



Photo: Jo Latimer

Summer 2017

Saturday 16th September 2017

Autumn Show

If you have never exhibited before, have a go, the fee is only 10p for each entry. Make sure you keep precisely to the 2017 schedule. Entry details should be phoned through to our Show Secretary, Claire Williams, between 6 and 9pm on the Thursday prior to the show. Claire will also be accepting email entries before 6pm on the Thursday. The entry form is available on the Shows part of the website - please follow the instructions there. If you do not receive an acknowledgement, please telephone Claire to confirm your entries.

Please come and help with the setting up if you can on the Friday evening. Exhibits may be staged between 8.30 and 9pm on Friday, and between 10am and 12:45pm on the day of the show. **NO LATE ENTRIES WILL BE ACCEPTED.** The doors open at 3pm and admission to the show is free. Bring your friends, family and neighbours – this is a lovely show with all the Autumn colours – peruse the exhibits, marvel at giant marrows, enter the competitions, buy plants and raffle tickets, and treat yourself to refreshments and homemade cakes before the prize giving at about 4:15pm.

If you enter something in the show, please do help clear up afterwards and be sure to take your own entries home with you.

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



Forthcoming Events

August 14th History of Millbrook Tammy Woodhouse
Members' Show: a) pot of pelargonium b) Members' choice

September 11th Speaker – West Kent Badger Group Derek Wilkinson
Members' Show: a) 3 stems of dahlia b) Members' choice

September 13th Inter-Society Village Cup
This is a Wednesday evening event – details to be given out at the club meetings

September 16th Autumn Show
See top of Newsletter for details

October 9th 'Harvest of the Sea' Supper & Roy Lingham's talk on Derek Jarman's garden, Prospect Cottage, Dungeness at earlier time of 6:45 for 7pm
Members' Show: a) 3 stems of chrysanthemum b) Members' choice

October 20th Inter-Society Quiz hosted by Hartley Gardeners
This is a Friday evening event – MGA teams needed!

The full programme for 2017 can also be found on our website: www.meophamgardeners.co.uk, which includes news of our various activities in 2017 and also previous years.

Please remember to check the tea rota if you have volunteered this year.

Recent Events

May 8th All Things Nutty Alexander Hunt
The speaker for our May meeting was Alexander Hunt from Potash Farm, St Mary's Platt. It was interesting to learn that the predecessor to the walnut, the clawnut (much larger than modern varieties of walnut) was introduced by the Romans. The Kentish cobnut dates back to 1840 – then, there were around 20,000 acres of nuts grown in the area, but today there are only about 6,000 acres nationally. The trees at Potash Farm were planted in 1900 and still produce 2.5 tonnes per acre. Nuts in shells will store for 2-3 years, but fresh 'wet' nuts are only available for 6-8 weeks and so kiln-dried nuts are sold for the rest of the year. Nut trees require little maintenance - however, grey squirrels are a significant problem!

Friday June 9th Coach Outing to West Dean, Chichester
Many thanks to Gail for all her hard work arranging our day trip to West Dean in Chichester. There were 46 people on the coach and the gardens certainly lived up to expectations. We were very lucky with the weather and some of us were able to sit in the enormous walled garden eating our packed lunch surrounded by a fantastic selection of fruit, vegetables and flowers, with more wonderful specimens in the many greenhouses. The various gardens and 300ft long pergola were filled with endless varieties of roses and bedding plants, obviously all well-nurtured by the friendly staff. The sheep on the far side of the haha and a family of ducks and ducklings made the picture complete. The day was rounded off with tea and homemade cake, followed by a look around the beautifully stocked shop and nursery. This definitely merits a second trip later in the year, or next spring!



Some Photos of West Dean by Jo Latimer

June 12th Summer Mini Show & Social Evening

Hazel prepared the quiz and it was very hard! There was the usual raffle, a well-stocked plant stall and refreshments, with scrumptious home-made cakes provided by Barbara and Hazel.

The winners of the classes were:

- (1) a single cut rose for fragrance – Jill Pask (Gertrude Jekyll)
- (2) a vase of garden flowers – Barbara Macknish
- (3) a flowering pot plant – Gail Carpenter (Begonia Southlandii)



July 10th Annual Garden Visit - Meadow View, Hodsoll Street

We finally persuaded Barbara Macknish to invite us into her garden in Summer. We arrived to see legions of dahlias, fuschias and more in pots on the patio, many of which are sold for charity through the year. The 'tour' began with an impressive hedge of cloud pruned Ionicera – many will also have seen the honeysuckle, Winter Beauty, which flowers on Snowdrop Day. It was hard to believe that there were so many snowdrops in the beds that held such a variety of plants. Barbara explained that a lot of the plants were shallow rooted because of the snowdrops underneath and there were plants dotted around in pots over the top of dormant snowdrops.



Barbara misses Brian's company in the garden, his favourites were gladioli and chrysanthemums, and he looked after the lawn and the pond. Barbara pointed out the perennial foxglove, *digitalis parviflora*, which we had seen at West Dean, and amongst many others, plants which had self-seeded, including the shoo-fly plant.



