



Photo: Jo Latimer

## Summer 2011

### Autumn Show 17<sup>th</sup> September 2011

Calling all members to enter. If you have never exhibited before, just have a go. Make sure you follow precisely the schedule on pages 12-13 of the 2011 Programme. All entry details should be given to our Show Secretary Sharon Sperling between 6 and 9pm on Thursday September 15<sup>th</sup>. The fee is 10p for each entry. Exhibits may be staged on the Friday evening between 9 and 9:30pm and between 10am and 12:45pm on the day of the show. The doors open at 3pm and admission to the show is free. Take the opportunity to buy plants, raffle tickets, tea and a slice of cake before the prize giving at 4:15pm.

**NO LATE ENTRIES WILL BE ACCEPTED**

*If you enter something in the show, please help clear up afterwards and be sure to take your own entries home. Buckets and black sacks will be provided to help with the operation. Please do not expect others to clear up for you.*

## Forthcoming Association Meetings & Other Events

September 12 <sup>th</sup>	Perennial Plants for Continuous Colour	Jean Tallboys
September 17 <sup>th</sup>	Autumn Show as detailed above	
October 10 <sup>th</sup>	Hardy Geraniums	Jackie A'Violet
November 14 <sup>th</sup>	Wildlife Through the Seasons	John Buckingham

### Cobham Gardeners Society

For further details of these events please contact Chris Shipway

September 10 <sup>th</sup>	Autumn Show
October 12 <sup>th</sup>	West Indian Vegetables

### Istead Rise Gardeners Club

For further details of these events please contact Arthur Hills

September 10 <sup>th</sup>	Autumn Show
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Meetings are on the first Thursday of the month and start at 8pm at the Memorial Hall, Lewis Road

## Recent Events

May 9 <sup>th</sup>	Herbaceous Perennials	Laurie Manser
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Laurie told us how and when to take cuttings as well as how to divide large plants to increase plant numbers and as ever those present were given plenty of advice and tips on getting the best from these plants such as to allow space for growth as they will be in position for several, if not, many years. Laurie and Anne have just retired and moved to a flat which will be quite a change from the tied cottage and large garden they were used to.

June 13 <sup>th</sup>	Garden Outing
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On a pleasant evening around 40 members and their friends enjoyed a look around club member Jan Meadow's garden in Wrotham. Her garden contains many interesting plantings and features including a pond, croquet lawn and mature fruit trees. They have also devised an interesting badger deterrent.

The donations received from visitors were passed onto the Friends of Wrotham Church.



Photos: Mike Hughes

July 11<sup>th</sup>

Summer Social

We enjoyed a relaxed evening of table quizzes with cream tea refreshments and a small show. The winners of the classes, voted for by those present, were: Janet Oxford (flowering pot plant and scented rose) and Lorraine Davies (vase of garden flowers).

July 16<sup>th</sup>

Garden Safari

In spite of the terrible weather the garden safari went ahead as planned although visitor numbers were disappointing. The open gardens looked fantastic. Thank you to those who opened their gardens and to everybody else who helped on the day. At the time of going to press the final figure is not available but it seems we will have raised around £200 for club funds.

## 2012 Programme

The 2012 programme is nearing completion. Once again we propose to use our February meeting for an exchange of ideas and tips between members. We have a vast knowledge of many different aspects of gardening and we hope this will be a lively and interesting meeting for everybody. Our normal April meeting would clash with Easter but we have been able to hire the small hall for the third Monday (16<sup>th</sup>) for our meeting.

