



Castle Cary Gardening Association Newsletter 2017

For those of you that haven't seen it, we introduced a new website and Facebook page this year, to keep people up to date with all things to do with the Castle Cary Gardening Association. So, if you need to check a date for an event, get a copy of the show schedule, or just want to catch up with a talk you missed – just go to <http://ccga.btck.co.uk/>. These are some of the stories from 2017 covered on the website.

After our New Year Lunch in January (including a quiz with a gardening slant), we settled down to our programme of talks. In February we had a talk on 'Garden Giants' by Castle Gardens, while in March we took a trip through over 4 billion years as Greg Morter took us through the evolution of plants and how humans adapted them - 'From Seed to Fork' In April we heard about 'Successful Gardening in the Shadows', by Christopher Bond.



On 30 March, we picked up the plants from Castle Gardens for the 'Club Challenge' class at the Annual Show. The plants - Geranium 'Appleblossom' - were free to members. Grow your plant and enter it in the special class at the Annual Show in August. Everyone starts with the same sized plant!

In April, members were able to take advantage of the discount evening at Castle Gardens in Sherborne. A fabulous turnout of members and visitors came to hear a very entertaining May talk by Caroline Pakenham on the 'Cultivation and Uses of Unusual Herbs'. Ever wondered what wode (the plant that produces blue dye) looks like? There was a great excitement about the possibility of a 'mole' plant discouraging unwanted tunnels! Caroline took us through the history and uses of a wide variety of plants - many that you wouldn't necessarily of thought of as herbs.



We had a good turnout for our annual Plant Sale on Saturday 6th May. The weather was kind to us, and we were joined by the beekeepers and tools for self-reliance, making it an enjoyable morning for all. Thanks to everyone who helped, grew plants, or came to buy! The funds raised will help support the club's annual show on 5 August, as well as its other activities.

Plants were also available to buy at some of our club evenings – either from our speakers, or grown by our own members. Some free seeds were also available to members at our November AGM. We might like to develop this idea further in 2018 – what do you think?

Our June talk on the 'Persuit of the Plants of Peru', by Hilary Little, was a fascinating trip through Peru. Most of us were surprised at how many plants Hilary showed that were newly discovered on her trip with fellow members of the Alpine Plant Society. There were plenty of familiar plant families too, but in unfamiliar colours and shapes. Some wonderful orange buddleia's and lupins were particularly loved by the audience.

Our July talk by Matt Simpson was about how Simpson's seeds started in Surrey and transitioned to the Frame Yard at Longleat walled gardens. Matt was very engaging and told us about all the hard work he and his team had put in to build the business. He has a particular passion for chillies and brought some samples of sauces made from his own chillies - ranging from mild to very hot (the flesh being a by-product of his seed production!). Seed catalogues were available for those tempted to grow some of the many things he grows and trials.



Annual Show. Despite the wind and rain of the previous few weeks, we had a fantastic display of vegetables, fruit and flowers in the hall. We also saw a big increase in entries in the Art & Photography and Homecraft section. After the usual panic and worry, the Annual Show at Caryford on Saturday, August 5th, was a wonderful success and enjoyed by all who attended. Thank-you to everyone who grew stuff, boiled and baked, sewed, crafted, painted, photographed, wrote, arranged flowers and guided children to make and bake. Without your efforts, ours would be unnecessary. Thank-you also to those who visited – again your attendance made it all worthwhile. And especially thank-you to everyone who helped – the committee for being committed and the friends who rolled up their sleeves and helped. And now we can all rest until next year!



Cup winners from left to right: Neal Hatch – Vegetables and Dahlias cups, Lesley Ridgley - Photography, Jenny Horler – Vegetables and Flowers, Ruth Coleby – special botanical interest, Elsie Were – most points in Children’s class, Catharine Millar – Handicrafts & Best pot plant, Isla Were – runner-up in Children’s classes , Daphne Kimbell – peoples choice best Handicraft, Jo Pepper – runner-up Domestic Science and to her right her grandchildren Zara and Benedict Palmer – Best children’s exhibit and Best handwriting respectively, Michael Julian– Fuchsias cup, Erica Holt - Floral art and Rosie Meek – Domestic science cup and shield. Missing from the line-up are Mary-Beth Millican – winner of the Best floral art exhibit and Mary Townsend – winner of the Joy Barnes Art cup. Also shown is the winner of the 'club challenge' geranium this year (near left). See [Annual Show - 2017](#)

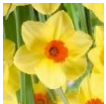
[Show Photos](#) for more pictures. Next year’s club challenge will be fuchsia ‘Winston Churchill’.

Our September talk was by Neil Lovesey who is well known by many in the town (he attends the weekly market). Neil gave us a very engaging talk about **'Wildlife in the Garden'**, accompanied by some fantastic photos, many from his own garden and nursery. He spoke passionately about the importance of looking after the insects in our gardens, on which the rest of the 'food chain' depends.

Our October talk was **'Plants, Poisons and Potions'** by Adrian Hutchinson. Adrian took us through a wide range of plants, some beneficial to man and some most certainly not if misused! Everything you wanted to know, and more, about the nightshade family, giant hogweed, ragwort, elder etc. Adrian illustrated his entertaining talk with quotes from herbalists and folklore.

The **Annual General Meeting** was held at the beginning of November. The formal business was kept quite short, and we heard reports from our chairperson and treasurer. The Committee was re-elected. Attendance was a little lighter than usual on a particularly foggy night. But if you want to add any ideas, or become more involved in the running of the club, then do feel free to input your thoughts at any stage through the year - to the Committee or via the 'Contacts' page of the website.

Erica announced the winner of this year's **'Flower of the Month'** competition for club members. Congratulations to Mary-Beth Millican, who wins the trophy for 2017. Free seeds were available for members, and details of the New Year Lunch were also given out. The AGM was followed by a talk by David Constantine from **'Motivation'**. David described how he came to design work, and set up Motivation with two colleagues.



We have now distributed the **'Pipe Major' daffodil bulbs kindly supplied by Castle Gardens** for a spring bulb growing competition. The aim will be to bring back a cut daffodil flower to the April and/or May meetings - for an extra 'flower of the month' competition.

Our December meeting, unusually held on a Wednesday rather than Thursday (6th December), was on **'Exploring the North Island of New Zealand'**, by Rosemary Le Grand. Rosemary gave us a fantastic talk on the South Island a couple of years ago, so we are in for a treat.

2018 Events

Jan	New Year Lunch
Feb	'Horticultural Practices and Projects undertaken at Lytes Cary'
Mar	'A growing Addiction: bulbs from the winter rainfall area of South Africa'
Apr	'Going Wild in the Garden'
Apr	Discount Evening at Castle Gardens, Sherborne
May	'Herps for the Hignorant (reptiles and amphibians)'
May	Saturday MAY 5th – PLANT SALE
Jun	'A Rogue's Gallery for Gardeners – organic ways to tackle pests and diseases'
Jul	'Marianne North – Victorian botanic artist, her travels and her Kew connections'
May	Saturday AUGUST - 4th ANNUAL SHOW
Sep	'How to Show Vegetables'
Oct	'Gardens of the Rich and Famous'
Nov	AGM
Dec	'Alternative Plants, Alternative Places'

Further details to be found on your membership card, or the website