



Taken at Beth Chatto Gardens July 2014

Photo: Jo Latimer

Summer 2014

Autumn Show 20th September 2014

Calling all members to enter. If you have never exhibited before, just have a go. Yours may be the best exhibit on the day. Make sure you follow precisely the 2014 schedule. Entry details should be phoned through to our Show Secretary Sharon Sperling between 6 and 9pm on the Thursday prior to the show. She will also be accepting e-mail entries to shows@meophamgardeners.co.uk. The entry form is available from the Shows part of the website. Please follow the instructions there and make sure they are received before 6pm on the Thursday. The fee is 10p for each entry.

Exhibits may be staged on the Friday evening between 8.30 and 9pm 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 about 4:15pm.

NO LATE ENTRIES WILL BE ACCEPTED

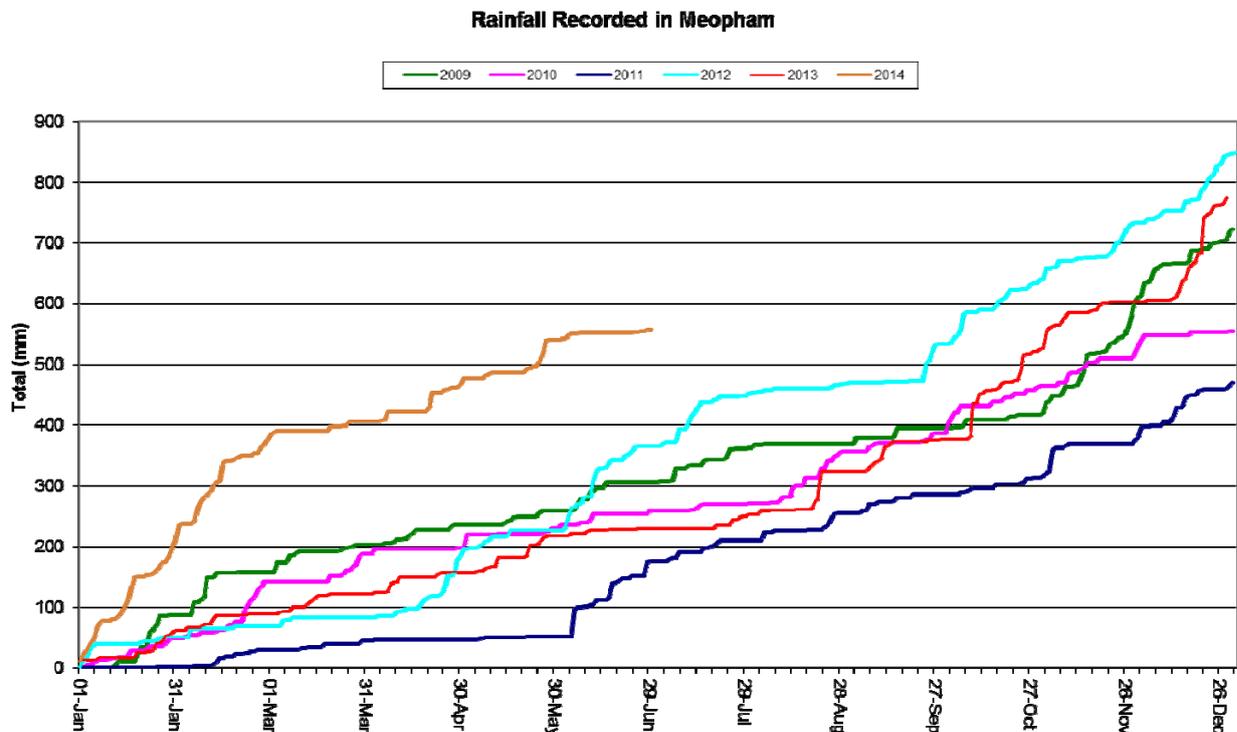
If you enter something in the show, please help clear up afterwards and be sure to take your own entries home. Buckets and black sacks will be provided to help with the operation. Please do not expect others to clear up for you.

For information relating to the Meopham Garden Association go to our website at
www.meophamgardeners.co.uk



Rainfall

This graph shows the cumulative rainfall from January 1st to June 30th 2014 along with the annual rainfall for the 5 previous years. The total rainfall up until the end of June was 558mm or 22" which is more than we recorded for the whole of 2010 and 2011. The total rainfall for the meteorological Winter (Dec - Feb) was 539mm and we had 165.5mm this Spring (Mar-May).



