



Photo: Jo Latimer

Autumn 2012

Christmas Social Monday 10th December 2012 at 7:00 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' and glasses. Water will be provided.



Meopham Garden Association

Christmas Menu

Starter

Leek & Potato Soup (V)

Main Course

Honey Roast Ham & Turkey with sage stuffing
& sausage wrapped in bacon
& seasonal vegetables,
roast & new potatoes

or

Cheese & Spinach Tortellini (V)

Dessert

Christmas Pudding with Brandy Sauce

or

Lemon Meringue Pie with cream

or

Cheese & Biscuits

Tea or Coffee & Mince Pies

Forthcoming Association Meetings & Other Events

10 th December 2012	Christmas Supper
14 th January 2013	AGM & Seed Swap (see below for more information)
11 th February 2013	A talk by Caroline Halfpenny of Hadlow College
11 th March 2013	Garden Forum

Have your say in the future of the club

The Committee would like to receive suggestions from members to help shape the club in the future. Any suggestions can be made in person to a committee member or in writing. To this end 'suggestion slips' will be distributed and once completed, they can be given to a committee member or posted in the suggestion box. Please be assured that all suggestions will be discussed initially by the committee and maybe at the Garden Forum in March.



Seed Swaps in 2013

Members are asked to bring along to the AGM or the Garden Forum in March any saved seed or bought seeds that are not required. Any types of seeds are welcome. Tokens will be issued for donated seed but can also be purchased. These can then be exchanged for any of the donated seed packets. Please follow the instructions below to donate seed:

- 1 Provide 'sensible' quantities of seed in paper packets/envelopes. If supplying old seed, increase the quantity to offset any reduced viability.
- 2 Packets must be clearly marked with name (common/botanical) and month/year collected.
- 3 Include as much cultural information as possible (perhaps on separate sheet). This should include approximate height and spread, preferred soil type and conditions (if significant), and whether Perennial, Biennial, Hardy, Annual, or Half-hardy annual.
- 4 Seed saved from F1 hybrids will not come true to 'type', but could be offered if clearly marked, for anybody not unduly bothered
- 5 For vegetable seeds, state whether organic although this is difficult to prove especially if other similar plants in vicinity may have cross pollinated
- 6 Excess purchased seed may be offered as can seeds which perhaps were not to your requirements.

Recent Events

13th August

Summer Social and Mini Show

A little later than in recent years, we held our summer social and mini show. Those present attempted to answer questions posed in quizzes on various topics. The mini show consisted of three classes and the winners were voted for by those present:

A rose for fragrance	Pat Day
A vase of garden flowers	Lorraine Davis
A flowering pot plant	Elizabeth Thomas

8th September

Autumn Show

One of our earliest Autumn Shows was well supported, despite the very unusual weather since the Spring Show, which included the wettest summer for 100 years. All but two classes in the schedule had entries. We had 186 entries from 20 exhibitors including 4 new competitors and one junior. We were pleased to have pleased the judges with the quality of the show. Roy Lingham has made some very thorough notes on comments for Sections 1- 3 and these are available on request.

The Autumn Show award winners were as follows:

Stevens Cup	Barbara Macknish
Championship Cup	Barbara Macknish
Townsend Vase	Ann Kneif, Rosemary Divall & Claire Williams
Coronation Cup	Rosemary Divall
National Vegetable Society Medal	Tony Thomas
Douglas Nicholson Trophy	Lorraine Davies & Tony Thomas
Hill Cup	Gail King
Harvel Floral Bowl	Enid Lander
Bill Roberts Cup	Jo Latimer
Garden News Shield	Lorraine Davies
Goodwin Cup	Lorraine Davies
Top Tray Award	Lorraine Davies
Everard Bowl	Lorraine Davies

Thanks also are due to all the helpers from setting up on Friday night to the tea room, plant stall and raffle to the clearing away on Saturday afternoon. Thank you to all the exhibitors who made

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Meopham Garden Association

the effort to enter the show. Many thanks personally to Claire Williams and to Barbara Macknish for standing in for me on the Saturday.

The show dates for next year are 23rd March and 21st September. The specified bulbs for Classes 1 and 2 of the Spring Show 2013 are **Gypsy Queen** (Hyacinth) and **Arctic Gold** (Narcissus).

Sharon Sperling – Show Secretary

10th September Growing & Showing Daffodils

Mrs Jannine Doulton, who was one of the judges at our Autumn Show, made a quick return to tell us about her passion for daffodils. She gave a detailed talk and inspired us all to grow daffodils for the Spring Show which she will also be coming to judge.

8th October What We Are Doing at Rifleman Cottage - a talk on Permaculture

The main essence of 'Permaculture' is to take care of the earth, take care of people and share the surplus. The term was coined in the 1970s by Bill Mollison and David Holmgren to represent a more sustainable way of living by minimising the reliance on non-renewable resources and destructive economic systems. Our speaker, John Rudgard told us how he and his family are putting this into practice at their home in Faversham in terms of energy use, dealing with waste, creating wildlife habitats, growing their own produce or buying as much locally as possible.

