

Chichester Organic Gardening Society

Newsletter 53
April 2010



NOTES FROM THE COMMITTEE

April 2010

Congratulations to all of you who survived the winter weather and are now preparing for spring. Probably quite a number of treasured plants will have succumbed to snow and ice, but others are fortunately remarkably tough, and even ‘frostbitten’ leaves can be renewed. So we start the new gardening year with optimism, as always.

This newsletter looks forward to the summer, and we have a varied programme arranged with three visits: Gardens at Church Norton, Monica’s Bee Garden and to Chidmere House. You may remember that Monica gave us a talk last year, illustrated by her own plants. Meet at the gardens. If you need further details please contact Vee Cowan.

For the future, plans are going ahead. We have had several requests for input on composting and pH of the soil, and are hoping to arrange this for next season.

We always welcome suggestions for visits or speakers; again please contact Vee.

You will have seen that we include notices of events organised by Transition Chichester, in which all COGS members are welcome to participate. TC on its own (email) newsletter gives notices of COGS events. Many of our aims are the same: community co-operation, self-sufficiency, growing our own, buying local – and the two groups can be of mutual benefit. COGS however with a specific membership is quite independent. TC is a more loosely-organised group, wide open to all, affiliated to other Transition Towns around the country. Their discussion groups include the Food Group, the Grow Your Own group, and Gardenshare. For any details please contact Gina.

Our final meeting this season is the May Spring Fling with Quiz – do come, with a homemade (if possible) dish to share, your own cutlery, plates and glasses, and bring plants which you would like to pass on to others. You may find someone else has brought a plant which you really want and have been searching for

Hoping for good growing weather, and wishing you all an excellent gardening season,

The Committee

COGS NOTICES

COGS MEMBERSHIP

COGS continues to sustain its membership at around 100.

Throughout the year we lose a few members and we gain a few. It would be lovely if we could increase our number to a stable 110/120 members during the coming year, so let's have an active campaign to spread the word.

Thank you to those members who have elected to receive the Newsletter electronically, it certainly saves on paper and costs. If you haven't signed up to this yet then you can at any time - there isn't a time limit on it. Just email me at nina@nrgelearning.co.uk and I'll add you to the list.

Perhaps you could consider renewing your membership via a standing order? The amount is completely under your control and is really just one less thing to have to deal with! You can do this on line or at your bank. The details you will need are:

Lloyds TSB

No: 1914064

Sort code: 30 91 97

In the name of Chichester Organic Gardening Society.

£5 subscription

Even if you have renewed you could set one up ready for October 2010!

RHS Concession Card



We now have just one RHS concession card, which gives the holder and a guest one third off the price of entry to the RHS Gardens at Wisley (except Sundays), Rosemoor in Devon, Harlow Carr in Yorkshire, Hyde Hall in Essex and Trebah in Cornwall. It also entitles us to one free group visit of up to 55 people per year to an

RHS Garden. Liz Campling holds this card, so if you would like to borrow it, please contact her.

We have to pay a small fee for this card and it is only valid for a year, so if there is little interest from members, we will not renew next year.

Speakers and Meetings

We are always looking for suggestions for speakers. If you have any idea for speakers or visits, please let Vee Cowan, our Speakers' Secretary, know.

We also need volunteers to help at meetings. Please contact Pat Alderton if you can help.

STANSTED SHOW - Friday - Sunday 11 – 13 JUNE 2010

Thank you to all the people who have offered to help on our stand at Stansted – There are still several spaces to fill on the rota for Saturday and a few spaces on Sunday, please give me a ring if you can help on these days Tel 01243 780518 or email

variannec@yahoo.com . (If you can help setting up the stand on Thursday evening do let me know.) Please give me a ring if you have any queries. Many thanks Vee Cowan

SOS request - to help decorate the stand at Stansted Show. I am looking for someone to do/help decorate the stand on Thursday 10 June starting about 5 or 6.00pm. (there are some props and covers etc)

Penelope is organising the plants and is “hoping for some really good plants again. Herbs, tomatoes, vegetables and flowers, interesting plants, including any in flower. Healthy plants such as you would wish to buy yourself - clean pots, and labelled. Thank you in advance!” Please contact Penelope 01243 771881

penelopejohnstone@yahoo.co.uk

Totally Tomato Show 4th and 5th September

This is almost the last event in the calendar of the beautiful West Dean Gardens, and COGS is fortunate to be offered a pitch here free of



charge. It is a great chance to promote ourselves and organic growing, and to have free access to the other exhibitors and the gardens, including the impressive Victorian greenhouses. However organization of our stand is always something of a problem.

