

Chichester Organic Gardening Society

Newsletter 62
April 2013



Notes from the Committee

What a year it was. Endless rain, then a cold winter which continued its January temperatures into March. We are assured though by the experts that seeds sown later will catch up. So we are hoping for good summer weather and the gardener's dream of gentle rain at night.

We have some interesting visits lined up, and hope that a good number will be going to each of these. In particular we support Maggie Haynes, who came to talk to us in March, and the Graylingwell allotments are interested in COGS and deserve our encouragement.

As is pointed out in a short article in this newsletter, and everyone must already be aware, our farmland is threatened by 'local plans' which turn out not to be so local after all. So the more we can grow, the better – and Garden Share is one way of getting unused back gardens into production.

You will see that Vee, who has done great work in arranging our visits and speakers for several years, is stepping down, and we encourage someone among our members to come forward and take over. We always welcome suggestions for speakers and visits too.

And we are still celebrating our 20 years!

The Committee

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

COGS has maintained a small subscription of £5 for a good few years now, which is I hope you'll agree, good value. Unfortunately, at the time of writing we still have 18 members who have not yet renewed their subscriptions. This is a lot of members to lose and so the Committee is asking all of our members either to encourage friends whose membership has lapsed to re-join, or to see if they can spread the word and find us some new members.

Membership runs from October to September each year and it would help very much if renewals could be sent back promptly. If you would like to create a Standing Order here are the details you will need:

Lloyds TSB

No: 01914064

Sort Code: 30 91 97

Chichester Organic Gardening Society.

If you would like to receive your Newsletter electronically, that is still possible; just email me at nina@nrglearning.co.uk
Please be sure to let me know if you change your email address, because if you don't then you won't receive your Newsletter

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. Nina Guilfoyle 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 Vi Cowan, our Speakers' Secretary, know.

Raffles

A reminder that these are held at every meeting except May and October. Any good items, especially bottles, good plants, and 'gifts' are welcome.

Also at meetings:

Surplus, Gluts, whether plants or produce or no-longer-needed useful garden things, are also welcome. People can help themselves (for a small donation) – but please take yours home if no-one wants them!

A call for contributors

We would welcome interesting and relevant pieces by other members, which we can print. Do you have some special ‘tips’ or advice gleaned from your own experience, which you would like to share? If so do send, in first instance to penelopejohnstone@yahoo.co.uk or you can discuss at one of the meetings.

Speaker secretary needed for COGS

I have been speaker secretary for the last seven years and have decided to stop now. COGS is looking for someone who can take over from me in the autumn, or this summer. I will organise speakers until the end of 2013, and the new person can arrange the talks and visits for 2014 onwards.

The role is not that big as the Committee help with ideas for both speakers and visits if necessary. There are several suggestions for 2014. Each year there are 6 speakers to arrange and recently I have shown a DVD for January making 5 speakers to find. Terry has kindly taken on the role of introducing and thanking the speaker. Being a Committee member is not essential.

There are 3 visits in the summer which often are arranged after a speaker has been to COGS, and allotments are popular to visit.

I am sure someone would like the opportunity of doing this job. Please give me a ring on 01243 780518 or email varianec@yahoo.com to discuss it further.

Parham House Grow Your Own

Tom Brown, the head gardener at Parham, has asked COGS to be part of their 'Grow Your Own' Festival, which is taking place on **Sunday 11th August**, from 11.0 a.m. to 5.0 p.m. We had such a happy time last year and decided it would be fun to do it again. As you will remember, last year we won a silver cup at this Show, and Tom the head gardener brought it to show us when he gave his talk. We feel that we would like to defend our position as cup-holder. So we are hoping that members will come up with ideas, and some plants that we can use on the stall. Especially if you have anything unusual or particularly beautiful (this can be on loan, not for sale!). We would also welcome any helpers on the day. Do contact Vee or Penelope if you would like to help or have plants we can use.

Weald and Downland Open Air Museum

Countryside Show: on Saturday and Sunday, **12th and 13th October.**

We shall be invited again to have a stall, and any items (vegetables especially unusual ones, plants, etc.) will be welcome. And as it takes place over two days, we should particularly welcome helpers for short and easy shifts.

