



Viburnum x bodnantense 'Dawn'

Photo: Jo Latimer

Winter 2017

Spring Show 18 March 2017

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 2017 schedule available on the website. All entry details should be phoned through to our Show Secretary Claire Williams 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 the completed forms 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.



Forthcoming Association Meetings & Other Events

- February 13 Gardeners' Forum and Seed Swap
 February 19 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 Foundation. There will be a plant stall and teas will also be available. Entry is £1.

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| March 13 | Film Show – British Flowers | |
| March 18 | Spring Show | Doors open at 3pm |
| April 10 | Kent Tree and Pond Life | Ann Storey |
| May 8 | All Things Nutty | Alexander Hunt |

Recent Events

- November 14 Christmas Hanging Basket Practical

To begin the evening, Gail King demonstrated making a Christmas hanging basket containing oasis, which was filled with seasonal foliage, pinecones, Christmas baubles, fairy lights and other embellishments. We then had an opportunity to create our own. It was interesting to see all the different interpretations on the same theme and the resulting baskets were absolutely delightful. Thank you to Gail for a creative and very enjoyable evening, also to the unsung heroes who provided us with refreshments while we worked – waitress service!

- December 12 AGM

The AGM was held at the start of the evening and afterwards we enjoyed a social with refreshments.

Members' Show

The Members' Show starts at the February meeting and details of the classes can be found with the Monthly Programme in the Events tab on the website. The first class is the '*Selected Item*' and is specified but the second item, '*Member's Choice*', can be anything from the garden which is perhaps looking spectacular on the evening or is of special interest. The entries are judged by a club member and points out of 10 are awarded for each exhibit. The points are totalled at the end of the year and the entrants with the most points from each class will each receive a cup and prize money of £2.50.

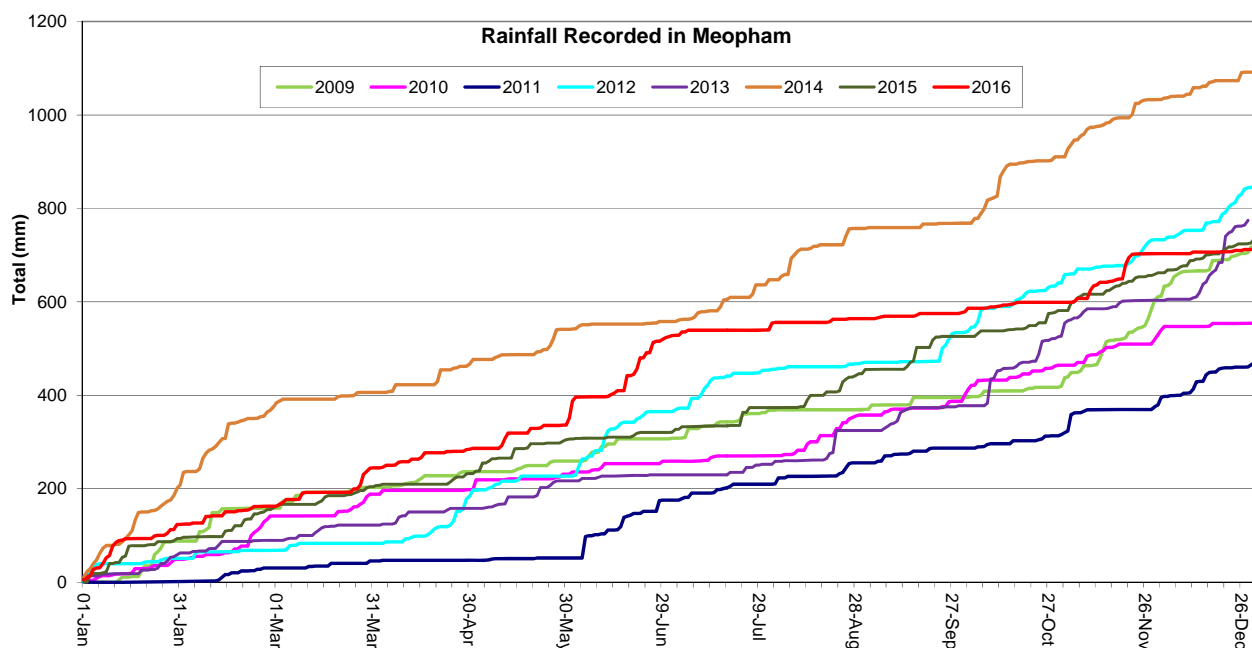
Plant Stall

If you have plants you wish to sell, please ensure that they are labeled and provide the plant stall with a list of your plants showing the asking price and the quantity of each as you will receive 50% of the takings from their sale. It is your responsibility to take any that have not sold away with you at the end of the meeting. Members may advertise other items such as garden tools on the notice board without charge, but if a sale is achieved a donation to the Association would be appreciated.

The Climate in 2016

The graph overleaf displays the cumulative rainfall over the last 8 years. The total rainfall recorded for 2016 was 712mm (28").

The following statistics are from the Met Office and the averaging period referred to is 1981–2010.



January was wet and mild with a named storm 'Gertrude' on the 29th. The stormy weather continued into February but conditions became more settled with a cold snap mid-month. March was stormy with 'Katie' causing damage and closing the QE2 bridge on Easter Monday (28th). April was cold, bright and showery with thunderstorms on the 15th causing flooding and disruption in London during the evening rush hour. May was generally more settled although flooding and fallen trees caused problems on the 25th when a landslip blocked the rail line between Strood and Tonbridge. Thunderstorms caused more disruption on the 23rd and 25th June when localised rain in Kent, caused flooding and submerged cars. The M26 was closed in both directions due to surface water-related accidents.

