



Newsletter
No 37
Jan/Feb
2017

**WESTON-SUPER-MARE
HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY**
www.wsmhorticultural.org.uk

SOCIETY OFFICERS

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WELCOME TO THE NEW YEAR

MEETINGS: We had a very enjoyable meeting in November when Christine Walkden, the TV gardener and presenter, gave us a talk she called "The life and times of a gardener" that was both inspirational and entertaining. She described her life as a gardener that led her into becoming a lecturer at a top horticultural college, a radio presenter, on

Gardeners' Question Time and eventually becoming a TV gardener and presenter.

We also had some great fun at our **Victorian Christmas Social** evening in December when the speaker, Katherine Kear and our social committee ladies came dressed in Victorian costume.



The first meeting of 2017 on 12th January welcomes Robert Harvey whose subject "British Wild Flowers in Nature and the Garden" should get us off to an educational start to the new year. Then, on 9th February, having got the AGM out of the way, (see below) we welcome Adrian Hutchinson who will talk on "Wild Flowers in the Dolomites"

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 9th FEBRUARY 2017

The present committee, with the exception of Brian Airey, are all prepared to continue for another year, along with our new Flower Show Secretary John Chapman, who was recently seconded onto the committee. If you would like to join the committee, please complete the enclosed form and return it to The Secretary by 2nd February 2017. The present members of the committee are listed on the enclosed documents.

COACH TRIPS

Details of the trips for 2017 are enclosed and Brenda will be at the next meeting on 12th January to take your booking details.
Contact Brenda Wall on 01934 620948 if you have any questions.

Subscriptions

Your subscriptions are now due for 2017. Still representing excellent value at £6.50 single and £10.00 for couples/families living at the same address. Derek Hooper will be at the Trading Hut every weekend to take your details. You can also pay at the meeting on 12th January or by sending your remittance to the Membership Secretary WSMHS, 75 Stradling Avenue, Weston-super-Mare BS23 3RF.

Snowdrops

Colesbourne Park

Started by plant collector Henry John Elwes FRS with the outstanding *Galanthus elwesii*, the snow-drop collection has been greatly enhanced in recent years by great-grandson Henry and his wife Carolyn and is now one of the best in the country with over 300 varieties. Visitors can walk through the ten acre garden with its woodland and lakeside paths, the Spring Garden and the formal garden to see huge banks of snowdrops, hellebores and other winter plants. The surrounding park, arboretum and nearby church are also open. Teas etc are available.

Our visit to Colesbourne Park is planned for Saturday 4th February. The trip will cost £15 each which includes the coach travel and entrance fee. The coach will leave the Locking Road car park at 11:30 and will also pick up at LIDL at 11:45am. This trip is not suitable for anyone with mobility difficulties as the paths are narrow and can be very slippery at times. Georgina Heathcote is organising this trip and she will be at the January meeting to take your booking details or you can phone her on 07525 400223



January/February to do list

1. Plant bare root roses , shrubs, trees & hedging
2. Lift, divide & replant congested aconites & snowdrops
3. Cut down ornamental grasses before new shoots appear.
4. Order flower seeds for spring sowing
5. Prune wisteria
6. Get down to The Hut to collect seed potatoes & buy veg seeds
7. Clean & tidy the greenhouse

The Trading Hut will open again on Saturday January 9th after the Christmas and New Year holiday. A committee member is always there to answer your gardening questions, and to help with the loading of your composts, etc. Come along to see the range of composts, perlite, vermiculite, grits, canes, fertilisers, fleece and bubble wrap.

What is a New Year's resolution?

It is a 'to do' list for the first week of January!!!

Nourish the trenches

Long, dry summers put massive demands on crops as they search out every last drop of water. Adding extra organic material is the best way to increase the soil's capacity to store water, so making a composting trench NOW can really help. Dig a deep trench into which vegetable peelings, tea bags, banana skins and any other compostable kitchen waste are added. Throw it in, cover with a sprinkling of soil before adding more waste. Top off the trench with soil. Sow dwarf and runner beans over the trench later in the year and they will send their roots down to the nutritious compost below.

UNDERSTANDING FERTILISERS

Wet weather can leave our crops and plants on the hungry side as nutrients are leached away, especially if you garden on light and free draining soil. Therefore it is important to understand how fertilisers can help to improve your crops and plants. All fertilisers contain at least one of the major plant foods—that is:

- Nitrogen (N) for stem and leaf growth
- Phosphate (P) for root growth
- Potash (K) for flower and fruit production

Plants also need trace elements such as iron, magnesium, boron and manganese. Some fertilisers contain these as well.

All proprietary brands of fertilisers, whether in bags or bottles, should display the analysis or the N:P:K ratio. For example, if the N:P:K ratio is 7:7:7, as in **Growmore**, you know that it contains equal parts of the three major plant foods and therefore suitable for general use with all plants. Every plant requires all three elements, but at different stages of growth and they are needed in different proportions. For example, a flowering or fruiting plant, and many vegetable crops, requires some phosphate in the early stages, to promote root growth, followed by a fertiliser high in nitrogen for the growth stage and then one which is higher in potash to ripen the plant and assist in flowering and fruiting.

Blood, fish and bone is a chemical-free version of Growmore, with a similar amount of the three major plant nutrients making it suitable for any edible crop, but keep it away from those you eat raw, such as raspberries and strawberries.. Perfect for long term crops, such as parsnips and fruit trees.

Bonemeal a slow release organic source of phosphate to promote strong plant growth. Incorporate a little into the planting hole for new plants and sprinkle around the base of existing trees and shrubs.

Sulphate of Ammonia is strong stuff! It's what's known as a straight, which means it just contains one nutrient in a high dose! High in nitrogen, sulphate of ammonia will boost peas and beans that are yellowing, especially when plants are young. It is also good for brassicas and leafy crops such as cut-and-come-again lettuce. Also good for activating the decomposition process of your compost.

Sulphate of Potash is a fast acting source of potassium for developing healthy fruit and flowers.

Iron Sulphate for acid loving plants and can be used to feed ericaceous plants such as azaleas, heathers and camellias.

Chicken manure pellets are a great general fertiliser because they are natural, easy to handle and spread and high in nitrogen (N). Also contains levels of (P) and (K). Use it on crops you grow in rows such as runner beans. Just scatter it at the base of the plant and "job done".

General granular feeds such as **Growmore** are similar to blood, fish and bone, but not suitable for organic gardens. Normally contain equal parts (N):(P):(K). Growmore was first formulated as part of the "Dig for Victory" campaign in the second world war—hence its full name "National Growmore"

Tomato Feeds can be used on any crops to help promote flowers and fruits. Normally sold in liquid form and applied weekly after the first fruit has formed.

Magnesium Sulphate (Epsom Salts) is a quick-fix foliar feed applied straight to crops where the leaves are suffering from a nutrient deficiency. They work best on soft young leaves. Raspberries are prone to this deficiency. Should be applied on a dull day to avoid scorching.

Superphosphate for root crops. Apply in the winter for best results.

ALL OF THE ABOVE FERTILISERS ARE AVAILABLE IN THE HUT AT PRICES WELL BELOW ANYTHING YOU WILL FIND EITHER ON THE HIGH STREET OR GARDEN CENTRES