



Photo: Jo Latimer

Winter 2015

Spring Show 21 March 2015

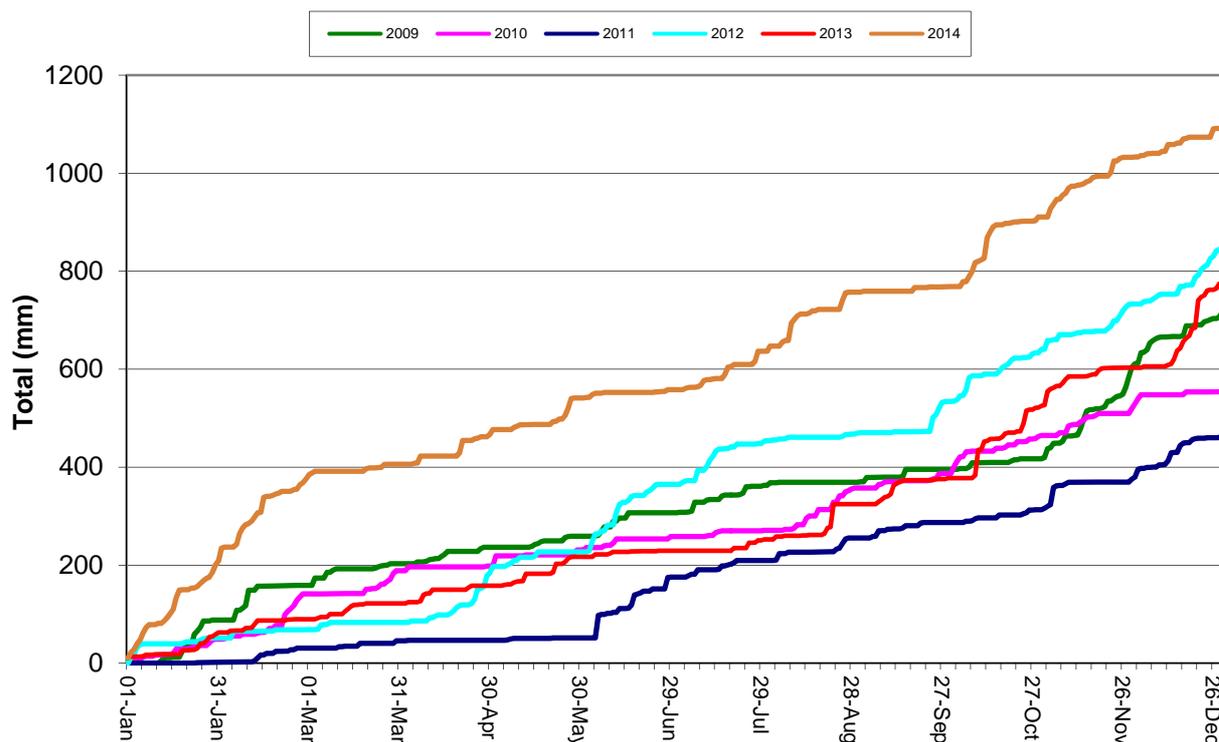
Calling all members to enter. If you have never exhibited before, just have a go. Yours may be the best exhibit on the day. Make sure you follow precisely the 2015 schedule. All entry details should be phoned through to our Show Secretary Sharon Sperling between 6 and 9pm on the Thursday prior to the show. She will accept e-mail entries to shows@meophamgardeners.co.uk. Please use the entry form available from the Shows part of the website 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.

LATE ENTRIES WILL NOT 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.

Rainfall Recorded in Meopham



January was very mild but wet and the stormy weather continued in February causing flooding. The number of air frosts was amongst the lowest in the last 50 years. March was more settled and Gravesend recorded 20.5°C on the 9th. April was also warm with thundery showers toward the end of the month. May was warm but it was the dullest since 1991. In Gravesend the temperature reached 20.5°C on the 1st. June was one of the warmest since 1910 with warm days, mild nights and very high pollen levels.

July was warm, dry and sunny with many days above 25°C. A maximum temperature of 32.3°C was recorded at Gravesend on the 18th. Heavy showers and thunderstorms gave some large rainfall totals in south-east England from 27th - 29th. The warm and humid conditions were ideal for slugs and mosquitoes.

August, the coolest since 1993, was often unsettled. Ex-Hurricane 'Bertha' passed through on 10th - 11th bringing some unseasonably windy and wet weather. In the 24 hours ending at 0900 GMT on the 12th, 135.6mm of rain fell at Torridon in Wester Ross.

High pressure dominated in September giving plenty of fine and settled weather. It was provisionally the driest September since 1910 and the driest calendar month in the UK since August 1995. It was only the fifth time that the UK mean temperature for September has equalled or exceeded that for August.

