

MEOPHAM GARDEN ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



Photo: Jo Latimer

Spring 2008

Summer Show 9th June 2008

Our summer social event will be a small show with the winners voted for by those present. There is no charge to members but for a mere £2 non-members will also be welcome to come along and take part. There will be a quiz and a raffle and refreshments will be provided. There is no need to pre-book your entries just bring them along on the evening and exhibit. The three classes are as follows:

1. A rose selected for fragrance
2. A bowl of herbs (maximum 30cm (12") in diameter)
3. A vase of garden flowers (Association vases will be provided)

Forthcoming Association Meetings & Other Events

May 12 th	Aspects of Fuschias	Ron Holmes
June 9 th	Summer Social as detailed above	
June 14 th	Nurstead Fete	
	We have booked a double stall for this event so please please sow a few extra seeds or pot-on a few extra seedlings so we can have a plant stall fit for a garden association. Please ensure that any plant donations (and plant trays if you would like them returned) are labelled and deliver them to Nurstead between 8.00am and 10.30am on the morning of the fete. Connie Smith has very kindly offered to co-ordinate this and would like to hear from anyone who can help on the stall during the day.	
June 25 th	Visit to RHS Hyde Hall & The Beth Chatto Gardens	
	We will visit Hyde Hall in the morning and the Beth Chatto Gardens in the afternoon. Please let Hazel Borrow have your money for this trip by our June meeting. The cost is £13.50 for members (£14.50 for guests). The pick ups are as follows: 09:10am Hodsall Street, 09:20 Village Hall, 09:30 Norwood Lane.	
July 14 th	Visit to Owletts at Cobham	
	We will be given a tour of the garden before enjoying refreshments on site. The cost is £3 which includes a ploughman's and a donation to a charity of the Spree's choice.	
July 31 st	Visit to the World Garden at Lullingstone	
	If you would like to see the progress at the World Garden since our visit last year please let me know. The cost is £6 and does <u>not</u> include a tour of the house.	
		Jo Latimer
August 11 th	The Story of the Honey Bee	Mr D.March

Cobham Gardeners Society

For further details of these events please contact Chris or Di Spree:

May 14 th	Beekeeping	John Chapman
June 7 th	Summer Show at the Meadow Rooms starting at 3:15pm	
June 28 th	Car outing to The Salutation. Depart Meadow Rooms 9:30am.	

Istead Rise Gardeners Club

For further details of these events please contact Arthur Hills:

June 5 th	Compost	Henry Doubleday
June 7 th	Coach trip to St Albans	
July 3 rd	Topiary	Judith Older
July 12 th	Summer Show from 2:30pm at the Memorial Hall.	
August 7 th	Social Evening	

Meetings start at 8pm at the Memorial Hall, Lewis Road, Istead Rise

June 15th

Open Gardens at St Mary's Platt

From 2 – 5pm local gardens will be open to the public in aid of Farm Africa and Kenward Trust. Maps and programmes cost £3 (children free) and are available from Platt Church.

Recent Events

February 11th Low Maintenance Gardening David Fitton

Mr Fitton turned up very late and this rather spoilt what should have been an interesting evening.

February 17th Snowdrops & Hellebores at Meadow View, Hodsall Street

Once again Barbara Macknish opened her garden to the public to view her magnificent snowdrops and hellebores and raised about £600 for the Eleanor Foundation.

March 10th Guerrilla Gardening Richard Reynolds

Those present enjoyed a lively and entertaining presentation as Richard explained the philosophy and work of the Guerrilla Gardeners.

March 29th Spring Show

Despite the cold snap in the week prior to the show our exhibitors were able to put on a superb show. There were 195 entries from 17 exhibitors and all judges had a hard time reaching their decisions.

The prizes were awarded as follows:

Douglas Nicholson	Chairman's Cup	Best in Class 1
Barbara Macknish	Melliker Cup	Best in Class 2
Jennifer Ward	Hasler Vase	Best in Classes 3-11
Kathy Green	Certificate of Merit	Best Bloom in Show
Elizabeth Thomas	Oldham Goblet	Best in Classes 44-45
Barbara Macknish	Harvel Spring Challenge	Most Points in Classes 12-38

The tea room did a roaring trade as those present enjoyed the refreshments which included delicious home made cakes. Thank you to everybody who exhibited and helped 'behind the scenes' to make a very successful show.



Photos: Jo Latimer

April 14th

Lavenders

Simon Charlesworth

The owner of Downterry Lavender made a welcome return to us (after 12 years) with an excellent presentation. We learnt about that there 3 main types of lavender and how to care for them. The basic requirements are sun, good drainage and pruning at the right time. It's as simple as that.