The data below is from the Met Office statistics and the averaging period referred to is the 30 years 1981–2010.

Last Winter was exceptionally stormy, with at least 12 major winter storms affecting the UK in two spells from mid-December to early January, and again from late January to mid-February. Overall this winter had more very severe gale days than any other dating back to 1871. January was the wettest in the England and Wales based on records extending back to 1766. The south east received almost record rainfall. However, it was a very mild month with a notable absence of frosts. The UK mean temperature was 4.8°C with a maximum temperature of 14.1°C recorded at Bude (Cornwall) on the 5th. The stormy weather continued until 15th February causing flooding across the Somerset Levels and from the River Thames. A wind gust of 109 mph was recorded at Needles Old Battery (Isle of Wight) on the 14th. With mild conditions snow was confined to the Scottish mountains. The number of air frosts was amongst the lowest in the last 50 years with a mean temperature of 5.2°C, which is 1.5 °C above average. A maximum temperature of 14.9°C was recorded in London on the 24th.

By contrast March was fairly settled with several warm days and few air frosts. It was sunnier and drier than average. The 9th saw Gravesend record 20.5°C but the maximum temperature of 20.9°C was recorded at St James's Park and Santon Downham (Suffolk) on the 30th. April was also a warm month though not as warm as 2007 or 2011. During the last ten days, showers, thundery at times, affected mainly southern areas, with some localised downpours in places. The number of air frosts was equal third lowest since 1961. Rainfall was well above normal in parts of southern England whilst sunshine was about average. The temperature reached 20.5°C at Gravesend on the 1st. May was another warmer than average month but it was also the dullest May since 1991. A low pressure system gave some unusually strong winds along the south coast over the weekend of 10th to 11th. The UK rainfall was well above average. A maximum temperature of

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26.3°C was recorded at Heathrow on the 19th. Although there were no spells of exceptional warmth, June had warm days and mild nights. It was one of the warmest Junes since 1910. A maximum temperature of 27.0°C was recorded at Cupar (Fife) on the 18th. It was rather unsettled early and late in the month, with localised thundery downpours on several days, but there was a period of fine anticyclonic weather around the middle of the month, bringing plenty of warm, dry, sunny weather. Pollen levels were very high.

Some Photos from RHS Hyde Hall and Beth Chatto's



Jo Latimer



In The News

Bees. The BBC Today programme (07/08/2014) reported that the mild winter followed by an early Spring this year has helped bee numbers to recover. However, they still have to contend with the effects of the varoa mite, pollution and the limited availability of food sources.

Biotechnology. The promises made by the biotech industry of increased yields, reduction of chemical use and control of weeds and pests have not been kept. Last month an investment fund sued DuPont for \$1 billion for pushing herbicide-resistant crops knowing full well they would fail to control weeds and instead contribute to the emergence of "superweeds".

Creating 'ownership' of seed through patents and intellectual property rights and imposing it globally through the World Trade Organisation, the biotech industry has established a monopoly empire over seed and food. While they claim ownership of the seeds they sell and collect royalties, when it comes to checks and balances on safety, the biotech industry is systematically destroying international and national laws on biosafety claiming their products are "as nature made them". (Vandana Shiva)

<http://www.commondreams.org/views/2014/08/01/fine-print-food-wars>

Food Production and Greenhouse Gases. The overall global food system -- including land-use changes, feed, fertilizer, transportation, refrigeration, processing and waste -- is estimated to be responsible for 30 to 50 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions. Over the last decade, agricultural emissions have increased by approximately 1 percent per year. According the Rodale Institute's white paper, 'Regenerative Organic Agriculture and Climate Change', "recent data from farming systems and pasture trials around the globe show that we could sequester more than 100 percent of current annual CO₂ emissions with a switch to widely available and inexpensive organic management practices." (Elizabeth Kucinich)

http://rodaleinstitute.org/assets/RegenOrgAgricultureAndClimateChange_20140418.pdf

<http://www.commondreams.org/views/2014/08/01/we-can-reverse-climate-change-way-we-grow-food>

Hawaii and GMOs. The Center for Food Safety (CFS), Earthjustice and local farmers are defending the 2013 ordinance against a lawsuit brought by companies like Monsanto who aim to open up the island for expansion of GE crop. The ordinance places a moratorium on expanding GE crops on the Big Island and regulates the organisms to prevent harm from associated pesticide use and the contamination of non-GE crops.