We did well last year, and several members won certificates for their competition entries. Also, anyone entering for one or more classes (the precise details seem to vary each year) receives free entry to the Show. So this would be very useful, even if you do not come among the first in your class.

So do put these dates in your diary, and both Shows are well worth a visit anyway.

January meeting: Biodynamic Gardening was the DVD shown on January 28. It was fascinating to be shown the tools and techniques of this way of gardening by Lynette West as she works alongside the gardeners at Garden Organic Ryton. We saw how to understand

biodynamic preparations and make biodynamic compost, how to make and use manure concentrate and all about the sowing and planting calendar.

Working with all the different life forces that come towards the garden, including the gardener, this DVD makes sense of the how's and why's of the biodynamic processes.

February talk: Ellie Garwood on the Community Orchard

(Ellie Garwood spoke to us about the work being done in Oaklands Park near the Theatre, and she has given us a list of the apple trees planted in the Community Orchard, as we might be interested to see these. We include some of her notes from the talk. She gave us some information for the January Newsletter, but there is more detail here)

The Orchard was planted in November 2011, and funded by Chichester District Council and 3 Chichester Rotary Clubs

There was a fantastic turn out for the day, with approx. 60 people including local residents, archery club members, church members, members of the RSPB and the local schools.

There are almost 80 members on the mailing list for the orchard now (after just one year), of which approximately 15-20 are active members who help look after and maintain the orchard, as well as help organise events

It is a 30 tree community orchard planted on MM106 and M26 root stocks

M26 is a semi dwarfing rootstock, producing a tree 2.5-3.5m (8-10ft) at maturity. The size is suited to smaller gardens, M26 rootstocks do not have a strong root system and require permanent support.

MM106 is an all purpose rootstock that is used by both gardeners and commercial orchards, producing a free-standing tree around 4m (12ft), which can easily be kept a smaller size of about 2.5 metres with a good pruning regime. It is also great for wall trained fans and espaliers.

After your trees are established, they do not need support. In addition to this MM106 root-stocks are woolly aphid resistant

There are 24 apple trees in the orchard, 4 pears and 2 plums
Apple varieties are comprised of both old and new, the new varieties include: Fiesta, Falstaff and Pixie, alongside heritage varieties such as Ashmead's Kernel, Charles Ross and Bramley

7 of the fruit trees we have are Sussex varieties including

Duck's Bill:

Grown at Stamner Park in Brighton by orchard and fruit tree expert Peter May, who is grafting and growing all 30 species of recorded Sussex varieties. It was introduced by Fred Streeter, Head Gardener at Petworth House in 1937. Its distinctive shape gives it its name, the skin is yellow with a red flush. Apples can be picked early October and stored until December. It is rich, sweet tasting.

Crawley Beauty:

Discovered growing in a garden in Tilgate, near Crawley, it was awarded an RHS Award of Merit in 1912. Useful cooking variety that can be grown in colder, frost prone areas because it flowers late
Can be picked mid October and stored through to January

Alfriston:

Raised in the late 18th century by Mr Shepherd of Uckfield and originally named Shepherd's Pippin. It was renamed Alfriston in 1819 by Mr Booker who lived in that village. It received an RHS Award of Merit in 1920, and is a sharp cooking apple, a biennial.
It can be picked in October and stores right through till April

Eastbourne Pippin:

Grown by E. A. Lindley from Eastbourne in 1930 – from a pip of a Newton Pippin. Fruit can be picked late August and stored until October.

Wadhurst Pippin:

Grown sometime in the early nineteenth century at Wadhurst. It is a very good cooking apple, which can be picked early October and stores until February.

Egremont Russet:

This is the only Sussex apple variety to be commercially grown on a larger scale. Grown on the Estate of Lord Egremont, Petworth
First recorded as a variety in 1872 by nurseryman J. Scott, and

received an RHS Award of Garden Merit in 1993.

It can be picked in early October and stored until December.

Victoria Plum: The variety was first discovered in a garden in Alderton, Sussex; it was named after Queen Victoria, and introduced commercially in Sweden in 1844 by a nursery owner, Denyer, under the name of Denyer's Victoria.

