



Photo: Jo Latimer

## Autumn 2014

### AGM & Christmas Nibbles

As we are not meeting in January, we will be holding our AGM on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> December. Apart from the business part of the meeting there will also be festive refreshments. The meeting will start at 8pm.



# Meopham Garden Association

## Forthcoming Association Meetings & Other Events

- 8<sup>th</sup> December 2014**                    **AGM and Christmas Nibbles**
- 12<sup>th</sup> January 2015**                    **NO MEETING**
- 9<sup>th</sup> February 2015**                    **Gardener's Forum & Seed Swap**
- 15<sup>th</sup> February 2015**                    **Snowdrops & Hellebores at Meadow View, Hodsoll Street**

Once again Barbara Macknish will be opening her garden to the public between 11am – 3:30pm to view her magnificent display in aid of the Eleanor Lions Hospices. There will be a plant stall and teas will also be available. Entry is £1. Please park at Woodlands Farm.

## Recent Events

The winners of the classes of the mini show which was held during the July meeting were as follows:

A rose for fragrance	Enid Lander
A vase of garden flowers	Moya Church
A flowering pot plant	Marion Johnson

## **11<sup>th</sup> August**                                    **Flower Arranging Practical**

This experimental evening proved to be a huge success with members, friends and relatives taking part in the class lead by Ann Stapley.

## **8<sup>th</sup> September**                                    **Alpines**

Dr Tim Ingram from Copton Ash Garden in Faversham spoke about his passion for alpines. With some fantastic pictures, he showed how alpine plants have adapted to extreme conditions such as quite high up in mountains where they have plenty of moisture but also good drainage. They are ideal in our gardens to be grown in raised beds or on a natural slope. At his own garden he has created deep troughs which contain well drained compost mix. As alpines dislike wet conditions he recommended covering them in winter. He brought along an irresistible selection of plants for sale.

## **20<sup>th</sup> September**                                    **Autumn Show**

Despite concerns caused by the warm July and August, we had a good range of flowers, some fruit and vegetables although there were no entries for Top Tray. Although many members were away, 16 adults entered 42 classes and everyone enjoyed the 13 junior entries, particularly the junior category of "Sporty Spud."

We were very pleased by the effect of the new black cloth for the show tables and the green sticks for classes. The judges also commented on the appearance. Our judges were David Johnson for Sections 1-3, Sue Rowe for Section 4 along with the Junior Class 48 and Elaine Lockyear for Section 5.

The Autumn Show award winners were as follows:

Stevens Cup	Lesley Foxwell
Championship Cup	Barbara Macknish
Townsend Vase & Coronation Cup	Enid Lander
National Vegetable Society Medal	Fred Pepper
Douglas Nicholson Award	Fred Pepper
Hill Cup	Gail King
Harvel Floral Bowl	Enid Lander

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Bill Roberts Cup  
Garden News Shield & Goodwin Cup  
Everard Bowl

Anne Nicholson and Enid Lander  
Fred Pepper  
Marion Johnson

We were also pleased to display entries to the Village Hall Garden Design competition and to announce the winner was Joanne Latimer. Thanks to all the entrants for taking part. Jo was awarded the prize vouchers at the club's Harvest Supper in October.

Thank you to Claire for all her work while I was away. Thanks also to members who helped set up and put away. It was noticed that fewer members attended the show and this had an impact on the takings in the tearoom and raffle. As one of our main fundraising events, we hope that more members will attend both shows in 2015 and bring friends and relatives!

## Next Years' Shows

Claire and I will be booking the judges for the 2015 shows, which are planned for March 21<sup>st</sup> and September 19<sup>th</sup>. We have already started working on the new schedule to go to the printers in early 2015. All suggestions for classes and comments are welcome.

The bulbs for the Spring Show are **Blue Delft** (Hyacinth for Class 1) and **Bravoure** (Daffodil for Class 2).

*Sharon Sperling*

## How to take part in the Seed Swap

Members are asked to bring along to the AGM any saved seed or bought seeds that are not required. Any types of seeds are welcome. Seeds may be purchased but tokens will be issued for donated seed which 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.

## In The News

On November 4<sup>th</sup>, the government published its '**National Strategy for Pollinators**' which is designed to help protect the species that pollinate our crops and in turn save several £1 billion every year. The strategy has come about after lobbying by environmental groups including Friends of the Earth and local Wildlife Trusts and is backed by politicians of all parties.

**TTIP (Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership):** We are in **serious danger** of losing our sovereignty to unaccountable and powerful international corporations if we allow the TTIP to become law. Nobel Prizewinner and former chief economist at the World Bank, Joseph Stiglitz says, "There would be some big losers - namely, the rest of us". Enlightened media present details of the appalling consequences of similar agreements (NAFTA, CAFTA) and their impact on farming and horticulture and the pollution of aquifers and ecosystems. <http://www.citizen.org/trade>

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**Vandana Shiva:** The conflict between “free trade” and food rights arose again at the WTO talks in September, when India maintained that a permanent solution be found for food security issues before signing the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA). WTO double standards are exposed when India’s subsidies of \$12 billion to its 500 million farmers are considered “trade distorting”, while US subsidies of \$120 billion to its 2 million farmers are not. India’s subsidies are \$25 per farmer, while US subsidies amounts to \$60,000 per farmer — that’s 240,000 per cent more than Indian subsidies. Yet the US is threatening India and demanding the removal of support to its small and marginal farmers.

