



Newsletter  
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**WESTON-SUPER-MARE  
HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY**  
[www.wsmhorticultural.org.uk](http://www.wsmhorticultural.org.uk)

### SOCIETY OFFICERS

**President:** Reg Davis  
**Chairman:** Bert Filer . Telephone 01934 514057  
**Treasurer:** Sue & Rod Thomas: 01934 627358  
**Secretary:** Cynthia Filer. Telephone 01934 514057  
**MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR**



### A MESSAGE FROM CHAIRMAN BERT.

It does seem very strange to be wishing you all a happy Christmas in October, but this is the last newsletter of 2016. I hope you have a wonderful time and good gardening in 2017 I am delighted to inform you that Robin Potter, John Chapman and Dave Rock have volunteered to join the Flower Show Committee and I would like to thank them very much for volunteering. If anyone else is interested please let me know. I would also like to thank the three ladies who have volunteered to help with the refreshments at our meetings. Regrettably Tess Bailey has resigned from the committee for personal reasons.



**MEETINGS** There are still a few tickets available for the visit of our celebrity speaker **CHRISTINE WALKDEN** on 10th November. Admission is £8:50 for members and £9:50 for visitors. Please telephone Cynthia to reserve. The meeting following is on 8th December when we are delighted to welcome Katherine Kear to our social evening. Katherine is a British Master florist and will be giving us an illustrated visit to the sentimentality of a Victorian Christmas. Katherine will be in Victorian costume as will the ladies of the social committee (courtesy of Sue Thomas). You are very welcome to join them!!! Festive food, a glass of wine, tea and coffee will be provided along with a Christmas raffle.

**W**eston-in-Bloom won a gold award in the South West in Bloom Competition for the fifth year running. Congratulations to everyone involved.

### COACH TRIPS and other outings

Brenda has not yet finalised the coach trips for next year, but my internal source informs me that something rather special is being planned. Watch this space for more details in the next newsletter.

There is discussion within the Social committee to put together a series of mini-day trips to visit some local interesting venues. The transport could be anything from a small mini-bus to a full coach load depending on the number of members wishing to go. The first trip under consideration is a visit to **“England’s greatest snowdrop garden” at Colesbourne Park near Cheltenham**. They do garden tours on Monday to Friday in February at a cost of £14 which includes home-made cakes and tea and coffee. A talk about Colesbourne and the snowdrops is followed by a guided tour with Sir Henry Elwes and Arthur Cole, the head gardener, which takes about 90 minutes. The snowdrop garden is also open at weekends to the general public at a cost of £7 each. There are no guided tours on Saturday and Sunday. If you are interested then please let Cynthia know if you would prefer a weekday or weekend visit.

### NEWS FROM THE HUT

**The Hut will be closed over the Christmas period .  
The last trading day will be Saturday 3rd December 2016  
and it will re-open on Saturday 7th January 2017**

**Aquadulce Broad Bean seeds** are now available in The Hut, for sowing anytime from November to January to give the earliest crop of well filled beans next year.

**Vegetable seeds** for next year are also on sale together with **Winter hardy Onion Sets** which must be planted soon to give fresh onions ready to lift in late spring or early summer. You can buy 125gms, 250gms, 500gms or more - There are at least 80 sets per 250gms.

**Seed potato** orders are still being taken for next February delivery - early, second early and main crop varieties are on the list in the Trading Hut. The prices are similar to last year.

### GARDENING HINTS AND TIPS

#### What to do in the garden in November and December

There's always something to be doing in the garden, whether it's pruning, tidying or sowing, so we've put together our top gardening tasks for November and December.

#### In the flower garden

There's still time to plant daffodil bulbs and other spring flowering bulbs for a magnificent start to next years display. Plant tulip bulbs now to prevent Tulip Fire infection.

Plant up a terracotta pot of hyacinth bulbs for a simple but stunning display next spring. Plant out spring bedding displays of pansies, violas and primulas.

Start to plant bare-root roses - they can be planted any time between now and March.

Plant heathers, grasses and trailing ivy in pots for winter colour.

Now is the ideal time to plant a magnolia tree for a beautiful spring display.

Gather up fallen leaves from around the base of rose bushes which suffered from blackspot or rust this summer, to reduce the chance of infection next year.

Continue to lift dahlia tubers, begonias and gladiolus corms to store dry over the winter months.

Remove the dead foliage before storing.

### In the vegetable garden

Lift parsnips after the first frosts when their flavour will have sweetened.

Divide mature clumps of rhubarb once they are dormant. Now is a great time to prepare a perennial vegetable bed which can be planted up with rhubarb crowns and asparagus crowns.