Our last meeting, the Spring Fling in May, is too

early to expect people to commit themselves to a date in September, and the event takes place before our winter programme begins. Early September, after the schools start, is also a popular time for people to take a holiday. So recruitment relies upon phone calls and emails, and there is usually a last-minute rush to fill the roster. There are a team of regulars who are constant with their support but there are always opportunities for newcomers. There are three shifts of three people each day, the shifts being approximately 2 hours long and the time flies by. If you are new you will be placed with experienced members who will explain everything. It is also very helpful to have a volunteer or two to help set up our pitch on the Friday afternoon. We like to have a display of members' home grown tomatoes, so if you have any to spare – particularly unusual varieties – please set some aside for the stall. Also, if you find you could help on the stall, as the time draws nearer, please phone me or email me at the number and address at the end of this newsletter; I will be delighted to hear from you!

Gina Carrington

Love Parks Week 2010



The charity **GreenSpace** is holding a **Love Parks Week** from

24 July to 1 August. They are inviting as many people as possible to go into their local parks and green spaces in support of their campaign for continued investment in these

valuable community assets. To find out more, visit their website at www.loveparksweek.org.uk.

The Parks and Green Spaces department at Chichester District Council supports this initiative and invites individuals and organisations to contact it if they would like to put an event on in a local park. The District Council would also consider organising special 'workdays' if there was enough interest from the public. The person to contact here is the Park Officer, Mick Gore, at mgore@chichester.gov.uk.

Perhaps COGS could put something on at one (or more) of the Chichester parks. It is a good cause, which we all support, and is also a way of advertising COGS. If you have any ideas about what we could do, please speak to a member of the Committee.

Request from Barry Chambers:

(We have received this email and are passing on a shortened version in case anyone in COGS would like to help. Please contact Barry direct if so. Although he specifically mentions ‘Transition’ that should not prevent anyone not ‘officially’ part of TC from taking part.

Barry’s email is barryjohnchambers@googlemail.com)

‘I have to build a garden at the Malvern Spring Gardening Show, May 6-9. The 8 gardens competing for the Chris Beardshaw Mentorship Scholarship (CBMS) will feature in a special edition of BBC Gardeners World on Friday 7 May.



May 6th - 9th 2010

I would like to try to use the garden to promote the Transition town movement, in particular the sense of community which it embodies and which has been ebbing away probably since the last war. The CBMS is a very unique and exciting project and

Chris does things that make positive changes. Bradstone, the main sponsors of CBMS, are committed to increasingly sustainable practices and will recycle/reuse all the materials they will supply free to all the competitors. My design is not quite fully developed and has to cover the theme Circus.

I would like to invite members of Transition Chichester to assist in this project

Gardens are highly symbolic, emotionally charged metaphors for me I have designed this garden to reflect a sense of community which I propose is the key, leading feature of the transition movement – people making things happen.’

BBC2 Small Holding Series - Looking for Gardening Applicants

Pat Evans received the following email from the BBC:

'I'm emailing regarding a new BBC series that we hope will be of interest to people involved with your members.

The series will feature ten couples or pairs (married couples / siblings / friends etc.) who would like the opportunity to change their lives forever and run a farm/small holding. The programme will see the ten couples learn all the basics they need before decamping to a farm in beautiful British countryside where they will be challenged in all areas of farm life, from animal husbandry to coping with the unpredictable summer weather. The series will culminate in the winning pair getting the opportunity to live and work on their own small farm.

We're looking for couples of all ages and relationships (married couples / siblings / friends etc.) who are serious about wanting to change their lives and who will relish farm life. Whether it's a love of animals, a passion for gardening, an interest in sustainability and food provenance or a general lust for all things outdoors, we want to hear from anyone who thinks they've got what it takes to take on this lifestyle-transforming project.