*Permaculture is an innovative framework for creating sustainable ways of living;
a practical method for developing ecologically harmonizing efficient and
productive systems that can be used by anyone, anywhere.*

26th October Coach Trip to Sheffield Park & Garden

On a dull, damp day we were still able to enjoy the spectacular colour in Sheffield Park. A few photos are printed at the end of the newsletter.

In The News

Compost Problems Gardening Which? warns that recent media reports have suggested that *clopyralid* lawn weed killer may be present in bagged compost. Despite a compulsory test for herbicide contamination carried out in the manufacturing process, it may have become contaminated from council green waste, an ingredient in both peat-based and peat-free products. Gardeners have reported issues with plant growth, including distorted foliage on tomato plants. However, it is well to point out that some common plant ailments such as viruses, or over watering could be confused with herbicide contamination.

Ash Trees Threatened By *Chalara fraxinea*

This has been very much in the news in the last few weeks as it could potentially devastate one of our most common woodland trees. Outbreaks have been confirmed in Kent and the public are asked to be vigilant to try and prevent the spread of the disease by not transporting leaves from woodlands they have been walking in. Look for black leaves on the tree and lesions around the leaf nodes. For further information <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-20079657> or look at the Forestry Commission video here: <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/chalara>

Incredible Edible, an initiative involving local businesses, schools, farmers - everyone in Todmorden, West Yorkshire is dedicated to providing access to good local food for all by planting on unused land throughout the community. They now have Lottery funding for a full-scale fish farm at Tod High School and await final planning permission. <http://www.incredible-edible-todmorden.co.uk/>

Farm to Plate, an organisation in Vermont has a 10 year plan that seeks a path to a more sustainable local food system. The state-funded scheme is open to all farms, food system-related enterprises and trade associations, co-ops, public agencies, non-profit organizations, private funders and community groups. The program is designed to "catalyze and accelerate the development of markets for sustainably produced goods and services." <http://www.commondreams.org/headline/2012/10/15-5>

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"Feeding the World" Have you heard the myth that we need industrial agriculture to feed the world? This link features a video pointing out the Myths of industrial farming. The biggest players in the food industry spend billions of dollars every year not selling food, but selling the idea that we need their products to feed the world. The film **Food MythBusters** answers these questions and more. Next time you can answer them too. <http://www.commondreams.org/video/2012/10/26>

Sustainable Agriculture A new study finds that sustainable farming methods with longer rotations and greater variety of crops (patterned after those formerly used by North American farmers for generations) can help conventional agriculture significantly reduce its chemical use. The 9-year Marsden Farm study, on Iowa State University land, found sustainable methods improved yields of both corn and soy, reduced need for nitrogen fertilizer and herbicides by up to 88%, reduced toxins in groundwater 200-fold, but didn't reduce profits by a single cent. <http://www.plosone.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0047149>

More on GM

In India a court-appointed technical committee called for a ten-year moratorium on open field trials of genetically modified (GM) crops. The committee responded to a petition concerning trials of food crops spliced with genes taken from the soil bacterium *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt), an insecticide whose impact on human health is unknown. <http://www.ipsnews.net/2012/10/india-puts-gm-food-crops-under-microscope/>

Also in India, at a media briefing organized by Aruna Rodrigues which highlighted public interest litigation seeking a moratorium on GM testing, scientists proposed a holistic paradigm, not GM crops, as the answer to India's future agricultural needs. <http://www.commondreams.org/headline/2012/09/25-5>

A team of scientists in France claims to have discovered a noticeable increase in tumours and kidney disease in lab rats that have been fed GMO foods. The article in Food and Chemical Toxicology found that rats fed, for two years, on a diet containing NK603, a seed variety made tolerant to Monsanto's Roundup weedkiller, or given water with Roundup at levels permitted in the United States, died earlier than those on a standard diet. Rats on the GM diet developed mammary tumours, as well as severe liver and kidney damage. The GM community came out in defence of GMO products, saying the data is not trustworthy, and the scientists who conducted the study went on a "statistical fishing trip," to prove their case. (*But the GM community test for only 26 weeks and they would say that, wouldn't they?*) <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/09/19/gmcrops-safety-idUSL5E8KJC1220120919>