Prepare a bed for planting autumn garlic. Improve heavy soils with organic matter before planting. Now is an ideal time to invest in mushroom kits. It's surprisingly easy to grow your own mushrooms. Place a scaffold plank on the ground along the main access route into the plot to allow access without compacting the soil as you walk across it. If you have access to fresh manure, now is the time to spread it across the surface of your vegetable beds to rot down over winter. Build a raised bed to take the bending out of vegetable growing. Stake top-heavy brassicas and draw up some soil around the base of the stem to prevent wind rocking the plant and causing damage to the roots.

### In the fruit garden

Now is the ideal time to plant currant bushes whilst they are dormant.

Plant raspberry canes now for a delicious home grown crop. Remove the top netting from fruit cages as heavy snow in winter can make it sag. Check fruits in storage and promptly remove any showing signs of disease or rotting. Tidy up your strawberry plants - cut off any dead leaves and remove runners.

Prune pear and apple trees anytime between now and February. But don't be tempted to prune your plum trees now as they will be susceptible to the silver leaf fungus - wait until midsummer.

Apply glue bands or greasebands to the trunks of fruit trees to prevent wingless female winter moths climbing the trunks and laying their eggs in the branches.

### In the greenhouse

Replace damaged glass before the worst of the winter weather sets in. Clean out the greenhouse thoroughly. Wash the glass, the floor and the staging with horticultural disinfectant to kill any overwintering pests and diseases. Install solar lights in the greenhouse so that you can still get out there on dark winter evenings to check your plants. Insulate the greenhouse with sheets of bubble wrap attached to the inside of the frame, to reduce heat loss. Don't forget to ventilate the greenhouse, particularly after watering and when paraffin heaters are used at night. As the winter approaches, take special care to not to over water plants that remain in active growth. Little and often is the key.

### Looking after your lawn

If you haven't already aerated your lawn, there's still time to do it before winter sets in. You can use either a lawn aerator or simply insert a garden fork at regular intervals and lean it back slightly to let air in. Continue to clear fallen leaves off the lawn to keep it healthy. Remember to set your lawn mower to a higher cut-height for winter. Now your beds are clear, try edging your lawn. Lawn edging creates a neat and tidy appearance and makes maintenance easier.

Try gathering your leaves on to the lawn and mow them with a rotary mower that has a collection box on the back. They will rot down quicker in your compost bins

### From your armchair

Check any notes that you made earlier in the year before placing your seed orders. What grew well, which varieties did you enjoy, and which varieties failed? Carefully plan your vegetable garden for next year so that you ensure good crop rotation to avoid a build up of pests and diseases. Order seed potatoes for next spring. Order your fruit trees now for planting in early spring. If space is limited in your garden try growing dwarf fruit trees.

### Other jobs about the garden

Wash, dry and store any used pots, seed trays and containers to remove overwintering pests and diseases that may infect your plants next year. Make sure gardening tools are cleaned of soil and debris. Once dry apply linseed oil to prevent rusting over the winter. Tidy up canes from around the garden. Make sure that you let them dry out before storing them away. This will help to extend their useful life. Clean out your seed stocks. Old parsnip seed are unlikely to germinate well the following year. Now is a good time to clean out water butts before they fill with fresh rain water over winter. Insulate taps and pipework with foam lagging to prevent damage caused by freezing weather conditions. Check any potatoes you have in storage. Prevent them rotting by storing them in hessian sacks or similar to allow air to circulate. Move container grown specimen plants to a sheltered spot in the garden to protect them from strong winds, heavy rain and frosts. Raise potted plants off the ground to prevent them becoming waterlogged. Collect leaves up for making leaf mould as a soil conditioner. Oak, Alder and Hornbeam will rot down in a year but beech, sycamore, horse chestnut and sweet chestnut will take a couple of years to compost. Build a new compost heap. Cover compost heaps with an old piece of carpet to keep the warmth in and maintain favourable decomposition conditions. Keep on top of weeds while they are still in active growth. Dig over the soil on a dry day when the ground is not too wet. Incorporate plenty of organic matter such as spent compost, manure or mushroom compost. Move deciduous trees and shrubs while they are dormant. Prune deciduous shrubs and trees. Plant evergreen shrubs and conifers. Take hardwood cuttings of deciduous shrubs and trees and place them in a sheltered spot outdoors or in the coldframe to take root. Take root cuttings from fleshy rooted herbaceous perennial plants to increase your stock. Place them in a cold frame or in a cold greenhouse to root. As the weather grows colder make sure bird feeders and bird tables are topped up with food. Check around the base of bonfires before you light them. Hedgehogs and other wildlife may be sheltering there.

### *Other news in brief*

- Cabbage patch king David Thompson, claims to have set a new world record with a 23kg red cabbage. He said his success was down to good seed, good soil and a big garden!!!
- Waitrose is the only supermarket with a working farm. The Leckford Estate in Hampshire produces mushrooms, honey and English sparkling wine.
- RHS research suggests that children perform better at school if they are involved with gardening and many will develop a greater interest in healthy eating.