<http://www.commondreams.org/views/2014/10/08/food-farmers-and-wtos-doublespeak>

**Christian Science Monitor, September 23, 2014:** During the past few weeks, we’ve seen the people of Guatemala and El Salvador push back against efforts by the United States, Monsanto, and Australian-Canadian gold mining companies to require national governments to abide by national and international agreements and to ignore domestic objections.

<http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Americas/Latin-America-Monitor/2014/0923/Should-multinationals-have-say-in-national-affairs-Central-Americans-say-no>

<http://www.bilaterals.org/?guatemalan-court-suspends-monsanto>

### **The second edition of GMO Myths and Truths - Statement: No scientific consensus on GMO safety**

A report by genetic engineers Dr John Fagan and Dr Michael Antoniou and researcher Claire Robinson, released on 19 May 2014 as a free online download by the sustainability and science policy platform Earth Open Source, concludes with the statement; "As scientists, physicians, academics, and experts from disciplines relevant to the scientific, legal, social and safety assessment aspects of genetically modified organisms (GMOs), we strongly reject claims that there is a “scientific consensus” on GMO safety and that the debate on this topic is “over”. The claim encourages a climate of complacency that could lead to a lack of regulatory and scientific rigour and appropriate caution, potentially endangering the health of humans, animals, and the environment.

#### **1. There is no consensus on GM food safety**

#### **2. There are no epidemiological studies investigating potential effects of GM food consumption on human health**

#### **3. Claims that scientific and governmental bodies endorse GMO safety are exaggerated or inaccurate**

#### **4. EU research project does not provide reliable evidence of GM food safety**

#### **5. List of several hundred studies does not show GM food safety**

#### **6. There is no consensus on the environmental risks of GM crops**

#### **7. International agreements show widespread recognition of risks posed by GM foods and crops**

Science and society do not proceed on the basis of a constructed consensus, as current knowledge is always open to well-founded challenge and disagreement.

A laboratory study in human cells shows that very low levels of glyphosate (well below levels allowed for drinking water) stimulated the growth of breast cancer cells. It was also below the level found in GM glyphosate-tolerant soy, which is imported into Europe for animal feed and human food. If confirmed in animal studies, this finding would overturn regulatory assumptions of safe levels of glyphosate.

Claims that Europe is becoming a “museum” of farming because of its reluctance to embrace GM crops are shown to be nonsensical by research showing that Europe’s mostly non-GM agriculture out-yields the USA’s mostly GM agriculture with less pesticide use. But in reality the GM-adopting USA is falling behind Europe in terms of productivity and sustainability.

[http://earthopensource.org/files/pdfs/GMO\\_Myths\\_and\\_Truths/GMO\\_Myths\\_and\\_Truths\\_1.3.pdf](http://earthopensource.org/files/pdfs/GMO_Myths_and_Truths/GMO_Myths_and_Truths_1.3.pdf)

[http://bullhorn.nationofchange.org/gm\\_foods\\_myths\\_truths](http://bullhorn.nationofchange.org/gm_foods_myths_truths)

Director of Food Policy Initiatives at Consumers Union, which is the world’s largest independent product-testing organization, points out that "US Federal law requires labelling that lets consumers know whether foods have been previously frozen, made from concentrate, pasteurized, or irradiated, but not that a food is genetically engineered". Tests on more than 80 different processed foods containing corn or soy—the common GMO crops in the U.S —revealed that nearly all unlabelled products did, in fact, contain substantial amounts of genetically modified corn or soy.

<http://www.commondreams.org/news/2014/10/07/gmos-are-everywhere-and-should-be-labeled-study-finds>

<http://www.commondreams.org/news/2014/10/03/here-we-go-again-monsanto-spends-millions-defeat-states-gmo-labeling-effort>

The California Department of Food and Agriculture has released a draft plan giving itself authority to spray toxic pesticides anywhere in California, at any time into the indefinite future – **without any public knowledge or input.**

<http://www.nationofchange.org/2014/10/27/california-dept-food-agriculture-gives-blank-check-spray-pesticides-anywhere-anytime-public-input/>

Permaculture Magazine for August features two articles that would seem to be complementary, namely, "Grow Your Own Orchard on the Cheap" and "Start a Reforestation Revolution". Also, read "Restoring Agriculture in the Mediterranean".

[www.permaculture.co.uk](http://www.permaculture.co.uk)

The news section of the October edition of Gardening Which? begins an investigation into neonicotinoids and requests comments. A year or two ago, distorted growth of seedlings was reported as being caused by their presence in composts and these chemicals were banned because of their danger to wildlife, but there is pressure in the EU to get the ban lifted.

The Autumn RSPB Magazine carries a description of a suburban garden in its wildlife gardening section. This nature-friendly patch provides sanctuary for a wide variety of creatures while keeping the owners self-sufficient in fruit and veg.

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