Although many of the original trees had been lost to honey fungus over the years, there are still substantial tree trunks draped with beautiful clematis, which also scramble through various shrubs. The purple clematis, Polish Spirit, weighs down a huge hibiscus, which is cunningly supported by a hoe and a couple of rakes – Barbara loves to recycle and improvise!

Whilst admiring the gooseberries and redcurrants loaded with fruit in a good-sized fruit cage, we were amazed that just two of the bushes made seven gallons of wine last year! When the tour was ended we were tempted back to the pots to make some purchases, while Claire and Rosemary brought out refreshments to accompany Hazel's delicious cakes – it was a very pleasant and inspiring evening.

Did you know?

Mediterranean plants survive dry summers by entering a resting stage. The aim is to keep these shrubby plants alive but not encourage young summer growth – for plants in the ground try watering the soil on one side each week and the alternate side the next week (Sunday Telegraph).

Top tip – if it hasn't rained for a week, push a trowel 4in into the soil. If it feels dry, put on two watering cans per three square feet per week. A weekly soaking is better than a daily sprinkling for plants in the ground as it encourages roots to go deeper. Containers are best checked daily – a micro-irrigation system is not expensive to buy - a simple system can be set up to drip feed at various times of day for different lengths of time - hi-tech accessories can be added, from moisture sensors to a timer controlled from a phone!



Nigella Sativa (Love in a Mist) is known by many other names, including Black Cumin Flower, Fennel Flower and Roman Coriander. The black seeds are known as the 'The Cure for everything but Death', having been used in tribal and eastern medicine for hundreds of years. The ancient Greeks used them for respiratory problems, but they also help alleviate pain, inflammation, asthma, problem skin and allergies, fight infections etc. They can be cold-pressed for oil or used to make a tea infusion.

The seeds, known as black onion seeds, or kaljoni, are also widely used in cooking. Lightly toasted to release essential oils, they are spicy, reminiscent of curry and used in breads and vegetarian dishes.

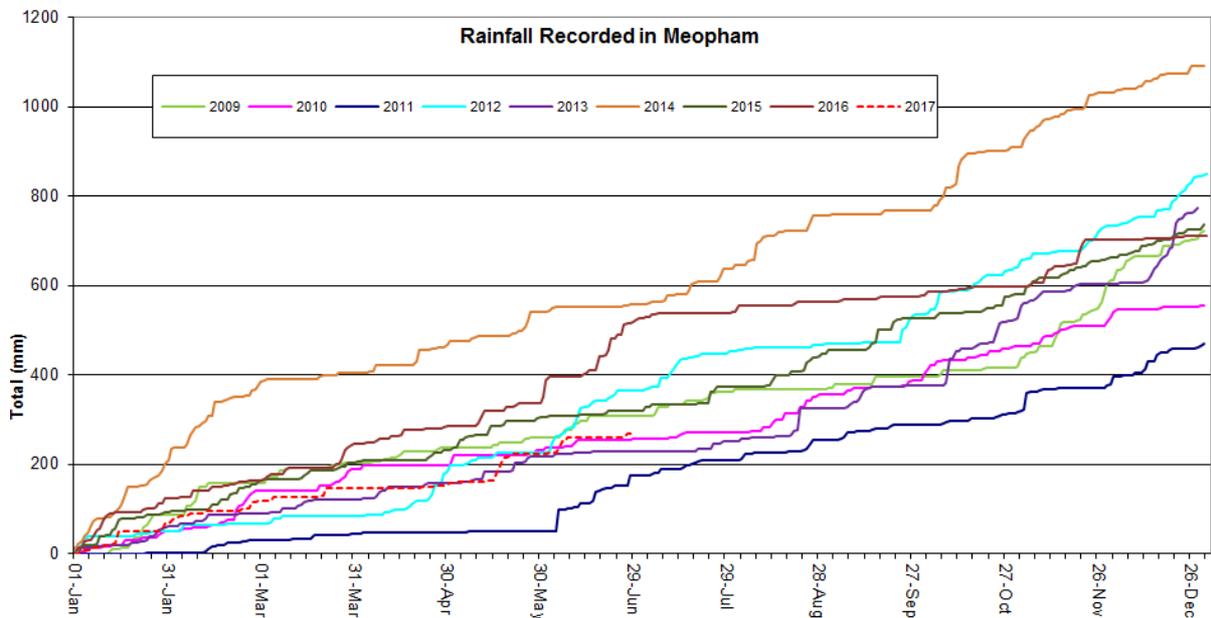
Beware of the dangers of laurel - the new Duchess of Northumberland, whilst converting 14 acres of forestry land producing Christmas trees at Alnwick Castle (the setting for Hogwarts in the first two Harry Potter films) into beautiful gardens, decided that instead of having an apothecary garden, it would be of much more interest to children to have a Poison Garden. This contains 100 killer plants (visitors are told not to smell, touch or taste the plants) including the ubiquitous laurel hedge. People who have loaded laurel prunings into the car and driven to the dump have fallen asleep behind the wheel from the toxic fumes emitted by the branches (Smithsonian).

