

# Chichester Organic Gardening Society



Newsletter 67  
January 2015



## Notes from the Committee

As you will see, we have arranged meetings for some way ahead. Since Vee stood down, this has been done jointly by committee members. **But we do need someone to co-ordinate**; if you think you would like to, please contact one of the Committee. You will have plenty of support and ideas and contacts from the rest of us.

You will also see that we are starting to have coffee/tea at meetings, after the main talk.

*The Committee*

## MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Many thanks to those who have renewed their subscription. Please note that membership now stands at £6 per household. Should you wish to renew by Standing Order, here are the details:

Lloyds TSB  
No: 01914064  
Sort Code: 30 91 97  
Chichester Organic Gardening Society.

**If you do set up a Standing Order or you change your email address (and are receiving your newsletter by email PLEASE let me know: [nina@nrglearning.co.uk](mailto:nina@nrglearning.co.uk)**

## COGS FUNDING – REMINDER

Talks: Members - £1 per meeting, Visitors - £2.  
These are probably the smallest charges of any local Society!

## ***Speakers and Meetings***

We are always looking for suggestions for speakers. If you have any idea for speakers or visits, please let one of the Committee know. And do bring a friend to any of our meetings.

## ***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!

## **COGS is having tea (and coffee!)**

This Autumn the committee has decided to have a trial run to offer tea and coffee at our meetings, after the speaker. We felt it would be a good opportunity for everybody to have a chance to talk to one and other, to discuss gardening tips, successes, seeds or anything else – we won't be patrolling to check that it is only garden talk!!!

Initially the committee will provide the tea and coffee from the funds, but donations will be gratefully received. We will review it at Christmas and depending on your feedback and funds, we will make any changes in the New Year.

### *A call for contributors*

We would welcome interesting and relevant pieces by 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](mailto:penelopejohnstone@yahoo.co.uk) or you can discuss at one of the meetings.

### We remember

We were saddened in October to hear first of Liz Merritt's serious illness and then of her passing away in QA Hospital on 8 October. Liz was a stalwart member and supporter of COGS for many years, and during 2006-2007 was Talks co-ordinator. Others knew her in her work of complementary therapy. She will be much missed, and we send our sympathy to John and to Liz's family.

**September meeting** – Alan Waters of Wildwood in Halnaker gave us an account of his work coppicing – a craft which he began as an apprentice, at an early age. He showed us the tools he uses for cutting and splicing, some inherited from previous coppicers – steel worn by use, and which has to be sharpened regularly.

His products include ‘pimps’: a pimp is a bundle of ten beautifully cut and bound birch brushwood bundles, surrounded by pegs of chestnut and tied with twine. He works the West Dean woods, where the trees are coppiced at regular intervals. Wattle fencing, of which he showed us examples, can be simple or contained within a carefully shaped frame. This ancient craft is still very much alive, and Alan has an apprentice who will carry on the tradition.

### **November meeting**

At the November meeting Professor Gerald Blunden gave us a fascinating talk about his research into plants. He is Emeritus Professor of Pharmacognosy at the University of Portsmouth - there is only one other such professor in this country.

In the third world plant drugs are still used, but Professor Blunden explained the difficulty of using plants because of the variation in quality and quantity of the chemical content of each plant. The myth that if it is natural it is safe he said was rubbish.

His research had taken him to many countries including Kenya and Cuba. He showed us slides of sisal fibre, the waste product of which was used to develop the steroid drug. This was begun in Kenya and continued in Cuba, but lack of resources prevented further development. However it was Professor Blunden's written report on his research that led the Chinese to develop this product further.

Professor Blunden showed us slides of his visit to the tropical forest on the shores of the Orinoco in Venezuela. He showed us different seaweeds that are now used in many everyday products such as toothpaste and ice cream. He explained the importance of a herbarium in the collection of plants. It was essential to press a plant within

hours of gathering, so that its quality could be maintained in order to be correctly identified.

Altogether, Professor Blunden gave us an enlightening and thought provoking talk.

*Pat Alderton*

### Green Fair 2014

Green Fair 2014 was held in the Assembly Rooms, as usual, on Saturday 11 October. COGS had a stall well located towards the end of the hall, near Biodiversity, Edible Verge, and Grow Your Own – themes which are very much in line with our own aims. A lot of growing goes on in and around Chichester. Of the estimated 900 visitors to the Fair, a good many were interested in our stall, and the Cooks Calendar as always was a popular sale. We also raised some funds, though our chief motive was to promote interest in Organic growing and in our Society.

Many thanks to those who helped on the Friday, setting up, and on the day.