October by contrast was unsettled and wet. The remnants of Hurricane Gonzalo blew through on the 20th-21st. The 31st was the warmest Halloween on record with both Gravesend and Kew Gardens recording 23.6°C. The unsettled and mild weather continued through most of November. Rainfall was well above average and sunshine below normal. Much of December was mild and wet but there were some colder spells. On Boxing Day there were snowfalls at lower elevations in Wales and northern England, followed by a notable anticyclonic spell toward the New Year. This brought clear skies, hard frosts and the lowest temperatures of the calendar year.



In The News

Peak Food

We have reached peak food production and there may be shortages fairly soon. However, other studies suggest that enough food to feed 15 billion people is grown at present. The Institute for Food and Development Policy notes that small farms produce from two to ten times as much food per hectare as large farms devoted to monoculture.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/have-we-reached-peak-food-shortages-loom-as-global-production-rates-slow-10009185.html>

Agribusiness

Monsanto and Cargill (the American giant agribusiness responsible for de-forestation, massive habitat loss - remember the pictures of that pathetic orangutan and the toxic smogs in Singapore) are now busy in the Ukraine, which has 27% of the best agricultural land in Europe. Mass unemployment can be expected in the farming sector.

<http://www.commondreams.org/views/2015/01/18/how-people-can-outwit-global-domination-plans-agribusiness>

<http://www.commondreams.org/views/2015/01/28/corporate-takeover-ukrainian-agriculture>

<http://www.commondreams.org/news/2015/01/01/seeds-and-soil-vs-tyranny-corporate-power-2015-message-hope>

Food Movement

The rallying message for the march against agribusiness in Berlin on 17 January was 'We are fed up'. It appropriately encapsulated a growing and widespread outrage about how food is produced and the negative environmental and social impacts it has, e.g.: health and ecological impacts of pesticides, herbicides, genetically engineered seeds, industrial animal farming, water pollutions due to synthetic fertilizers, further weakening of environment and health protection by free trade agreements (TTIP/CETA), threats to pollinators like bees – the list goes on.

<http://www.commondreams.org/views/2015/01/19/across-europe-and-beyond-food-movement-march>

Bees

As one might anticipate, Farmers Weekly weighs in against the ban on neonicotinoids. They do not question whether or not neonicotinoids are harmful to bees, but suggest that the doses bees receive in the field are much less than the doses applied in experiments. However, they ignore the fact that larvae depend upon supplies of pollen, each grain likely to contain some of the insecticide, which in turn will weaken the larva and the resulting adult bee.

<http://www.fwi.co.uk/arable/doubts-raised-over-neonic-ban-as-bee-scientists-clash.htm>

GM and Salt-Grown Potatoes

Most food plants cannot grow in areas fed by salty sea water. But researchers in the Netherlands discovered potatoes can not only survive, but thrive in salty soil and taste sweeter than normal ones.

<http://inhabitat.com/salt-grown-potatoes-could-revolutionize-crop-production/>

McDonald's USA says it does not source GMO potatoes and most other fast food chains will follow McDonald's lead.

<http://www.fwi.co.uk/arable/us-fast-food-giants-reject-newly-approved-gm-potatoes.htm>

Toxic Soy

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has already approved *Bacillus thuringiensis* or Bt corn, cotton, potatoes, and soy that contain a soil dwelling bacterium used as a biological pesticide linked to negative immune system responses. Now a double Bt toxin soy has now been de-regulated or 'approved' by the US illustrious 'protector of the food supply.' Bt proteins are extremely toxic to mammalian blood.

<http://www.nationofchange.org/2015/01/11/new-double-bt-toxic-soy-just-approved-us-department-agriculture/>

Glyphosate

Both conventional and GM crops are sprayed with glyphosate. The insecticide and its toxic by-products end up on our plates. Recommendation 10 in this American article addresses the dangers and urges people to "Support consumer efforts to test for Roundup (glyphosate) contamination in drinking water, human urine, breast milk, and in non-GMO food products such as wheat, potatoes, oats, peas, lentils and dry beans that are currently with Roundup before harvest."

<http://www.commondreams.org/views/2015/01/07/consumer-self-defense-12-ways-drive-gmos-and-roundup-market>

Composts

Gardening Which? magazine points out that different size bags of compost from the same supplier may well have different formulations that sometimes lead to unexpectedly variable results. The magazine presents its own "Best Buy" lists, but also carries a possibly more important "Don't Buy" list.

Green Revolution

Permaculture Magazine has some harsh words for the results of the so-called Green Revolution, and for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for promoting further and intensified monocropping, chemicals and GM. This system has already led to the stunted growth of almost half the under fives in Malawi and to a lack of vitamin A in their diets when the tropical climate allows for year-round production of nutritious crops, including those containing plenty of Vitamin A.

<http://www.permaculture.co.uk/back-issues>

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

at www.meophamgardeners.co.uk