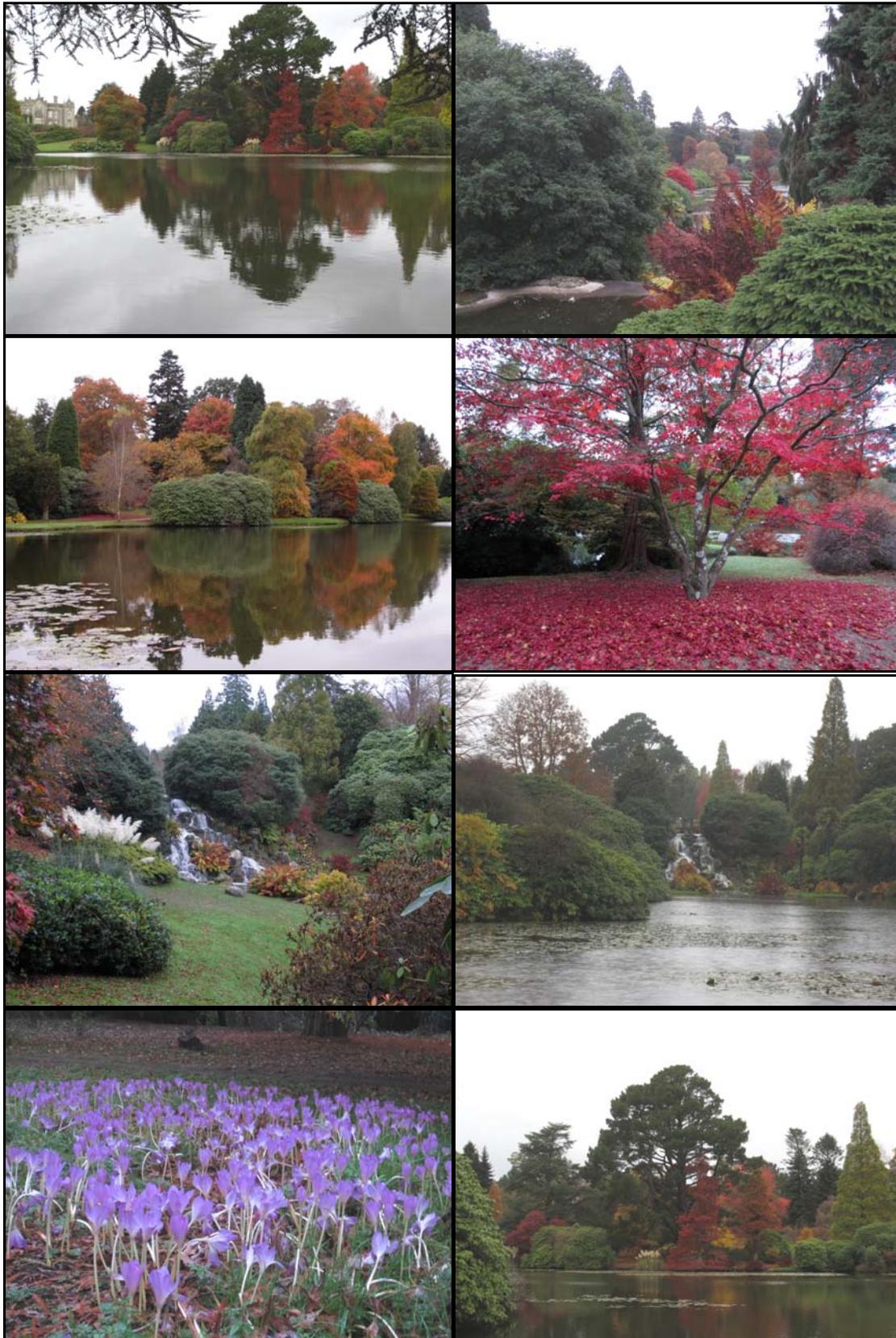
Giant Walmart vs. the Small Farmer Productivity in agriculture has been manipulated to exclude diversity and also to exclude costs of high chemical and capital inputs. When biodiversity is taken into account, small farms produce more food and higher incomes. Promoters of Foreign Direct Investment in retail claim that corporations like Walmart will benefit the Indian farmer by getting rid of the middleman. What is Walmart if it is not a middleman? But instead of small traders taking small commissions and spending the money in the community, Walmart would take the money out. <http://www.commondreams.org/view/2012/10/15-5>

Hunger Games Hunger and malnutrition are man-made and are hardwired in the design of the industrial, chemical model of agriculture. We are repeatedly told that we will starve without chemical fertilisers, which are essentially poisons that undermine food security by destroying the fertility of soil and killing the biodiversity of soil organisms, friendly insects that control pests and pollinators like bees and butterflies necessary for plant reproduction. Industrial production has led to a severe ecological and social crisis. <http://www.commondreams.org/view/2012/08/28-1>

Pesticides and Health A new analysis from America draws a disturbing connection between pesticides in their food system and serious health problems among women and children. The report reviews empirical research linking agricultural chemicals to birth defects, neurological disorders, childhood cancers and reproductive problems. Some of these chemicals make their way into the foods we eat, but they are more acutely concentrated in the environments surrounding farmlands. Children in or near farming areas can be exposed through myriad channels, from contaminated soil to the air in playgrounds. The President's Cancer Panel reports that the contribution of environmental contamination to disease has been "grossly underestimated" and that the policies meant to protect people have fallen far short. Nearly 20 years ago, scientists called for swift action to protect young and growing bodies from pesticides. Yet today, in America, children continue to be exposed to pesticides that are known to be harmful in places they live, learn and play. <http://www.panna.org/sites/default/files/KidsHealthReportOct2012.pdf>

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