



The Lily Pond at Monet's Garden, Giverny

Photo: Jo Latimer

Spring 2012

July 9th 2012 at 7:30pm

Plant Hunting Trips and the World Garden Through the Seasons

Tom Hart Dyke

This will be an all ticket event but members are entitled to 1 free ticket which must be claimed in advance. Additional tickets can be purchased for £5 so please bring friends along. Note that the meeting will start at 7:30pm.

Please bring any spare plants for the plant stall and we are also asking for donations of cupcakes and 'tray bakes' for the tea room.



Forthcoming Association Meetings & Other Events

May 14th **Gardening for Wildlife and the
Kent Wildlife Gardening Award Scheme** **Maureen Rainey**

June 11th **Garden Outing to Haydown, Great Buckland DA13 0XF**

This is the garden of Dr and Mrs Edelanu and directions will be available at our May meeting and on our web site. The cost of the visit is £5/person which includes refreshments as well as the chance to look around their 9 acre garden. All proceeds from the evening are being donated to charity. Please note that some of the garden is on a slope so wear sensible shoes if you want to see it all.

June 21st **Coach Trip to Rolvenden**

The cost of the outing will not exceed £20/person. The coach will leave Norwood Lane at 9:15am, Meadfield Road (opposite Meopham School) at 9:20am and Culverstone at 9:30am. Please let Hazel know where you wish to join the coach. Great Maytham Hall are opening just for us in the morning. Please note that the facilities here are limited but refreshments may be purchased on the coach. We will go onto Hole Park for the afternoon where there is an option to order at cream tea for an additional £3.50.

July 9th **Plant Hunting Trips and the
World Garden Through the Seasons** **Tom Hart Dyke**

August 13th **Summer Social**

Our summer social will consist of 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 £2 non-members will also be welcome to come along and take part. There is no need to pre-book your entries, just bring them along on the evening and exhibit. The 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)

Recent Events

February 13th **Members Forum & Seed Swap**

This was our third member's forum where all present are encouraged to take part. We had a lively discussion on wide ranging topics with many tips or remedies suggested. Details of the subjects discussed can be found on our website. We also had our first seed swap where many interesting seeds brought along by members were swapped or bought.

February 19th **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 for once the weather was kind. The opening and subsequent sales of snowdrops has raised about £550 for the Eleanor Foundation.



March 12th

Winterdales Cheese

Carla Betts

Local cheesemakers, Winterdales began making cheese 8 years ago when it became uneconomical to continue as just a dairy farm. Within their first year, they had won the World Cheese Bronze Award with their cheddar-like cheese. Since then they have won the gold award (2009) and also the British Cheese Gold Award.

Their handmade cheeses use milk produced on the farm using vegetarian rennet and a batch of milk (1200 litres) produces 120kg of cheese. The waste product, whey, is fed to local pigs. Their farm shop at Fairseat is open 11am – 1pm on Saturdays but the cheeses are also stocked by Waitrose and Fortnum and Mason.

March 24th

Spring Show

Visitors to the 2012 Spring Show were greeted by the colour and fragrance of spring, which filled Meopham Village Hall. The event was very well supported with over 250 entries received from 35 competitors, including two new exhibitors. Both received places in the judging and so the Everard Bowl is likely to be awarded based on the Spring and Autumn results together. Another pleasing development this year is the extension of the junior class to local schools. The response from Meopham Community Academy produced 22 lovely drawings and we also had three lovely entries from club members' families.

David Johnson returned to Meopham to judge, although he has never judged our Spring Show. His comments were useful and brought a different view to the schedule. As steward for this section, Roy took excellent notes which will be made available to members on request or via the website.

Following Mr Johnson's comments and after consulting the Kent Federation, we will be renaming all our classes as 'daffodil' where they have previously said 'narcissi' in line with RHS changes nationally.

Congratulations to the award winners: The Diploma for Best Bloom went to Lorraine Davies. Barbara Macknish won both the Melliker Cup and The Harvel Spring Challenge. The Chairman's Cup was won by Janet Oxford. Enid Lander won the Melliker Cup and the Meryl Burgess Salver. Elizabeth Thomas won the Oldham Goblet.

Thanks to all those who helped setting up, we could do with more need helpers on the Friday night to put up tables and move chairs. Thanks also to those who were judges' stewards, those who donated lovely cakes and helped to run the tea room, those who worked on the plant stall and the raffle. Thanks particularly to Claire and to all the exhibitors who made the show possible.