Oh to be in England now that Spring is here:

6th April 2008



Photos: Jo Latimer

Robert Browning

Home Thoughts from Abroad

Oh, to be in England
Now that April's there,
And whoever wakes in England
Sees, some morning, unaware,
That the lowest boughs and the brushwood sheaf
Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,
While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough
In England--now!!

And after April, when May follows,
And the whitethroat builds, and all the swallows!
Hark, where my blossomed pear-tree in the hedge
Leans to the field and scatters on the clover
Blossoms and dewdrops--at the bent spray's edge--
That's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over,
Lest you should think he never could recapture
The first fine careless rapture!
And though the fields look rough with hoary dew,
All will be gay when noontide wakes anew
The buttercups, the little children's dower
-- Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower!



Photos: Mike Hughes

Historical Snippet

HEMP

Cannabis Sativa

Since at least 1000 BC until 1883 AD, cannabis hemp (marijuana) was our planet's largest agricultural crop and most important industry producing the overall majority of Earth's fibre, fabric, lighting oil, paper, incense, and medicines. It was also a primary source of essential food oil and protein. 90% of all ships' sails (since at least the 5th Century BC until long after the invention and commercialisation of steam ships— mid-late 19th century) were made from hemp. The word "canvas" is the Dutch pronunciation twice removed, (from French and Latin) of the Greek word "Kannabis".

In addition to canvas sails, until the middle of the last century virtually all of the rigging, anchor ropes, cargo nets, fishing nets, flags, shrouds, and oakum (the main protection for ships against salt water) were made from the stalks. Even the sailors' clothing, right down to the stitching in the seamen's rope-soled and "canvas" shoes, was crafted from cannabis. The ships' charts, maps, logs, and Bibles were made from paper containing hemp fibre from the time of Columbus (15th century) until the early 1900s in the Western European/American world, and by the Chinese since the 1st Century AD. Until the 1820s in America (and 20th Century in most of the rest of the world), 80% of all textiles and fabrics used for clothing, tents, bed sheets, and linens, rugs, drapes, quilts, towels, diapers, etc.—and even the US flag, "Old Glory," were principally made from fibres of cannabis hemp. 70-90% of all rope, twine, and cordage were made from hemp until 1937. It was then regrettably replaced mostly by petrochemical fibres, but at what untold costs to the environment?

Hemp, being acid-free, is the perfect archival medium for artists' work. The paintings of Van Gogh, Gainsborough, Rembrandt, etc., were primarily painted on hemp canvas. A strong, lustrous fibre, hemp withstands heat, mildew, insects, and is not damaged by light. Oil paintings on hemp and/or flax canvas have stayed in fine condition for centuries. For thousands of years, virtually all good paints and varnishes were made with hempseed oil and/or linseed oil.

Until about 1800, hempseed oil was the brightest, most consumed lighting oil in the

world and from then until the 1870s, it was exceeded only by whale oil. Hempseed oil lit the lamps of the legendary Aladdin, Abraham the prophet, and Abraham Lincoln. In the early 1900s, Henry Ford and other futuristic, organic, engineering geniuses recognized (as their intellectual, scientific heirs still do today) that up to 90% of all fossil fuel used in the world today should long ago have been replaced with biomass such as cornstalks, cannabis sativa (hemp), waste paper etc. Biomass can be converted to methane or methanol at a fraction of the current cost of oil, coal, or nuclear energy especially when environmental costs are included and its mandated use would end acid rain, the sulphur-based smog, and reverse the Greenhouse Effect on our planet—right now!

France (8,000ha cultivated) is Europe's biggest producer. Canada, the UK, and Germany all resumed commercial production in the 1990s. British production is mostly used as animal bedding. Other uses are under development. The largest outlet for German fibre is composite automotive panels. Many companies process hemp seed into a growing range of food products and cosmetics and many traditional growing countries still continue to produce textile grade fibre.

Over the millennia, the hemp plant has been bred and selected for specific purposes and as a result, the commercial hemp plant produces less than 1% of the narcotic that is found in the medicinal plant. There is evidence of powerful business interests getting laws passed, for instance, to prevent hemp competing with wood pulp to make paper. Also, considering the uneconomical yield of drugs by the commercial variety, the present restraints on growing commercial hemp may well have some support from the business world.

This article may paint an over-rosy picture for the uses of hemp and there are certainly drawbacks vis-à-vis alternatives such as manila in certain applications. However, this useful plant has been neglected for too long.

References:

"The Emperor Wears No Clothes" by Jack Herer
Wikipedia.