Wildflower Meadow: Sown in May 2012 – and followed throughout the summer. The Council were unable to give us the exact mix details but it definitely included cornflowers, Californian poppies, Toad flax (Linaria - Fairy Bouquet), English Poppies, pink cornflowers. It encourages wildlife including bees, bumble-bees and butterflies. We hope to sow a second wildflower in 2014

Related, though in different areas, is the:

Orchards in Schools project: In January 2012, Transition Chichester member Rita Dampier secured funding for 4 school orchards in local primary schools: Kingsham, Parklands, Fordwater and Tangmere. Trees were supplied by local nurseryman Paul Barnett, who also came along to show the children how best to plant a tree. Orchards will be re-visited next winter to show the children how to prune and why this is important

March 25 Meeting

Maggie Haynes from Tuppenny Barn Organics

Maggie, with no previous professional background in Horticulture, purchased a 2.4 acre field with a dilapidated barn in Southbourne, a village near Chichester, a few years ago. She now has an organically certified smallholding growing high quality affordable produce for sale to local people.

Maggie concentrated on giving us an update on progress both on their horticultural activities and on the building of the new natural structure which they have built for educational and social events.

The problems encountered this last year have mainly been biological ones due to the weather. The very large, yellow, carnivorous Spanish

Slug has decimated their field crops. The Harlequin Ladybird threatens to wipe out our familiar indigenous species of small red and black ladybirds. Out of the 135 trees in the orchard only 17 gave a full crop last year, due to the excessive rainfall and low summer temperatures.

In keeping with permaculture ideas all trees have been mulched and in the mulch bee-friendly plants and herbs that guard against pests and diseases have been planted. Garlic works well apparently, in addition nasturtiums, borage and comfrey. Bees have been an interesting and important topic for the school visits. Maggie herself has had to master the arts of bee keeping and now has 2 or 3 hives on her land.

The work of the centre is not just about horticulture, it is a welcoming place for all ages of people to come and work, learn and grow. Work experience teenagers, volunteers from local businesses such as John Lewis IT department who made raised beds, school children, and adults with learning difficulties have benefitted and also made a valuable contribution.

The new circular building, based on the designs of old round houses, is the major ongoing project. In April 2011 the foundations were laid, part funded by a grant from the Chichester Harbour Conservancy Trust. Three generations of one family worked on the roof using their special skills to lay cedar wood shingles, local farmers donated straw bales for the walls, and the underfloor was constructed from recycled paper resting on car tyres. Maggie hastened to tell us that the whole place is rat proof.

In the future the building will be used for courses, workshops, to help adults with learning difficulties, and all year round school visits. There will be a reference library, a local art and craft show case; it will be able to be rented out for community groups and events. Children will be able to harvest the vegetables and then cook them in the kitchen.

Maggie and all those involved with the Tuppenny Barn Project deserve every success and support in the future. The finance to complete the barn has yet to be secured.

Their website address is: www.tuppennybarn.com and more information on the new building is on the following website: <http://greenbuildingsolutions.co.uk/straw-bale-building-tuppenny-barn/>

Save Our Countryside and Farmland!

As you will know, from the local paper and discussions, planning regulations are changing, and the Council are having to prepare a Local Plan in an attempt to stop developers taking over prime land. COGS have received an email – which has gone to gardening groups nationwide – asking us to be concerned, and specifically to sign the petition below.

See the Local Plan, and how much of the proposed building area is now farmland, and have your say.

We print here a petition received by email:

carolshorney@hotmail.com <http://seeog.org.uk/>

'Why is it possible for developers to build on our **Best and Most Versatile agricultural land (BMV)**' - because it's land that will never feed another mouth again.

Safeguard our Soils, Mr. Pickles!

The aim of this is to stop the government allowing prime agricultural land to be bought by developers. It used to be the case, when Britain supplied most of its own food, that good quality land was kept for agricultural purposes, not housing/other buildings. Now we are giving away some of our best sites to supermarkets.

Please read more about it at this link, sign and pass on:

http://www.avaaz.org/en/petition/Safeguard_our_Soils_Mr_Pickles?launch

(Note: Avaaz (avaaz.org) are also busily combating Monsanto, who are again trying to introduce GM crops and thus undermine traditional farming practice. Contact Carol directly for further information)

Cabbage Soup with beans

We grow beans specifically for drying and storing. It always makes me feel secure as dried beans are proof against most of life's vicissitudes including power cuts. Instead of Savoy cabbage, you can use up any surplus greens. Last time I used leaves from a Swiss Chard plant that had survived the winter. Also you can experiment with the garnish. Our favourite is horseradish sauce.