We are especially looking for people who may already have some experience volunteering for a scheme that involves working with animals, food or nature, hence the reason I'm contacting you. We appreciate that this is a really different scale of venture for your members to consider, but hope that it might perhaps be an interesting and unique opportunity for them to display their skills in a life changing way.

The deadline for applications is 28th April 2010.

Thanks and best wishes,

Fraser Mullen

Researcher

Splash Media | 1 Bedford Avenue | London | WC1B 3AU

T: 0207 255 5475 | F: 0207 255 5443

frasermullen@splashmediatv.co.uk

A Farm for the Future

This film, presented by Rebecca Hoskins, questioned the very future of farming, even under organic principles, without extensive use of fossil fuels, especially oil. Various low fossil fuel alternative methods were presented. One was the development of a new type of pasture for year round feed consumption, pioneered at Fordhall Farm. Another was the growing of crops using permaculture principles: a forest garden using height as a third growing dimension. The film concluded that perhaps we should all be gardeners for food, rather than relying on large scale food production by farmers.

The film was a stark reminder of a fundamental peak oil problem: how do we feed our country? and provoked a very lively discussion. There were reservations about how well permaculture could work in relatively small spaces, such as allotments, and also concerns that national self sufficiency in farming could only be achieved with a national population at WWII levels, around half what it is today. The growth of cities and modern work patterns also make it harder to grow and distribute food on a local basis. The focus on grain in a modern diet is a problem, as is the fact that we now eat 'too much'. The group considered vegetarianism, but it was pointed out that raising animals could be useful use of marginal land (sheep) and waste (pigs, chickens) and that less meat was perhaps a more appropriate target than no meat. We also questioned public awareness of peak oil as opposed to climate change. The importance of seasonality was stressed, as was the possibility of no-plough farming as a parallel with no-dig gardening, to protect soil structure.

Among suggested responses by COGS was a local show, perhaps at the Assembly Rooms, aimed at new gardeners (perhaps 'Get started in Gardening?'). There could be stands on soil, sowing, fruit and vegetables, with a strong emphasis on practical help and demonstrations. Small space growing would also be useful to demonstrate, with photos of how much produce can be grown in a small space.

The Transition Landshare scheme was mentioned, as was a 'buddy scheme' pairing experienced with newer gardeners.

A 'New Year's Resolution' was proposed: those present, the 'January Group', would reconvene in a year and share how they had progressed away from fossil fuel use/ supermarket use. We look forward to seeing how everyone gets on!

Tuppenny Barn – our March meeting

On 29 March our speaker was Maggie Haynes of Tuppenny Barn, a 2-acre certified organic smallholding in Southbourne, which some COGS members have visited. With a series of splendid pictures, she described the transformation of a large field, formerly used as pasture, to the present



profusion of vegetables, fruit, herbs, and flowers. She and Becca have developed an extensive irrigation for the plot, using their rainwater harvest system; green waste and prunings are composted, and leaves are turned into useful mulch. Biodegradable materials and recycled items are used for planters, trays, and pots.

Produce is sold locally, in Chichester and Midhurst Farmers' markets, or at the site on Thursdays (see below). Maggie encourages school visits to show the younger generation the benefits of the organic method and care for nature – and the enjoyment of 'growing your own'.

Maggie also described how they have come to adopt the 'No Dig' method: they gradually converted each of their large raised beds, laying cardboard on the soil and then covering with layers of compost and mulch. Plants can be planted direct into this, and the method helps to suppress weeds. She recommends a book by Charles Dowding: Organic Gardening - the Natural no-dig way

Green Books ISBN 978 1 903998 91 5

COGS members might like to know – especially if they cannot get to the Friday markets – that every **Thursday from 10 to 4.30** vegetables etc can be bought direct from the farm – just turn up.

There is also a **veg bag scheme**: £7 for 6 items or £10 for 9 items.

Ring 07977 536684 or see the website www.tuppennybarn.com.

Maggie is looking for someone who would be kind enough to collect veg bag(s) from Maggie and offer a collection point for members who are unable to collect direct on Thursday. Please call Vee on 01243 780518 if you could help.

