exhibit classes 1-3)	Fred Pepper
Stevens Cup (best exhibit classes 4-17)	Gloria Kinch
Hill Cup	Winifred Hughes
Coronation Cup	Claire Williams
Harvel Floral Bowl	Enid Lander
Garden News Shield	Jo Latimer
National Vegetable Society Medal	Ann Nicholson
Garden News Top Tray Gold Award	Jo Latimer
Everard Bowl	Maurice Redsell

Thank you to everybody who helped set up and dismantle the show, those who baked wonderful cakes to sell and who ran the refreshments, to Vera for running the raffle and to those who helped on the plant stall.

The show dates for next year are 21<sup>st</sup> March and 12<sup>th</sup> September. The specified bulbs for Classes 1 & 2 of the Spring Show are **AIOLOS** (Hyacinth) and **BEST SELLER** (Narcissus).

**13<sup>th</sup> October**

### **General Vegetable Growing**

A welcome return by Laurie Manser brought us the benefit of his many years of gardening experience. This time he gave us tips on growing many types vegetables.

### **The Future of the December meeting**

With Vikki Hooper's decision to stop providing the catering for our Christmas Supper, we are in the position of having to decide what to do at our future December meetings. The committee would like to have suggestions from members as to what form this should take. Suggestions so far include a candlelight supper with buffet meal followed by entertainment or to engage another caterer to provide a similar meal. We will need to decide upon the format early in the new year.

## Historical Snippet

### DOGWOOD

Botanical Name: *Cornus*. Family Cornaceae

Dogwood was supposedly used to build the Trojan Horse. *Cornus mas*, or the cornelian cherry, was valued by the Greeks for its exceptionally hard wood, used to make javelins and spearheads. John Parkinson said, "The wood ... is very hard, like unto horne, and thereof it obtained the name" (from *cornus*, the latin for "horn").

How it became "dogwood" has to do with its edible and medicinal qualities. The berries of the *Cornus mas* are said to be edible and were supposedly fed to Odysseus's men when they were changed into pigs by Circe. *Cornus sanguinea*, or English dogwood, was called by John Parkinson "the Doggeberry tree, because the berries are not fit to be eaten, or to be given to a dogge". The Victorian garden writer John Loudon said that it was naked because a decoction of its leaves was used to wash fleas from dogs, and L. H. Bailey said in 1922 that it was used to bathe "mangy dogs".

The American eastern dogwood, *Corus florida*, is believed by some to be yet another "Crucifixion" tree (the tree on which Christ was crucified), although it is not native to the Middle East or Europe. Its bracts, leaf-like organs that look like flower petals, are shaped like a cross and at the base of each is a brown stain, like a blood spot made by a nail. Dogwoods need cold winters to set flowers, but late frosts will ruin the spectacular bracts that surround the cluster of insignificant yellow flowers. The American Pacific dogwood, or *Cornus nuttallii*, has four to six bracts, and they are not dented at the top like those of the eastern dogwood. It is name after Thomas Nuttall. Late-flowering Asian dogwoods such as the Kousa dogwoods of Japan were introduced into America and Europe at the turn of the last century. They do not flower until their leaves are out, whereas the American dogwoods suddenly ornament bare branches with a mass of papery blooms.

At different times, dogwood leaves, berries and bark have been used to intoxicate fish, make gunpowder, soap, and dye (used to colour the Turkish fez), make ink, and clean teeth (the twigs if chewed first will separate into a primitive toothbrush). Bark of the dogwood tree contains small amounts of quinine and "it is possible to ward off fevers by merely chewing the twigs" (Bailey). According to Peter Kalm, American settlers believed so strongly in the power of the dogwood that when cattle fell down for want of strength the settlers would "tie branches of this tree on their necks, thinking that it would help them. He does not comment on whether this helped or not, but he does say that "it is a pleasure to travel through the woods, so much are they beautified by the blossom of this tree". That, at least is still true.

(Adapted from *100 Flowers and How They Got Their Names* by Diana Wells)

### Goldcrest

The goldcrest is the smallest of European birds, weighing in at around 10g (1/3oz). It is not often that they pose for pictures, but this little chap mistook the reflection in the patio window for another field and garden to explore. We put him on up on a patio table, out of sight of the cats and it took him over half an hour to recover. How he fared after flying off is unknown.



Photo: Mike Hughes