

MEOPHAM GARDEN ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER



Photo: Jo Latimer

Autumn 2009

Christmas Social Monday 14th December 2009 at 7 for 7:30pm

Tickets priced at £17.00 each will be on sale for our Christmas supper until the end of November. Please make your choice of main course and dessert from the menu on the next page. Again this year we ask that you bring you own 'wine' but water and glasses will be provided. Our entertainment this year will take the form of a dancing display provided by local teacher Dawn Leach and her team.

Christmas Menu

Starter

Fan of Melon served with a fruit coulis

Main Course

Roast Turkey with Gammon Ham served
with trimmings & seasonal vegetables

or

Baked Butternut Squash filled with leeks, onions and cheese (V)
& seasonal vegetables

Dessert

Traditional Christmas Pudding and Brandy Sauce

or

Blackberry & Kirsch Torte with Cream

or

Cheese & Biscuits

Tea or Coffee & Mints

Forthcoming Association Meetings & Other Events

14 th December 2009	Christmas Supper	
11 th January 2010	AGM with Cheese & Wine and Travel Talk	
8 th February 2010	Members Forum	
8 th March 2010	Growing Vegetables Organically	Vanessa Jones

Advanced Notice of Our 2010 Garden Visits:

June 14th Julia Jarman's garden Tangle Wood £4 per head including tea & biscuit 7pm

The committee are also proposing an autumn visit to RHS Hyde Hall. Details of this trip will be announced when finalized.

Recent Events

10th August

Soft Fruit

Mr Bowles gave an illustrated talk about many of the common varieties of soft fruit that are available for the home grower. He gave tips on cultivation, training and pruning.

12th September

Autumn Show

We had an excellent, well supported show with 217 entries from 18 members. The trophies were awarded as follows:

Championship Cup	Barbara Macknish
Townsend Vase	Claire Williams
Goodwin Cup (best exhibit classes 1-4)	Fred Pepper
Stevens Cup (best exhibit classes 5-18)	Elizabeth Thomas
Hill Cup	Winifred Hughes
Coronation Cup	Claire Williams
Harvel Floral Bowl	Janet Oxford
Garden News Shield	Tony Thomas
National Vegetable Society Medal	Sue Gray
Garden News Top Tray Gold Award	Jo Latimer
Everard Bowl	Sharon Sperling
Douglas Nicholson Award	Tony Thomas
Kent Federation of Horticultural Societies Certificate of Merit	Sue Gray

Thanks to everyone who helped set up and dismantle the show, those who baked wonderful cakes to sell and who ran the refreshments, to Elizabeth for running the raffle and to those who helped on the plant stall.

The show dates for next year are 20th March and 18th September. The specified bulbs for Classes 1 & 2 of the Spring Show are **City of Haarlem** (Hyacinth) and **Dutch Master** (Narcissus).



Photos: Mike Hughes

14th September

Growing & Showing Daffodils

We enjoyed an excellent talk by Mrs Doulton. She began by explaining the classification scheme where there are 13 different types, including the main show types, which fit into divisions 1 – 4. This was followed by a slide show and then she described how she grows her bulbs to show at the highest level.

12th October

Garden Autumn & Winter

An illustrated talk by Mrs Easter gave us an idea of what we can grow to provide interest in the garden during the colder part of the year.

Comments From the Autumn Show Judges:

Flowers & Vegetables

- Use the appropriate size vase for your exhibit
- Remove dead and twiggly bits and make sure the blooms are fresh and uniform (the judge looks at the underneath of the blooms too)
- Where possible blooms should all face the front of the table. This obviously doesn't apply to bunch flowered blooms.
- Stand trailing pot plants up on another pot so they can trail properly.
- Tomatoes can be balanced on curtain rings of a suitable size
- Soft fruit such as raspberries and blackberries should be exhibited with stalks, sprigs or plugs.

Floral Art

Dot Richards our Floral Art judge was very impressed with the standard of exhibits and took quite some time to make her decisions.

Domestic

- With the raspberry jam she was looking for presentation, consistency and taste. Points were awarded to properly filled jars and good labeling. The jam should be topped by proper wax discs not cling film. The fruit used should be fresh.
- Presentation was important for the cheese scones as well. The scones tended to be over or under cooked and those that were undercooked lost their shape and ended up being larger than the 3" size. The final decision was based on taste.
- For the open savory sandwich the prizes were awarded on presentation and appeal alone.
- With the mincemeat tart, the judge felt that the pie dishes used were probably not appropriate which made the baking more difficult. Metal sheets should be removed from the underneath.

All of these comments were made in a positive way and she felt that exhibits were good. After judging, she also spent some time talking to and advising the exhibitors.



Historical Snippet

DEUTZIA

Botanical Name: *Deutzia*

Family: *Hydrangeaceae*

Although deutzia was first described in 1712, it was not imported to Europe until the end of the nineteenth century. Its stems are hollow, but they do not seem to have been used for flutes or pipes as other hollow-stemmed plants were. In fact, the deutzia doesn't seem to have any poetical associations at all. It's reliable, handsome and a pleasure to have around, like many respectable lawyers with whom we are acquainted and who make good neighbours.

It is, in fact, called after a lawyer, Johann van de Deutz of Amsterdam. He seems to have been reliable and maybe handsome as well. He was a town superintendent, and alderman and a councillor. Together with David ten Hove and Jan van de Poll he provided money for Carl Peter Thunberg to investigate the natural history of South Africa, Java and Japan. In gratitude Thunberg dedicated his *Flora Japonica* to them and named the genera Deutzia, Hovenia and Pollia after them.

