

MEOPHAM GARDEN ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



East Malling Church

Photo: Jo Latimer

Spring 2010

Summer Show 12th July 2010

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

1. A rose selected for fragrance
2. A flowering pot plant (pot no larger than 20cm (8"))
3. A vase of garden flowers (Association vases will be provided)

There is no need to pre-book your entries just bring them along on the evening and exhibit.

Forthcoming Association Meetings & Other Events

May 10 th	Guerrilla Gardening Update in the UK & Beyond	Richard Reynolds
June 14 th	Garden Outing to Tangle Wood	
July 12 th	Summer Social as detailed above	
August 9 th	Secrets of a Walled Garden	Derek March

Istead Rise Gardeners Club

Istead Rise Garden Club meets on the first Thursday of the month. For further details of their events please contact Arthur Hills (01474 834284)

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

Cobham Gardeners Society

For further details of these events please contact Chris Shipway (01474 814131)

May 12 th	What the judge is looking for – a guide to showing	Robert Wiseman
June 12 th	Summer Show at the Meadow Rooms starting at 3:15pm	
July 10 th	Visit to Haydown, Great Buckland	

Meopham Gardeners now have a website:



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Meopham Garden Association website. The header features a logo of a dog and the text 'Meopham Garden Association'. Below the header is a navigation menu with links for HOME, EVENTS, SHOWS, NEWSLETTERS, FORUMS, USING THIS SITE, and CONTACT US. The main content area is titled 'Welcome' and contains three paragraphs of text. The first paragraph describes the monthly meetings and provides a link to see the topics. The second paragraph mentions two main shows during the year. The third paragraph describes a plant stall and a monthly Member's Show. A disclaimer is also present. On the right side, there is a sidebar with a 'Links' section containing links to 'How to...', 'Money Saving Tips', 'Ideas for Using Produce', 'Recipes', 'Articles', 'Jobs', 'RHS', and 'Met Office'. The footer contains the copyright information: © Copyright Trinity Systems 2010 | www.trinity.co.uk

The website has been up and running for a couple of months now but it is still very much under development but we hope the information there is already proving interesting. If you have any comments or ideas, please e-mail us at contact@meophamgardeners.co.uk.

More information on our website: www.meophamgardeners.co.uk

Recent Events

February 8th AGM & Members Forum

After the AGM, which had been postponed due to the weather in January, we held our first Members Forum. The meeting, chaired by Elizabeth Thomas, began with a brief talk on Yacons by Mike Hughes. Members had been asked to pass on their tips and a lively discussion followed. Please keep the tips coming as they will eventually be loaded onto the website.

February 21st 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 £400 for the Eleanor Foundation.

March 8th Growing Vegetables Organically Vanessa Jones

Vanessa started growing organically 15 years ago and now has a 2 acre garden. She explained that the key to growing organically is to have good soil and improve it as best you can. Composting and mulching is vital. Most vegetables like a limey soil and choosing disease resistant varieties is wise. Crop rotation and organic fertilizers, such as fish blood and bone, bonemeal and seaweed, is important. Never use carpet to cover any spare ground in winter instead use cardboard weighted with bricks. She also encouraged us to lure helpful insects and animals into our gardens and vegetable plots (lacewings, ladybirds and frogs) instead of using chemicals.

March 20th Spring Show

Despite a four week delay in the arrival of Spring, I think everyone in the Village Hall on Saturday 20th March was very impressed with the display put on by the 24 members and 7 juniors that entered. I know the judges were. What we lacked in the floral section, we amply made up for in the Home Economics/Domestic section with 52 entries – double what we would normally expect. We were also pleased to have two new exhibitors and would urge them both to enter in the Autumn Show in an effort to add more points to those already gained in the Spring which will win one of them the Everard Bowl.