July was often breezy and showery although it became warmer and sunnier with a maximum temperature of 33.5°C recorded at Brize Norton (Oxfordshire) on the 19th. For southern England, it was provisionally the driest July since 1999. August was generally unsettled. Frequent southerly winds brought a spell of high temperatures over much of England. Faversham recorded 14.5 hours of sunshine on the 6th and maximum temperature of 34.1°C on the 24th. The sunny, hot weather continued with the south-east seeing maximum temperatures in the high 20s again and overnight temperatures remaining above 18°C in central London.

Early in September it was hot and humid in the south-east with Gravesend recording 29.3°C on the 7th and 34.4°C on the 13th, the highest temperature of the year and the highest September temperature since 1911. The second half of the month was more changeable but generally with above average temperatures. Heavy thunderstorms at the beginning of October caused localised flooding between Thanet and Canterbury. After that it was mainly a dry, sunny month although easterly winds restricted temperatures to about average. There was a foggy end to the month causing disruption to flights. The fog cleared on the 31st, leaving a sunny and warm afternoon, with a maximum of 20.7°C at Hampton (Greater London).

The mild weather continued into early November with 19°C recorded in Cornwall on the 1st. It was generally unsettled until Storm Angus arrived on the 19th disrupting Eurotunnel and channel ferry services and damaging roofs and scaffolding across Kent and East Sussex. There was flooding reported on the A20 and A2 and some local roads were closed due to flooding and fallen trees. In addition, 2,200 properties lost power for a time. With high pressure in charge at the start of December it was settled but often cold and frosty with fog patches, especially in the south. East Malling had 7.9 hours of sunshine on the 1st. As the anticyclone pulled away southerly winds prevailed and often brought very mild conditions with fog at times. There was an unsettled spell as Storms 'Barbara' and 'Conor' passed through on the 23rd-24th and 25th - 26th, respectively. The end of the year was cold and frosty. Fog caused travel problems and sports events to be postponed or abandoned. It was an exceptionally dry December with only 9mm of rain recorded in Meopham.



In the News

TTIP

MEPs will be voting on the TTIP on February 15th, so if you wish to have any influence on them, however small, you need to meet, write, telephone, fax or email them right now. The areas of the agreement that are of main interest to gardeners concern seed availability, pesticide use and genetically modified organisms over which large corporations have almost total control with very little public accountability – especially in the United States. A bad TTIP would have a profound effect on UK negotiations after Brexit.

http://www.europarl.org.uk/en/your-meps/uk_meps/south_east_region.html

Biofuelwatch

In 2015, 9% of the UK's electricity was generated by biomass electricity. This counts towards our renewable energy targets, and is viewed by many as a clean, green source of electricity. However, Biofuelwatch, other environmental NGOs and leading scientists disagree; far from helping to reduce carbon emissions and making our energy system more sustainable, biomass electricity causes climate impacts which are commonly no better than those from coal burning, along with increased forest degradation and biodiversity losses. Yet biomass electricity receives strong support from the UK government. Last year, energy companies received £817 million in UK subsidies for burning solid biomass for electricity, the vast majority of it wood. This figure is expected to increase substantially in future, given increases in capacity and a higher subsidy rate being guaranteed by the Contracts for Difference awarded to new biomass schemes.

<http://www.biofuelwatch.org.uk/end-biomass-subsidies/>

GM Mustard

Lead petitioner to India's Supreme Court, Aruna Rodrigues, contends that to date, serious conflicts of interest, slight of hand, regulatory delinquency, cover-ups, lies and scientific fraud has tainted the entire appraisal process concerning GM mustard. Moreover, the case is made that there is a general lack of rigour and expertise and overall incompetency where India's assessment and regulation of GMOs is concerned. In a response to the petition, the government (Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change) has issued a Reply Affidavit, which Rodrigues now says (in a rejoinder affidavit) is an astonishing filibustering, copious response that clearly reflects a high degree of scientific and technical incompetence in the regulatory oversight of HT Mustard DMH 11 (GM mustard). She says that the 'Reply' is brazen, misleading and weak in its interpretation of available data and facts.

<http://cpdev2.staging.wpengine.com/2016/11/11/gm-mustard-in-india/>

Pesticides and Corruption

Dr Rosemary Mason has described the devastating effects of agrochemicals and has singled out certain individuals who, in a different world, would probably be standing in the dock to answer for their roles they have played in poisoning the environment and damaging public health. She has supplied ample, strong evidence to highlight how agrochemicals are killing us and how public institutions and governments collude with the industry to frame legislation and polices to ensure it's 'business as usual'.

<http://cpdev2.staging.wpengine.com/2016/11/18/why-are-public-officials-protecting-the-pesticides-industry-digging-down-into-the-cesspool-of-corruption/>

Destruction of Indigenous Agriculture

Washington's long-term plan has been to restructure indigenous agriculture across the world and tie it to an international system of trade based on export-oriented mono-cropping, commodity production for the international market and indebtedness to international financial institutions (IMF/World Bank). This result has been the creation of food surplus and food deficit areas, of which the latter have become dependent on agricultural imports and strings-attached aid. Food deficits in the Global South mirror food surpluses in the North. Whether through IMF-World Bank structural adjustment programmes, as occurred in Africa, trade agreements like NAFTA and its impact on Mexico or, more generally, deregulated global trade rules, the outcome has been similar: the devastation of traditional, indigenous agriculture for the benefit of transnational agribusiness and the undermining of both regional and global food security.

<http://cpdev2.staging.wpengine.com/2016/12/12/double-whammy-on-farmers/>

Earth Hour 25th March 20:30 – 21:30 GMT

Time to focus on your commitment to our planet:

<http://www.earthhour.org>

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

www.meophamgardeners.co.uk