### Weald and Downland Countryside Show,

For the fourth successive year, COGS had a stall in the Horticultural tent, along with beekeepers, spinners & weavers, and the WDOAM's own stall of ancient fruit and vegetables. Those who kindly helped set up and run the stall were able to wander around the grounds, enjoy the demonstrations of falconry, gun dogs, and heavy horses, and also view the numerous stalls and regular exhibits. Weather was damp but warm, and heavy rain on Sunday only appeared late afternoon when we were packing up. We attracted plenty of interest and were kept busy. Our tent also housed the competition exhibits – which some of us had entered, thus gaining entry tickets. There were three awards – John Bennett a First for Beetroot and Ginger chutney, Penelope Johnstone a Second in the same class (Orange and Apple chutney) and a Third for Marmalade. There were 25 entries in the Chutney class. As

always, sincere thanks to all those who helped at this now traditional occasion or provided plants. We made a small amount towards funds.

### **John's Winning Chutney**

500g Beetroot  
1kg Cooking Apples  
275g Onion  
1 inch of fresh Ginger  
75g Stem Ginger  
1Tsp Salt  
350g of Sugar  
1Tsp of ground All Spice  
750mls of Vinegar

All finely chopped, then Simmer for approx one Hour.

### **Orange and Apple Chutney (2nd prize)**

4 lb cooking apples peeled & cored  
1 lb raisins  
2 oranges  
1.5 pints malt vinegar  
2 lb sugar (I use soft brown)

Chop apples finely with raisins. Wipe and squeeze oranges, remove pith from peel and chop peel finely. Cook apples, raisins and orange peel with 1 pt vinegar in covered pan until apples are soft. Dissolve sugar in rest of vinegar and add with orange juice to apple mixture. Reduce liquid by boiling with lid off pan until chutney is of required consistency. Pot and cover.  
(I use half quantities, making about 4-5 jars).

## **TAMING A WILD GARDEN – PERMACULTURE STYLE**

When we moved into our terraced house in Chichester in November 2011 we had created the house of our dreams. The garden, however, had been completely neglected since the last resident, a single lady,

had to leave for a residential home some three years previously. Since she had been elderly and frail little gardening had been done for some time before that, apart from basic clearance with help from neighbours. Moreover, it contained piles of ‘stuff’ left by the builders: old window frames and double-glazing panels, barely touched sheets of insulation, floorboards (removed when we installed underfloor heating on the ground floor), a couple of doors, a variety of odds and ends too numerous to list, an assortment of wood, much of which contained rusty nails, and – best prize of all – seven scaffold boards, hopelessly buried beneath the rest. By the time we moved in all this was covered by a very healthy looking mass of brambles.

The potential was there, though. The back dimensions were 5.5m wide x 28.5m long, orientation east/north east, with rear access, highly prized in the city centre. The front garden was quite small – not large enough to accommodate car parking, which was the fate of the larger plots on the opposite side of the road. Ownership of boundaries was questionable, with no help from the site plans, as is often the case with buildings of this type and age (1928). Almost all our boundaries consist of larch-lap panels of a variety of sizes and degrees of disrepair. Neighbours to the north claim the left boundary (facing the property from the front) so we accept responsibility for the right boundary.

Our boundaries are edged by mature shrubs and trees: a beautiful Rowan, male and female Holly, a (deep pink) Hawthorn, an original Coxes Orange apple tree, several Forsythias, two Bay trees, *Pettisporum* and much Winter and Summer Jasmine, Passion Flower, Honeysuckle and Ivy. A mystery tree was eventually identified as a *Viburnum* species – supposed to be a shrub, but this has grown to approximately 5m in height, with twin sizeable trunks. It has insignificant white flowers in spring which become small black berries, much sought after by a variety of birds; so it remains a ‘tree’, and we endure the free suckering. A narrow concrete path followed the south boundary to the rear, where there were the remains of a car port. The only other features of note were a dilapidated Alton Greenhouse with most glass broken and a shed in need of repair, but standing on a concrete base.

***Permaculture** is a design system for creating sustainable human habitats, ecologically sound, economically viable, self-sufficient (therefore do not exploit or pollute) and sustainable long-term whilst rapidly being able to regenerate degraded systems. It is based on observation of nature, wisdom contained in traditional farming and other social systems together with modern scientific knowledge.*

**Ethics of Permaculture:**

**EARTH CARE:** includes animals, plants, air, water, land, soil and geology.

**PEOPLE CARE:** ensure all people have access to the resources necessary to their existence, an ecologically and economically viable society, self-reliance, interdependence and community responsibility.

**FAIR SHARES:** limits to consumption and sharing of surpluses; reinvestment of surpluses which include money, land, labour, materials and information, caring for 'needs' not 'wants'.

We are keen believers of the Permaculture system, and although we have not found it possible to follow its tenets perfectly we do use it as a basis for the way we live. We have both completed Permaculture Design courses. Next time we will write about our first gardening year to the end of 2012.

Gina and David Scott.

## **Gardening in a Small Space**

*(It is always good to hear news from long-standing members who are not perhaps able to come to meetings. Angus and Ann Heron were at one time very active in COGS. Here, Ann describes their current gardening activities)*

This year friends of ours offered to transport 3 veg trugs from the nursery in Bognor Road to my garden as I am unable to do normal gardening now due to my long standing disability, so they thought that I would be able to get the same enjoyment out of gardening via these trugs, we have also been able to buy covers for them.