[PS During this presentation Maggie mentioned that she was applying for planning permission to build an Educational Centre. Brilliant news – she has been successful. Ed]

Review Of Talk By Andrew Lawrence ‘Dynamic, Rigid And Dying’

Andrew is the National Trust Warden for the South East, and has a long association with this area, having been NT Warden for East Head for a number of years. The somewhat dramatic title of his talk to COGS in February referred to areas on the south coast, and certainly attracted a larger than usual audience.

The three examples Andrew chose to illustrate his subject were East Head, dynamic, as it has been moving on its ‘hinge’ since records began, and will continue to do so; a small but fascinating area of shingle beach at Shoreham, which is protected because of interesting flora, but is unlikely to expand because of the heavy human use; and vanishing dunes at Climping for the final element of his title. He has also been monitoring sea level rise over a period of several years, and calculates that about 3cm per annum can be attributed to global warming, but some 5-7cm can be attributed to the tectonic effect of the south-east of the country sinking and the north-west simultaneously rising. All this gave rise to plenty of questions, and provides evidence that the occasional meeting with a wider subject matter is an appreciated addition to our programme.

Rhubarb And Ginger Jam

(A well tried recipe. If you have a glut of rhubarb, this is an easy method for a delicious jam. Instead of the muslin bag, you can simply add thin slivers of ginger to the fruit when cooking.)

3 lb Rhubarb (prepared)

Juice of 3 lemons

3 lb sugar

1 oz fresh root ginger

1. Cut Rhubarb into chunks and layer in a container with sugar. Add lemon juice, cover, and leave overnight. NO extra water.
2. (Bruise the ginger by smashing it with a mallet. Tie in a piece of scalded muslin and place in saucepan). Add rhubarb mixture.
3. Heat, stirring, until all sugar is dissolved, then boil hard until setting point. (Remove muslin bag).

Makes 5 lb.

Events

Selsey Open Gardens 2010

Selsey's best-kept secret is about to be unearthed – seventeen stunning gardens will be opening for the first time on Sunday 30th May 2010!

From cottage and organic gardens creating havens for wildlife to those enjoying stunning sea views – there's something of interest for everyone. Teas and plants will be on sale.

Fundraising for Manhood Wildlife and Heritage Group and St Wilfrid's Hospice. Tickets and programmes, £5.00 per adult, under 12s free (must be accompanied by an adult) will be on sale from 2nd April 2010 at Clarksons; The Fudge Shop; Selsey Cards & Gifts; The Selsey Florist; The Fruit Basket, East Beach; Manor Nurseries, Pagham Rd, Runcton; Russells Garden Centre, Main Road, Birdham, Wyevale Garden Centre, Bognor Road, Merston.

For more information contact the Fundraising Team on 01243 606899, 01243 602982 or 07763 209039

INFINITY FOODS

Next orders to Pat by Wednesday 5 May please.

(Collect Tuesday 11 May)

Any member is welcome to order and there is no minimum order. If anyone new is interested please contact:

pat_adams@btopenworld.com or 01243 602713

COGS DIARY DATES

Monday April 26 **Vegetable growing – tips from a head gardener**
Mark Saunders

Mark has been head gardener at Fittleworth House for many years. He will give us helpful tips on how to grow vegetables including growing them in pots and containers, and the new varieties of vegetables available now. He will talk about flowers too, and will answer questions. Mark has a website - www.gardenlifephotos.com where you can read his blog and follow what is happening in his garden. He is a keen photographer and will be showing photos during the evening.

Monday May 24 May Spring Fling with Quiz

Do come, with a homemade (if possible) dish to share, your own cutlery, plates and glasses, and bring plants which you would like to pass on to others. You may find someone else has brought a plant which you really want and have been searching for ...

Saturday 5th June 1-5pm Private visit to two gardens in Church Norton

COGS members are invited to visit two gardens in Church Norton near Selsey

Parking is very limited so please share cars where possible. To find us take the B2145 towards Selsey. Turn left to Church Norton (Rectory Lane) and then take the first right into Grange Lane and continue for about ½ mile. At the time of writing there is no road sign for Grange Lane, so look out for the COGS signs.

Tea & cakes in aid of COGS funds.

Susan Maguire's garden at Fieldings, Grange Lane, Church Norton, PO20 9DS

Fully organic one acre plot with a no dig vegetable garden, fruit cage, greenhouses, pond, wild garden and mature shrubs, roses and perennials.