Our cup winners were:

Chairman's Cup	Best in Class 1 (Hyacinths)	Janet Oxford
Melliker Cup	Best in Class 2 (Narcissi)	Anne Nicholson
Hasler Vase	Best in Classes 3-11 (Pot of bulbs)	Elizabeth Thomas
Certificate of Merit	Best Bloom in Show	Barbara Macknish
Oldham Goblet	Best in Classes 44-45 (Floral Art)	Elizabeth Thomas
Harvel Spring Challenge	Most Points in Classes 12-38	Elizabeth Thomas

My thanks go as always to Claire and Sharon and to all the members that do so much setting up and clearing away, providing cakes and raffle prizes and helping on the day to make the show so successful and enjoyable for everyone; but most of all to the exhibitors – without you we would have no Show. Thank you all.

Barbara Macknish (Show Secretary)

April 12th Flowers and Gardens of Japan Colin Jones

As the Spring blossom started to arrive here we were treated to pictures of the magnificent cherry blossom of Tokyo and Kyoto. Colin Jones, our speaker, was fortunate enough to have visited there along with other Japanese gardens around the world. He told us that until Japan was closed to the western world for a long time but gradually plant hunters were able to bring back examples of plants that are now ubiquitous such as azaleas and rhododendrons. Interest was soon aroused and in fact the BBC HQ now stands on the site of the Japanese festival of 1910. Some of the original garden is being restored to mark the centenary.

Historical Snippet

Runner Bean (*Phaseolus coccineus*)

Our own John Tradescant, gardener to King Charles I, first brought the runner bean to this country in the 17th century. It is native to the mountains of Central America, where it grows as a perennial, and was domesticated in Mexico around 900 AD. It is likely that it was originally grown for its starchy tubers. These days it is grown throughout the world for its flowers, for its fresh pods and for its dried beans.

The flowers are normally red, but some plants bear white ones. There are varieties of beans with pods of various colours - green, yellow, purple and even white. The mature beans are usually pink or white and speckled with black or brown. Uncooked, the beans of the *Phaseolus* species are poisonous and the mature runner bean seeds should always be cooked before eating.

The investigation into why these beans should be potentially so lethal found that they contained a fascinating group of chemicals known as lectins. Runner beans and their relations contain the lectin known as phytohaemagglutinin (usually referred to as PHA). Kidney beans contain much higher concentrations of this lectin and just five uncooked beans can cause severe and sustained vomiting if they are eaten.

Lectins play useful roles as well as harmful ones. In plants, lectins are thought to play an important role in defence mechanisms and in helping them to recognise nitrogen-fixing bacteria. In the human body they can cause cells to divide and can control the import and export of substances in cells. According to their type, they can specifically recognise and bind to particular cell types and have found applications in medicine and the development of cancer treatments.

A breakthrough in research occurred when it was found that they might interfere with complex infection pathways of HIV. PHA has been found to inhibit an important enzyme that the HIV virus uses to replicate itself, thus preventing it from spreading so easily through the body. PHA also interferes with the way that HIV virus binds to its host cells, again limiting the ability of the virus to replicate. PHA also has other ways to obstruct the virus from entering human immune system cells.

These treatments are still experimental, but it is possible that beans may be the key to turning the tide against HIV.

Based on an article in Kitchen Garden

Poetry Corner

Springtime

Oh, spring came to my garden
And caught it unaware
Wearing just a few old leaves
And a dejected air.

But when spring left my garden,
Its work so deftly done,
Many, many Daffodils
Were dancing in the sun.

-Velma D. Bates

Spring Garden

Jack Frost has upped and gone away,
To his icy summer home.
He stays there whilst the sun is warm,
It's not safe for him to roam.

Now he's left the earth warms up,
And flowers start to grow.
Peeking through the heating soil,
Growing quickly for a show.

Crocuses and Daffodils,
Green shoots poke through the ground.
And with each day as spring returns,
They burst up all around.

When spring arrives the garden glows,
With yellow, blue and red.
Stretching in the sunny warmth,
Whilst Jack is safe in bed!

- Gareth Lancaster



Photo Mike Hughes