Sharon Sperling (Show Secretary)

April 16th

The North London Community Veg Growing Project

Naomi Schillinger and Nicolette Jones

Neighbours Naomi and Nicolette met when the former knocked at Nicolette's door to see if she could have windows which had been thrown out to use to make a cold frame for her garden. They got talking and found they both enjoyed gardening. At that time their local council (Islington) were giving away free wild flower seeds which they applied for. They then went around giving them to their neighbours to sow in their front gardens and also in the tree pits along the road. The council also produces compost from their recycling depot which is free to residents and the project organises large bags of compost to be delivered which are used to grow flowers and vegetable in their front gardens. They won 5 prizes in the 'Islington in Bloom' competition and also a special award for 'Community Participation'. The prize money bought bulbs which were distributed at a 'Cake Sunday' organised and everyone went home with seeds and bulbs. This spring the neighbourhood is in full colour. There are now about 100 houses involved and the impact on the local community has been

For information relating to the Meopham Garden Association go to our website at

www.meophamgardeners.co.uk



tremendous. Everyone talks to each other, the neighbours look after each other's houses, pets and children and even the local pub has taken part. It was very enjoyable listening to their tales and hearing their enthusiasm. There is another 'Cake Sunday' on 27th May as part of the 'Chelsea Fringe' event. Please visit Naomi's blog at www.outofmyshed.co.uk for more information.

In The News

Neo-nicotinoids (BBC Countryfile, 6th May)

The programme highlighted the fact that neo-nicotinoids (insecticides) are used to dress the seeds of oilseed rape and as the plants grow this is transported to the pollen and therefore can thus have a severe impact on bees. One wonders how much gets into honey and also into vegetable oils. The Co-op is so concerned about neo-nicotinoids it has banned them on its UK farms.

Dog made ill by Compost (Gardening Which)

Tremorgenic mycotoxin may have been formed in the compost by fungal action and have become exposed when the compost was turned. This toxin can cause vomiting, muscle rigidity and even convulsions or death if it is ingested by a scavenging dog. So ensure that compost heaps and waste bins are secured so that pets cannot get at their contents.

Buttercups and Ultraviolet Light (The Garden)

Researchers at Cambridge have discovered that the petals reflect ultraviolet light in narrow beams and will therefore appear to flash to attract insects flying by. (www.cam.ac.uk)

Brogdale's New Plantings (The Garden)

The holder of the National Plant Collection of Apples is in the process of planting a new orchards to keep the collection vigorous and healthy. Already 1500 dessert apple cultivars have been planted and another 700 cooking apple cultivars will be planted in two years time. (www.brogdale.org)

Plants for Bugs (The Garden also visit www.bigwildlifegarden.org.uk)

Research is under way at the RHS to compare the value of native and non-native plants to garden invertebrates. The article gives some tips to encourage invertebrates, such as clothing walls with climbers for insects and spiders, making bug "hotels" from tubes filled with straw, leaving some soil bare and some mulched for ground beetles and sub-surface species.

Embedded Water (www.waterwise.org.uk/pages/embedded-water.html)

This web site is dedicated to raising awareness of the total amount of water that we use in our daily lives. Besides the obvious need for drinking and hygiene, we use even more that is far from obvious. Tea and coffee require large amounts for irrigation, processing and transportation. For each litre of coffee that we consume, about 1700 litres of water - (or nearly 400 gallons in old money) will have been used in its production. Similarly a cup of tea requires the use of about five gallons of water. Of more direct interest to gardeners is that a tomato has about 13 litres (nearly 3 gallons) of water "embedded" in it.

Designing for Drought (Permaculture Magazine Summer 2012)

Despite all the rain we have had recently, the spectre of drought still hangs over us. So it was interesting to find two articles that address the subject in the Summer 2012 issue. The first example is about Malta and describes the usual means of harvesting, storing and distribution of water together with schemes to limit the loss from the ground and protect against damage from salty winds. The second example is about the green oasis of a farm in the West Bank, Palestine and describes its success despite the blasting of a road through its terraces, the threats and demand for water by a nearby illegal Israeli settlement and the harassment by the Israeli army. (Land, once declared unoccupied is claimed by the Israeli authorities.)