



# Castle Cary Gardening Association Newsletter 2020

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 our website. Here are some of the stories from 2020 covered on the website.



Club Christmas display

Last year's (2019) Christmas festivities included Erica & Heather's lovely display for the Festival of Stars taking place in All Saints Church.

Around 40 members enjoyed our New Year lunch at the Orchard Inn, Galhampton, which included our popular quiz.

Gardening is always a great balm and growing your own food is both rewarding and helps fill the fridge as well as the stomach. To that end our first public outing was at the Pennard Plants Potato Day at Caryford Hall on Sunday January 20th. The club has a stall there where you can find out what we do, where it happens and when. If you haven't joined at

the December or January club meetings, you can do so there or at any of our future meetings.

We started the 2020 programme of talks in Caryford Hall with a fantastic talk by Paul Stickland of Black Shed flowers. Paul gave an entertaining and energetic description of how, over the space of just three years, his family had set up a very popular fresh and seasonal cut flower farm. He now has 250 flower beds in several acres, just outside Sherborne on the A30. We were treated to his utterly lovely photographs of his flowers – a sumptuous taste of summer! From field to fantastic flowers in just the space of a few months! As our members found out last year, the farm is well worth a visit too - and many of us will be looking forward to visiting when the flowers are in full bloom again - not many weeks now!



Our first meeting at Caryford, which we moved to when building work was being done on the Methodist School Room

Our talk by Paul Cumbleton, on Compost and other Conundrums, was also held in Caryford Hall, on Wednesday 4th March. Compost is, of course, fundamental to the growth and strength of every plant so this talk was very interesting - telling us all we ever needed to know about John Innes compost and how it is manufactured'. Paul had done his own experiments to show the variation in composts between manufacturers, but also between batches from the same manufacturer. Paul also covered a variety of other topics, including a discussion of other materials used for growing (including sand and a clay-based cat litter!), some illustrations of rooting cuttings in a 'hydropod', lighting with LEDs and the use of smoke to germinate some seeds.



As well as the usual flower of the month display, Members also brought a bloom of this year's 'club challenge' bulb.

And then...lockdown! We had to cancel the rest of our programme of events, including the Plant Sale and the Annual Show. We have tried to rebook the rest of the 2020 programme for 2021 in the hope that we can eventually hear some of them. We are also in the process of re-booking all our meetings to Caryford as we will need all that space for social distancing. This will also entail a move to Wednesday evenings.



Flower of the month



Bulb Challenge

We couldn't hold the Plant Sale – but this is also re-booked for next year. It is to be the last Saturday in April, 24<sup>th</sup> 2021. Please do carry on potting up your divided perennials, taking cuttings (to root in sand!) and sowing those seeds.

The Plant Sale subsidises the Annual Show – which was yet another casualty of COVID, a phrase that sums up so much, both disappointing and tragic.

Technology has become an important part of our lives this year. Early on in lockdown Rose and Lesley brilliantly organised us a new Facebook page (Cary Gardening Friends). This compliments the existing page used to advertise our events to a wider audience. Postings of flowers and veg and so on are always a heart-warming thing. Thank-you very much for those who have posted and there are online tutorials telling you how to. It is never too late to post things even if the month of something's glory is long gone.

Neal has been keeping the website alive and updated, including the running of the virtual flower of the month competition – which attracted more entries online than in a normal year. All of the entries can be seen on the website, so just click on the flower of the month link.



Fiona's winning entry in September

We are pleased to announce that Fiona de Fonblanque was the overall winner of Flower of the Month competition for the 2019/20 season. Well done Fiona!

We still couldn't meet for our AGM in November, so no seed swap either. But we had a virtual AGM, by posting the reports from our Treasurer (Allyson) and Chair (Erica) on the Members bit of the website.

You might also want look at the Gardening Thoughts tab of the website. The latest update (December) provides a few thoughts from Erica as we head into the winter months.

**As we have already announced, Membership will be held over until next year. We will try an update you on our plans for 2021 as soon as things become clearer, and we feel able to restart a programme of events.**