Deutz corresponded with the long-lived botanist and explorer Joseph Banks, who, like Deutz, was born in 1743. The banksias, which bear his name, however, are far less commonly grown than deutzias, and Johann van der Deutz, who was carried off in his forties, has in a sense outlived Banks in garden, for many gardeners know him by growing his namesake.

Deutzias are native to China but long cultivated in Japan, where their wood was used for bodkins and cabinets and their leaves as furniture polish. Englebert Kaempfer, who first saw and described Japanese deutzia, was employed by the Dutch East India Company as a doctor at their Deshima Island base. He taught the island's Japanese interpreters astronomy and mathematics in exchange for botanical specimens (although he knew they risked their lives by giving them) and he started a botanical garden on Deshima. He accompanied the Dutch cabinet to Tokyo to pay respects to the emperor and, although closely guarded, managed to collect plant specimens along the way.

Deutzias have curving branched stems, covered with double white blossoms in June. They need very cold winters or they will flower prematurely, so they do better in the northern United States than in Britain. They are extremely beautiful and really should have poetry written about them, like other no

more lovely plants. But that happens doesn't it? Sometimes the most unworthy subjects can inspire extraordinary art, while the lawyer next door, full of grace, gets only a respectful obituary.

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



Deutzia

Photo: Mike Hughes

November

November comes
And November goes,
With the last red berries
And the first white snows.

With night coming early,
And dawn coming late,
And ice in the bucket
And frost by the gate.

The fires burn
And the kettles sing,
And earth sinks to rest
Until next spring

Clyde Wats



Shaggy Ink Cap Mushrooms

Photo: Jo Latimer

Britain will starve without GM crops, says major report

This was a recent headline in the Sunday Telegraph. It matters, of course, who was doing the reporting and what their remit was. Another recent article is

www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/comment/ambroseevans_pritchard/6432538/Food-will-never-be-so-cheap-again.html

It is clear that there is another attempt under way to rehabilitate and push forward the cause of GM food. We should remain extremely vigilant. The terms of reference of committees that the government has set up have been chosen to ensure reports favourable to the production of GM crops. It has been reported that, as a result of these restrictions, many participants in these committees have found that they have been unable to present scientific results that impact negatively on the findings and have been refused the option of including cautionary clauses in the reports.

There are 6 billion of us now and about 1 billion do not find enough to eat. By 2050 the population is forecast to reach 9 billion. If the increase continues, then in the not-too-distant future there will be a breakdown of law and order as people struggle to obtain food, water, shelter, energy etc. Set against the almost certain increase in environmental degradation, pollution and the rise of sea level, there will be less inhabitable land and the prospects for today's children is far from rosy. We cannot expect technology, with its insatiable appetite for energy to save us from this catastrophe. One child per family, worldwide, for the next several generations could, however, reduce the demands of the human race on the planet to a sustainable level and provide everyone with a high standard of living. However, I am not optimistic about our future.

The second Telegraph article elicited many comments. One in particular referenced the web site www.informationliberation.com/?id=27716 and the article entitled **"Vilsack Mistakenly Pitched "GMOs-Feed-The-World" to an Audience of Experts—Oops"**.

Vilsack is the American Secretary of State for Agriculture. The following are excerpts from this article, but if you have internet access then I highly recommend that you read the complete story.

Vilsack was asked the following highly qualified question:

"The American Academy of Environmental Medicine this year said that genetically modified foods, according to animal studies, are causally linked to accelerated aging, dysfunctional immune regulation, organ damage, gastrointestinal distress, and immune system damage. A study came out by the Union of Concerned Scientists confirming what we all know, that genetically modified crops, on average, reduce yield. A USDA report from 2006 showed that farmers don't actually increase income from GMOs, but many actually lose income. And for the last several years, the United States has been forced to spend \$3-\$5 billion per year to prop up the prices of the GM crops no one wants.

"I'm wondering, have you ever heard this information? Where do you get your information about GMOs? And are you willing to take a delegation in Washington to give you this hard evidence about how GMOs have actually failed us, that they've been put onto the market long before the science is ready."

The room erupted into the loudest applause of the morning. In his answer, Secretary Vilsack, who has a history of favoring GMOs was trying to sound even handed. Then he made a tragic mistake. After a slight pause, he added in a warm tone, *"I will tell you that the world is very concerned about the ever-increasing population of the globe and the capacity to be able to feed all of those people."*

Moans, groans, hisses, even boos came from the audience who are among the top experts at actually feeding the world. The International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD), is the most comprehensive evaluation of world agriculture ever undertaken. It evaluated the last 50 years of agriculture in over 100 countries, and prescribed the methods that were now needed to meet the development and sustainability goals of reducing hunger and poverty, improving nutrition, health and rural livelihoods, and facilitating social and environmental sustainability. And GMOs was not one of those needed methods! It was clear to the experts that the current generation of GMOs did not live up to the hype continuously broadcast by biotech companies and their promotional East Coast wing--the federal government.

Aminopyralid

Another instance where corporate power overwhelms public concerns is highlighted in the November issue of "Gardening Which?". The suspension of the weedkiller, aminopyralid, has been lifted, but is now subject to a "stewardship programme" in an attempt to prevent contamination of manure. The chemical may not be used on land where horses graze, but the advice is still to make sure that the source of any horse manure you buy has not been treated with this weedkiller over the past couple of years. Best test it by planting a few peas in a tray of the stuff and make sure the resulting seedlings are unaffected. If the seedlings come up distorted then allow the manure to rot down and try again the following year. A gaping hole in the rules is that they do not appear to address bedding for animals or hay that may have been treated. More at www.manurematters.co.uk