

SOME MORE GARDENING HINTS

- ◆ To prevent accumulating dirt under your fingernails while you work in the garden, draw your fingernails across a bar of soap and you'll effectively seal the undersides of your nails so dirt can't collect beneath them. Then, after you've finished in the garden, use a nailbrush to remove the soap and your nails will be sparkling clean
- ◆ Turn a long-handled tool into a measuring stick! Lay a long-handled garden tool on the ground, and next to it place a tape measure. Using a permanent marker, write inch and foot marks on the handle. When you need to space plants a certain distance apart (from just an inch to several feet) you'll already have a measuring device in your hand
- ◆ To have garden twine handy when you need it, just stick a ball of twine in a small clay pot, pull the end of the twine through the drainage hole, and set the pot upside down in the garden. Do that, and you'll never go looking for twine again
- ◆ The next time you boil or steam vegetables, don't pour the water down the drain, use it to water potted patio plants, and you'll be amazed at how the plants respond to the "vegetable soup."
- ◆ Use leftover tea and coffee grounds to acidify the soil of acid-loving plants such as azaleas, rhododendrons, camellias, gardenias and even blueberries. A light sprinkling of about one-quarter of an inch applied once a month will keep the pH of the soil on the acidic side.
- ◆ Use chamomile tea to control damping-off fungus, which often attacks young seedlings quite suddenly. Just add a spot of tea to the soil around the base of seedlings once a week or use it as a foliar spray
- ◆ The quickest way in the world to dry herbs: just lay a sheet of newspaper on the seat of your car, arrange the herbs in a single layer, then roll up the windows and close the doors. Your herbs will be quickly dried to perfection. What's more, your car will smell great
- ◆ Before filling a strawberry barrel with compost stand a piece of drainpipe or cardboard tube upright in the centre and fill with pebbles. As you fill with compost gradually remove the tube releasing the pebbles. This will act as a central drainage system preventing the soil from becoming waterlogged.
- ◆ To prevent slugs getting to plants in containers, smear outside of container with petroleum jelly or WD40
- ◆ When growing sweet peas from seed, two-thirds fill pot with compost and water well, top up with dry compost and plant seed at about 1/2 inch beneath surface of compost. This way the seed will draw up as much water as required and will not rot away.
- ◆ As long as you don't mind how they look, old car tyres make a good temporary cold frames for new seedlings. Sow the seeds inside the tyre and place a piece of glass or clear plastic on top. The rubber absorbs the heat during the day and releases it over night.
- ◆ If your hose springs a leak it can be temporarily repaired by inserting a cocktail stick into the hole. Snap the stick off as close to the hose as possible and wrap around with insulating tape or waterproof tape (if available). This should extend by about 2" each side of the hole. As the wood absorbs the water it will expand and seal the hole
- ◆ To clean white plastic garden furniture break up two dishwasher tablets into a bucket of warm water, mix well, scrub the furniture well and leave for about 15 minutes after which rinse well with clean water and then buff up with a clean, soft, dry cloth



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**WESTON-SUPER-MARE
HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY**
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WELCOME TO THE NEW YEAR

MEETINGS: A big thank you to the ladies of the Social Committee for organising an evening of fun and games at our Social Evening in December with a glass of wine and festive fare. This was thoroughly enjoyed by the members who came along.

The programme for 2018 has been thoughtfully arranged by Cynthia and there should be something for everyone.

The first meeting of the new year is on 11th January at St Peter's Church Hall Baytree Road at 7.30pm. The Speaker will be Paul Cumbleton on Alluring Alpines. Paul worked for the RHS for 11 years as the Team Leader of the Alpine section at RHS Wisley, responsible for the rock garden, alpine meadow, crevice garden and the alpine display houses. He is now retired and living in Somerset. The meeting on 8th February starts with the AGM at 6.30pm. Following this Fay Gunningham will be our Speaker on Memories of her Father, Frank Lovell, who had a market garden in Worle long before any of the houses were built on the hillside. Fay has some fascinating memories of those times that we are sure to enjoy.

The Trading Hut will open again on Saturday January 6th 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 extensive range of composts, perlite, vermiculite, grits, canes, fertilisers, fleece and bubble wrap. As mentioned in previous newsletters, we are still looking for someone to take on the role of Assistant Trading Manager. If you are interested, please talk to Cliff in the Trading Hut.

Subscriptions

Your subscriptions are now due for 2018. Still representing excellent value at £6.50 single and £10.00 for couples/families living at the same address.

Enclosed with this newsletter you will find a remittance advice note, which, when completed, can either be handed to a committee member at THE HUT or you can pay at the meeting on 11th January or by sending your remittance to the Society Treasurer, Rod Thomas. It would also help enormously if you would kindly select to have your newsletter sent by email as printing and distribution costs are increasing and having an impact on our day-to-day finances.

COACH TRIPS

Details of the trips for 2018 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.

Wishing you all a happy and healthy 2018

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

8th FEBRUARY 2018

Nomination forms and the agenda for this very important meeting are enclosed with this newsletter.

We are delighted that Keith Jackson has come forward and is prepared to take on the role of Membership Secretary. He will also write and edit future newsletters.

We are still looking for nominations to replace our outgoing Chairman and an Assistant Trading Manager.

Cynthia has indicated that 2018 will be her last year as our Secretary and would like to mentor her replacement during the coming year. She has already handed over the responsibility for publicity etc to Margaret and Wendy. We are therefore looking for someone to take on the day-to-day secretarial duties and an additional person to compile the programme for 2019 and beyond.

Our warmest thanks go to Bert Filer and Derek Hooper who have undertaken the respective roles of Chairman and Membership Secretary for more years than they care to remember.

January/February

To-do list

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

Emerging spring bulbs

The leafy shoots of spring bulbs will soon start shooting through the soil. Carefully remove weeds, leaves and other plant debris from around the shoots and prick over the soil around them with a hand fork; this will help to aerate the soil prevents a soil cap forming. Where bulbs are emerging under trees, moss may form on the soil surface, this does not harm the bulbs but you may want to scrape away the moss to improve the general appearance. On poor soils a balanced fertiliser can be sprinkled around the bulbs once the surface has been cleared.

Even more things to do in January

If you haven't already sown your sweet peas, you can do this now under cover. Sown now, they'll give you earlier flowers in greater numbers and a longer season. All legumes, these included, thrive with a long root run, so deep pots or root-trainers are ideal. Water the compost and then push a pair of seeds in to about an inch below the surface. Cover with newspaper to keep moisture and warmth in and light out. Some heat will speed up germination, but is not essential. They'll germinate in about 10 days. Watch out for mice, they love them!

Other flowers to sow now are Iceland poppies, cobaeas and cleomes. Cleomes are tricky for beginners, so follow the instructions carefully – and be patient, as they can take a long time to germinate

Certain plants, such as antirrhinums, are grown as half-hardy annuals, but strictly speaking are tender perennials. They have a long growing season and can take up to 20 weeks from seed to flower. Get going soon with single coloured varieties such as 'Liberty Classic Crimson' or 'Giant White'. Seeds sown now should flower from June onwards. They germinate best in moist compost at around 21°C (70°F), so use a propagator or heated mat. By late January, growth is slowly starting so apply a slow release organic fertiliser.