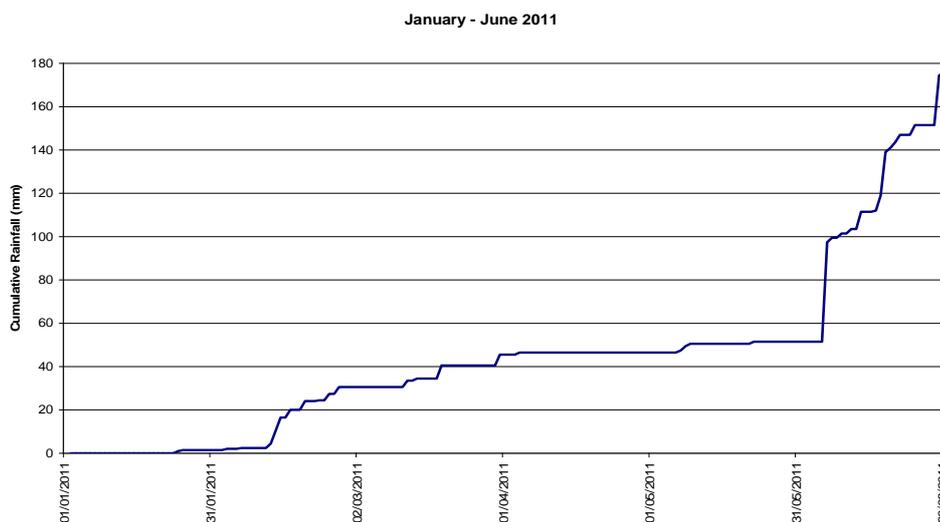
## Rainfall January - June 2011

*Definition: 'average' is for data recorded from 1971 - 2000*

This graph shows the cumulative rainfall from 1st January to June 30<sup>th</sup> 2011. During this time the total rainfall was 175.5 mm or about 7" which is around 80mm less than the same period last year (258.5mm).

The year started cold with snow but for January as a whole temperatures were close to average and it was rather dull. February was the mildest since 2002 with very few air frosts recorded.

A maximum temperature of 15.5°C was recorded at Writtle (Essex) on the 25<sup>th</sup>. It was one of the dullest Februarys on record. March and April were generally warm, dry and sunny with a few very warm nights towards the end of March. For April the UK mean temperature was 3.7 °C above average and as much as 6 °C above average in the south-east. It was one of the driest Aprils on record and the sunniest in the series recorded since 1929. Wisley recorded a temperature of 27.8 °C on 23<sup>rd</sup>. May continued the warm, dry theme with less than 30% of the normal rainfall recorded in the south-east making it amongst the driest on record since 1910. A maximum temperature of 25.4 °C was recorded at Weybourne in Norfolk on 7<sup>th</sup>. June began fine and warm but gradually became unsettled with some much needed rain in our area. For the month temperatures were about average and sunshine a little above the average. Gravesend was the hottest in the country on 27<sup>th</sup> with 33.1°C which was the highest temperature recorded in the past 5 years. The following day brought heavy thunderstorms in the afternoon with almost 1" rain recorded locally.



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## Veg Thoughts by Roy Lingham

A few thoughts for those of you who grow vegetables: for any who don't, or may not be interested, please skip to the next article!

Much of the general advice for vegetable growing seems to suggest that the optimum is an open plot, in full sun. Fine on an allotment, but not necessarily relevant to an individual garden. Your patch, like mine, may be edged, or shaded by trees and/or buildings, creating shade for at least the day, dissuading you from trying some types.

Having a tendency towards the 'suck it and see' school, or perhaps just from ignorance, I will nonetheless give most things a try: the consequence is that supposedly ideal conditions are not necessarily essential for reasonable success; there's a surprise!

My vegetable patch is rectangular, with its long axis roughly North-South. The South boundary is a wall of 10' height, the East and West sides have trees at least 20' high, shading their respective halves of the plot for at least half the day, and – as the cynics among you may have guessed – it is most open to the North, from where the sun doesn't shine.

My trial and error planting has covered Leeks, Kale, Spinach, Beetroot, Radish, Swedes, Parsnip, Beans (Runner, and Broad), Broccoli, Lettuce, Carrots, and garden Peas, most of which with satisfactory result (due to caterpillar attack, the Swedes never made it past puberty). Brassicas have been a disaster, probably due to ignorance on my part, but with not inconsiderable assistance from pigeons.

Regarding fruit, Strawberries produced a moderate crop – although I was later told it was “not a good year” for them – and gooseberries were outstanding: Raspberries have been a bit disappointing, although they were canes I had been given, rather than bought for a particular variety (now changed), and blackberries have been rampant, as have Egyptian onions – not too bad I thought, for the 'suspect' conditions.

This year (somewhat late in the day), I decided to give science a try, and after checking - how much time does the internet save? - found most of my efforts are actually considered feasible for part shade, and could have been augmented with Cress, Pak Choi, Turnips, Summer squash (surprisingly), Mustard Greens (whatever they are), Asparagus, Endive, Cavallo Nero, Onions, and Salsify (which – again by chance – I have sown this year). Asparagus is also given as a possibility, but too exotic and space hungry for me.

For fruit, the supposed options are also quite varied, including Alpine strawberries, Plums Pears, Redcurrants, Rhubarb (which I have in full sun), Quince, Elderflower (fruit?), and of course, Morello cherry. Suitable herbs apparently include Mint, Parsley, Sage, Rosemary, and Bay.

The general rule of thumb therefore seems to be anything 'leafy', but not flowered – so I'm not sure how it works for the legumes, Strawberries, Currants, and Prunus.

Perhaps not a great deal of help this late in the year, but then who's going by the book?