Ingredients

1 onion chopped

2 carrots sliced

2 sprigs rosemary

2 cloves garlic

2 tbsp. Olive oil

2 medium potatoes cut into cubes

Tin of tomatoes

1.2L stock

400gm tin of borlotti beans or same quantity of cooked dried beans

200gm Savoy cabbage

To garnish: chopped parsley or 6 tbsps. pesto

Method

*Heat oil in deep pan & cook add onion, carrot & rosemary for 10 mins until softened.

*Add potatoes & cook for 2 mins.

*Pour in tomatoes & stock. Bring to the boil & simmer for 20-30 mins

*until tender

*5 mins before serving, stir in beans & cabbage, simmer until tender.

*Serve sprinkled with parsley or a swirl of pesto.

(Liz Campling)

BOSHAM GARDENS OPEN DAY

Sunday 9 June 2013 - 11am – 5pm

Visit beautiful private gardens and help beat blood cancers

TICKETS £5 Available from May at:

Bosham Co-op Farm Shop; Hillier's Garden Centre;

Luscombes Newsagents; Mariners Coffee Shop;

Millstream Hotel and participating gardens on the day

LUNCH: To book lunch in advance (pre-payment required) in a harbourside garden email: jabartlett45@btinternet.com - £10 including a glass of wine.

Teas & Refreshments will be available in some participating gardens

FOR MORE INFORMATION Caroline Nelson: 07825 588604 or Gay Kaye: 07776 238120

Eco-Cinema: **Winged Migration:** tracking the age old mystery of bird migration. Bassil Shippam Centre, Monday 8 April, 7.30 p.m. £4.

INFINITY FOODS

Next orders to Pat by Mon **10 June** please.

(cheques to be with Pat by that date)

Delivery on Thursday **20 June** please collect asap

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

May 20

SPRING FLING AND PLANT SWAP

Do bring any good spare plants to swap, but please take it home afterwards if it doesn't find a new owner.

Please bring a dish of food to share with a label including ingredients + a serving spoon. Please remember to bring your own plates, cutlery and glasses.

2013 summer visits

June 25 (Tuesday)

Visit to Weald & Downland Open Air Museum

Cogs is joining Bognor Regis Horticultural Society to visit **the Museum** during Historic Gardens Week, with demonstrations in the museum's period gardens, plus a Herbarium Exhibition. Cafe on site, or bring a picnic. **11.00 am** - meet at reception. Cost £10.40/£9.40 (reduced to £8.80 if enough people for a group booking)

July 22 (Monday) 4.00 p.m.

Tea and tour round Tuppenny Barn

£5 to include tea and home made cake

Maggie will show us round the hectare plot to see her sustainable working practices to include the beehive, composting project

Pls ring Vee to book a place 01243 780518

August 19 (Monday)

Visit to Graylingwell Allotments

The Graylingwell Park Community Garden has been set up by the Chichester Community Development Trust (known as the CDT) as part of its vision to foster good community relations in the north quarter of Chichester.

Meet at **6.15** at the Graylingwell Chapel where there is a path to the north and one minute to the Garden! We'll go the allotments at 6.30

Autumn indoor meeting:

September 30 The Aldingbourne Trust

Michelle McKinley Bell and Nicki Clarke

This West Sussex charity supports adults with learning disabilities to lead independent lives and they run several sustainable and green projects. They will also bring bee friendly plants for sale, and natural composters/ fertilisers.

Unless otherwise stated, Monday meetings take place at Bassil Shippam Centre, Tozer Way, St Pancras, Chichester PO19 7LG Meetings start at 7.30pm, doors open at 7.15pm

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 , Transition, and Weald and Downland Open Air Museum
- 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:

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

Bookshop/Librarian - Barbara MacGregor (01243 781849)

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

Publicity - Susan Sinnett-Jones (02392 341813) a3ssj@mac.com

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www.chicogs.org.uk

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