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Rainfall

This graph shows the cumulative rainfall from January 1st to June 30th 2017 along with the annual rainfall for the previous 8 years. The total rainfall to the end of June was 269.5mm or 10.6". During the meteorological Winter (Dec - Feb) 125.5mm or rainfall were recorded and we had 108mm this Spring (Mar-May). The averaging period mentioned below is 1981-2010.



The year began mostly dry, settled and fairly cold with below average temperatures for January in the south-east. After a very cold start on the 18th there were 8.4 hours sunshine at East Malling. It turned mild, cloudy with some freezing fog towards the end of the month. February was often mild, wet and windy. It was very mild on the 13th with 9.5 hours of sunshine at East Malling and again on the 20th where 18.3°C was recorded in London. **Storm Doris** brought widespread disruption on the 23rd, closing the Dartford Crossing, cancelling flights and ferry crossings. Fallen trees caused problems on the rail network and there were countrywide power outages. Storm Ewan on the 25/26th was less damaging.

March continued unsettled. Although a deep low pressure system brought 120 mph gusts to north-western France on the 6th, it missed the UK. The weather was more benign and warmer for the remainder of the month with a maximum temperature of 22.1°C recorded at Gravesend on the 30th. It was unseasonably warm at the start of April with a maximum temperature of 25.5°C recorded at Cambridge on the 9th. After that temperatures were closer to average, with some cool nights, but it was mostly dry. A late cold snap 24th - 27th damaged apple blossom and tender plants.

May began cool and cloudy for us but became more unsettled and wet mid-month. During a hot sunny interlude 29.4°C was recorded at Lossiemouth (Morayshire) on the 26th. Widespread thunderstorms followed with heavy rain and lightning in the south-east during the morning of the 29th. It was the second warmest May in a series from 1910 (behind 2008). Early June was largely unsettled with significant rainfall. Very warm air arrived from the south on the 16th and every day from 17th - 21st somewhere exceeded 30°C, the first time this has happened in June since 1995. The highest temperature was 34.5°C, at Heathrow Airport on the 21st, and this was the highest June temperature since 1976. Fresher air moved in and low pressure brought plenty of rain at the end of the month.



In the News

Jamaica's Organic Revolution

Jamaica has long provided the UK and Europe with sugar, bananas, coffee and cocoa. Despite its climate and fertile soil though the country has become steadily more reliant on food imports. Getting Jamaicans interested in growing their own food again has become a government priority and at Source Farm in the East of the island they are using organic methods to grow all sorts of crops which can then be sold for a high price.

Such is the demand for organic produce in Jamaica and abroad that Source Farm also teach other farmers how to grow organically and to negotiate direct sales. Their intention is simply to get Jamaica farming again and their hope is not just for better diets but for more jobs and higher prospects for rural Jamaica.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b08skyk0>

Toxic Relations

Dr Mason asks the Government to stop colluding with Monsanto and the Agrochemical Industry!

A report by Dr Rosemary Mason and Colin Todhunter about a 19-page document Dr Mason sent to the UK's Policy Advisor Nigel Chadwick at the Chemicals Regulation Directorate of Health and Safety Executive (HSE). In it, Dr Mason asserts that Monsanto has engaged in the slow poisoning of the people of Wales with PCBs and Roundup. This, she says, is with the help of the British government, the Expert Committee on Pesticides, the Health and Safety Executive, Defra, the Royal Society, European Food Safety Authority, European Chemicals Agency, the German Rapporteur Member State, the BBC, the BMA and Rupert Murdoch. Mason also discusses how Monsanto has committed ecocide with Roundup in Wales thanks to Swansea City Council's authorised spraying of it on city roadsides. A total of 518 kg was used in 2016.

She mentions her long and unsatisfactory history of correspondence with the HSE about pesticides, which has failed to stimulate appropriate regulatory action despite the firm evidence she has provided about the damaging effects of biocides throughout the UK and across the globe.

<http://www.counterpunch.org/2017/06/02/toxic-relations-stop-colluding-with-monsanto-and-the-agrochemical-industry/>

Permaculture

Editor of Permaculture Magazine, Maddy Harland discusses the later work of the originators of Permaculture, Bill Mollison and David Holmgren. They turned their attention to the ethics of earth care, people care and limits to growth/sharing surplus. It is evident that permaculture is more than a design system or eco toolkit as its essence is nested in an ethical worldview.

<https://www.permaculture.co.uk/Politics-Fake-News-Media-Detoxing>

The Essential Guide to Hazel

Paul Alfrey's article in Permaculture Magazine tells you: "All you need to know about hazel. From growing and cultivating, to pollination, varieties, pruning, harvesting and pests.

Hazel is a multi-purpose champion of a plant that is super easy to grow, produces delicious nuts, pliable wood that can be crafted into a variety of products, provides early fodder for bees and an encouraging spectacle when flowering during the mid-winter. What more can I say...a plant so good people started naming their daughters after it."

<https://www.permaculture.co.uk/articles/essential-guide-hazel>