Due to Hawaii's climate, it has become a world center for experimental GE seed production. Nancy Redfeather Big Island farmer and agricultural educator said, "In Hawaii, we believe that our seeds, crops, and foods should remain free of contamination from genetically engineered plants"

<http://www.commondreams.org/views/2014/08/06/fight-continues-over-moratorium-gmo-crops-hawaiis-big-island>

WTO. India and the United States failed at the World Trade Organization (WTO) to reach agreement on construction of a legally binding decision on a "permanent peace clause" that would further strengthen what was decided for public distribution programmes for food security in developing countries at the ninth ministerial meeting in Bali, Indonesia, last year.

"The first responsibility of my government is to the poorest people of the country. **While we don't oppose the agreement, we believe that the needs of those living on the margins of society, not just in India but elsewhere too, have to be addressed,**" Modi told Kerry in the meeting...

<http://www.commondreams.org/news/2014/08/02/india-stands-firm-protecting-food-security-south-wto>

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/WTO-standoff-First-responsibility-towards-Indias-poor-Modi-tells-Kerry/articleshow/39440214.cms>



Organic Crops. An analysis of 343 previously peer-reviewed studies from all over the world has found that organic crops contain more antioxidants and fewer pesticides than their non-organic counterparts. The research, conducted by an international team of scientists led by UK professor of ecological agriculture Carlo Leifert, is published in the *British Journal of Nutrition*. The Soil Association points out that farming method affects quality and that the report shows that organic food benefits from More antioxidants, Fewer pesticides, Less cadmium and Less nitrogen.

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/jul/11/organic-food-more-antioxidants-study>
<http://www.commondreams.org/headline/2014/07/11-2>

Water Course Pollution. Researchers with the U.S. Geological Survey led by Michelle Hladick detected neonics in all the waterways in the mid west of the US, including the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers. One systemic pesticide, clothianidin, was found in 75 percent of the water samples. "... the insecticides were detected prior to their first use during the growing season, which indicates that they can persist from applications in prior years, and concentrations may frequently exceed chronic aquatic toxicity values during growing season".

<http://www.panna.org/> (the Pesticide Action Network)
<http://www.commondreams.org/news/2014/07/24/notorious-neonics-pervasive-midwest-waters-study>

US-EU Trade Negotiations. A leaked chapter (related to food safety as well as animal and plant health) of the secret US-EU trade negotiation ,TTIP, released by the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP), with an analysis that finds public health and food safety could be imperilled if the text under negotiation becomes law. Only negotiators of the TTIP and cleared advisors (almost exclusively corporate representatives) have been allowed to see the specifics of the agreement. The main problem with making such negotiations secret, according to the IATP analysis, is that trade policy inherently **requires that all national regulations protecting public health, the environment and worker safety, be subject to a 'least trade restrictive' requirement**, which without proper oversight leads to a natural undermining of regulations related to consumer safety.

One example cited, where negotiators continue to subordinate SPS regulations to the object of maximizing trade, is that the text follows U.S. protocols that do not require entry inspections and testing for food (which are relatively stringent in the E.U). Acceptance of this regulation would mean "food contamination outbreaks will be harder to trace to their origin, and liability harder to assess." In addition, "Import re-inspection and testing at port of entry, traditionally the last step in food safety management to verify that other programs are working, will disappear under this draft of the SPS chapter".

Additionally, while the chapter contains a section that addresses animal welfare—and member countries would be permitted to pass laws on animal welfare—those laws could not be extended to the import of products from abused animals. "While many key details regarding things like GMOs are still hidden, it's clear public health is losing out to corporate interests in a big way," said IATP's Dr. Steve Suppan, author of the analysis. "Moreover, it's an affront to democracy that the public need rely on leaked documents to find out how these agreements could affect health and safety."

Recently, European opposition to the deal has been growing, particularly regarding the possible undermining of European food standards that are far stricter around GMOs and animal growth hormones. Earlier in July, more than 100 notable French academics, activists, and cultural celebrities attempted to bring attention to these concerns by signing a petition against the TTIP. "*It's these same merchants to whom we've given the keys to the house. Now we're adding a few more keys to their ring*", comedian and activist Christophe Alevêque told the French daily Le Parisian. "There must be a firewall, a little bit of control, to make sure humans are a bit more at the centre of our concerns."

<http://www.commondreams.org/news/2014/07/24/leaked-trade-deal-chapter-reveals-corporate-friendly-subversion-public-health-food>