Pat & Colin Evans' garden at White Gates, Grange Lane, Church Norton PO20 9DS.

1/3 acre plot with a small greenhouse and a fruit cage, some mature and several newly planted beds and one currently being converted from the old vegetable beds. Also 1 acre 'wild-ish' area comprising native trees, a tiny orchard and a new vegetable garden with raised beds surrounded by a willow fedge.

Saturday 5th June 1pm Visit to an Eco house

COGS members have been invited to an informal visit to Ted and Pam Osborne's eco house at Hunston (on the way to Church Norton).

They will show us round their home and explain the renovations they have done.

1.00 pm for approx 30 mins. Numbers limited. (Please call Vee 07789 013472 to reserve a place)

**Monday July 19 Visit to Monica Lucas garden
The Birches, 19 Selsey Road, Sidlesham, PO20 7NF.**

A chance to see the 1 acre garden Monica talked about in September last year. Her garden is full of plants to attract honey bees and butterflies and has a large herbaceous border and she employs a colour co-ordinated planting.. Monica will be selling plants and honey for us to buy.

6.45pm for 7.00pm start. £2.00 donation for W Sussex Snowdrop Trust

Wednesday August 25 Chidmere Gardens

Chidham Lane, Chidham, Chichester, West Sussex, PO18 8TD

We are delighted to have organised a private visit to these lovely local gardens. First opened in 1935, the garden underwent a large refurbishment several years ago and has several new features. Set in 33 acres the 60 foot herbaceous border has been replanted this year, a rose garden which should be in full flower, a white garden, 3 orchards which contain 110 different varieties of apples, woodland area, a 5 acre Pond (Yes 5 acres!) which has varieties of grasses and dogwood planted around some of the perimeter. We will be shown round the gardens by one of the gardeners.

2.15 for 2.30 pm start

Cost £2.30

First indoor meeting of Autumn season

September 27 Chris Howkins "In partnership with nature?"

Chris Howkins is a well known Ethnobotanist, Writer, Publisher and Illustrator and has researched information on the use of plants in Britain for over forty years, so his database is now reckoned to be the third largest on the subject in the country. It includes material on both practical and ritual usages: from the sacred plants of ancient religions through to the Ivy and Mistletoe at Christmas and for the practical uses, everything from food and medicine, furniture and dozens of everyday commodities.

Chris will talk to us about our EARLY SAXON ancestors' relationship with the land of West Sussex and how the intervening years have changed our perception and relationship with crops and gardening practices...

Bassil Shippam Centre, Tozer Way, St Pancras, Chichester PO19 4LG

Start at 7.30pm, doors open at 7.15pm

Free to COGS members. £2 for non-members.

Chichester Organic Gardening Society was formed in 1992 as a local group of both the Henry Doubleday Research Association and the Soil Association.

Aims of the Society

To encourage the growing of healthy produce and beautiful gardens by sustainable and environmentally kind gardening methods.

To provide a focus for local gardeners and growers to meet those sharing their interest in gardening *with* nature, both for social activities and to discuss gardening and related issues.

COGS activities in support of our Aims

- A programme of regular meetings (indoors September to April, outdoors May to August) with speakers on gardening and related topics.
- Occasional visits to places of gardening interest.
- Promotion of organic methods at COGS special events and appropriate local shows such as those at West Dean (Totally Tomato Show) and Stansted Show.
- Shared purchase and bulk purchase scheme for whole food cooking supplies to obtain discounts.
- Books available for purchase or on loan from our small library.

Membership costs £5.00 per household. The membership year runs from October to September. To join contact Nina Guilfoyle on 01243 776063.

Your COGS organisers are:

Officers:

Secretary – Penelope Johnstone (01243 771881)

Treasurer – Rachel Ritchie. rcritchie@hotmail.com

Membership Secretary - Nina Guilfoyle (01243 776063) nina@nrglearning.co.uk

Organisers:

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Speaker Secretary – Vee Cowan (01243 780518) varianec@yahoo.com

Bookshop/Librarian - Barbara MacGregor (01243 781849)

Infinity Orders – Pat (01243 602713) pat_adams@btopenworld.com

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www.chicogs.org.uk

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