## In The News

### Ragwort

Recent articles in the press suggest that the risk to animals from ragwort may have been exaggerated. Whilst there is a risk to livestock and horses, ragwort is a critically important nectar and pollen source for hundreds of species of butterflies, bees, moths, beetles and flies, helping to maintain what remains of our much declined wildlife. There are 30 insect species totally reliant on it and about a third of these are scarce or rare. Recently the Advertising Standards Agency (ASA) cracked down on chemical companies who, in order to boost sales have suggested that landowners have a legal obligation to get rid of ragwort. In fact this is only the case if the weed poses a significant risk to horses, cattle or sheep living in the area and then the land owner might be ordered to control ragwort.

### Ecocide (source: Permaculture Magazine)

Barrister Polly Higgins is campaigning for the UN to adopt a fifth crime against peace that she calls *Ecocide*: the destruction of large areas of the environment and eco-systems. Examples include the Athabasca Oil Sands in north eastern Alberta, Canada, the deforestation of the Amazonian rainforest and water pollution.

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In this context, "Around the World in 60 minutes" on BBC2 showed how the impact of human activity can be monitored and even policed from space. For instance, the effect of diverting rivers to irrigate rice fields, denying water to the Aral Sea in Kazakstan and allowing it to dry up. Brazil has laws against deforestation and space monitoring is the most effective way of enforcing them. It may still be possible to download this program.

### **Feeding Britain** (source: Permaculture Magazine)

Craig Embleton does a little arithmetic to show just how productive the one million acres of Britain's gardens could be. For example, using biointensive methods, yields of 150 tonnes per acre of potatoes are possible. If only one tenth of this yield were possible in normal circumstances, 300lbs could be produced from a patch just 30ft by 15ft. Even people with quite small gardens could become more than self-sufficient in such things as apples, nuts, soft fruit and many salad crops. An 8 x 4 ft glasshouse could provide a household with all the glasshouse-grown vegetables and fruit they normally purchase at present. Once in action, no fossil-fuels need be used.

### **Beans**

Runner beans depend on warmth and soil moisture. However, Fava beans grow well in cool, wet weather. This following website has an excellent discussion on beans and most everything else (it's located in Eastern Washington state, USA): <http://growingtaste.com/vegetables/bean.shtml>

### **Roundup® (Glyphosate)**

The quotation below is taken from a paper by scientists with excellent credentials that can be found at <http://www.scribd.com/doc/57277946/RoundupandBirthDefectsv5>

"Concerns about the best-selling herbicide Roundup® are running at an all-time high. Scientific research published in 2010 showed that Roundup® and the chemical on which it is based, glyphosate, cause birth defects in frog and chicken embryos at dilutions much lower than those used in agricultural and garden spraying. The EU Commission dismissed these findings, based on a rebuttal provided by the German Federal Office for Consumer Protection and Food Safety, BVL. BVL cited unpublished industry studies to back its claim that glyphosate was safe. The Commission has previously ignored or dismissed many other findings from the independent scientific literature showing that Roundup® and glyphosate cause endocrine disruption, damage to DNA, reproductive and developmental toxicity, neurotoxicity, and cancer, as well as birth defects. Many of these effects are found at very low doses, comparable to levels of pesticide residues found in food and the environment."

Although glyphosate was originally due to be reviewed in 2012, the Commission decided late last year not to bring the review forward, instead delaying it until 2015. The chemical will not be reviewed under more stringent, up-to-date standards until 2030. So once again we see concern that the European Commission been bought off by Monsanto <http://blog.friendseat.com/wikileaks-cables-on-monsanto-gm-crops>.

"It is well-documented that glyphosate promotes soil pathogens and is already implicated with the increase of more than 40 plant diseases; it dismantles plant defenses by chelating vital nutrients; and it reduces the bioavailability of nutrients in feed, which in turn can cause animal disorders." And it is not only Roundup/Glyphosate ... If you can, take a look at <http://www.responsibletechnology.org/blog/1412>

... and a letter from Dr. Don Huber, Professor Emeritus at Purdue University to Tom Vilsack the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture presenting a finding of a correlation between either glyphosate or Roundup Ready crops and a new, previously unknown organism that may be the cause of animal miscarriages and infertility. See <http://www.lavidalocavore.org/diary/4523/researcher-glyphosate-roundup-or-roundup-ready-crops-may-cause-animal-miscarriages>

{I understand that glyphosate molecules in the soil are trapped in between the thin flat platelets of clay particles. Hence Monsanto claim that it is rendered safe in the soil. However, it could explain changes to microscopic living material held in long-term close contact with chemically-active glyphosate.}

Visit to Wisley 26<sup>th</sup> May 2011



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