The veggie trugs are like wooden troughs with 6 legs, they are about 2 meters long and 2 foot six wide and go down to the bottom about the



same width. If you look on 'Hillier's' nursery website and put in veggie trugs you will get a picture of one.

My very patient husband who helps me tend these trugs has enabled us to grow strawberries, garlic, lettuce, beetroot, chard, spinach, cabbage, one carrot pop its head up and lots of herbs. We started the tomato plants, sprouts and purple sprouting off in pots in them as well.

In old recycling boxes we have managed to grow peas, runner beans, broad beans, French beans, potatoes and courgettes. In the little piece of ground in between we have planted out the Sprouts and purple sprouting which are coming along nicely although the butterflies love them!

These trugs have been wonderful for me as I can walk to them with my four wheeled walker and then sit at each trug in turn to plant, weed and pick, my husband does the watering for me. Also the fact that they are triangular in shape allows me to sit quite close to the trug as they descend down to a point.

We bought some lobelia in a tub from the NOISE fun day, on the Parklands Green; they have flowered all summer long and have brightened up our garden. The NOISE project happens every year: volunteers from different churches go round helping folk on the council estates in Chichester, taking rubbish to the tip and tidying up people's gardens for them. They also provide children's activities, culminating in the family fun day.

### **Ten Years Ago**

The January 2005 issue of the Newsletter started with a call for plants – mainly tomato and basil – to sell at Stansted. (This was an annual feature for COGS until a couple of years ago, when we decided to stop: the show had become very commercial, charged us a lot, and it

was getting difficult to find helpers for the three days, apart from faithful ‘regulars’).

Russell Garden Centre in Birdham won the top prize in the District Council’s Green Business of the Year; other items included Sources for Organic meat, and Tales from the Allotment, with useful comments and information, from Hilda Alderton and Christine Timblich. In this last, a nice quote on garden(er)s: ‘those who can, do; those who can’t, wax satirical...’

‘Feathered Friends love us’ introduces quotes from a scientific survey by English Nature and the RSPB. EN said: “Organic farming can make a genuine contribution to the wildlife of England’s farmland. This study confirms that consumers can be confident that by demanding and buying produce from organic farms in England they will help reverse the declining fortunes of farmed wildlife.” Jointly, the two organisations found that “nearly always organic farms had more flourishing wildlife than non-organic equivalents, with more individual wild animals and/or plants, including dwindling species like skylark.”

There was an interesting recipe for Parsnip, Leek and Ginger soup My own earliest copies go back to 2001, No. 27. Does anyone have a copy from 20 years ago? Or know when the Newsletter started?

### **Seed Swop – Get Saving Now!**

Saving Seeds is something which COGS people will probably already be doing right now, at the end of such a hot sunny summer – despite the rain later.

Tuppenny Barn have made plans for a “Get Sowing Saturday – Seed and Seedling Swop”, to be held there on **Saturday 28th March 2015**.

COGS will take part, and we might have our own stall; there will be other stalls e.g. willow work, garden bric a brac, compost information. So do start saving extra seeds to contribute. They can be kept until the day or handed in earlier – and we can if necessary co-ordinate this at a future COGS meeting. Seeds should be clearly labelled, and you can add any notes on growing etc.

We shall keep everyone informed of any developments.

**Transition Chichester** continue their film evenings at the Bassil Shippam Centre, 7.30 p.m. entry £5/£3 concessions.

**Mon Jan 5th 2015 7.30 pm**

**2020 Vision** : an uplifting film where exquisite images of the beauty of our planet bring us deep into connection with the Natural World we all depend upon and love.. Inspiring initiatives are already in place to restore ecosystems and return our Earth to health A 2020 vision for the recovery of balance to all living systems has to manifest because we CARE ..... we just need to CARE enough ....

**Mon Feb 2nd 2015 7.30 pm: Schooling the World** "An impeccable and gorgeous piece of work... It shook me awake." ~ Joanna Macy If you wanted to change an ancient culture in a generation, how would you do it? You would change the way it educates its children. Schooling the World takes a challenging, sometimes funny, ultimately deeply disturbing look at the effects of modern education on the world's last sustainable indigenous cultures.

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**INFINITY FOODS**

Next orders to Pat by Mon **16 February** please.

(cheques to be with Pat by that date)

Delivery on Tuesday **24 February** 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](mailto:pat_adams@btopenworld.com) or 01243 602713

The catalogue can be downloaded at

<http://infinityfoodswholesale.co.uk/catalogue/>

And Pat explains more about the scheme:

Infinity Foods in Brighton are a co-operative who supply natural and organic foods and eco-friendly non food items. COGS places an order with them about every three months, roughly in February, May, August and November. Any COGS member may participate and there is no minimum order value. It is not necessary to order every quarter, only when you need something. Because we order from the wholesale catalogue the quantities are larger than those you might find in their shop, but in my experience things keep well beyond their 'best before' dates!

I ask members to send me their orders by the cutoff date which is always a Monday and is published in the newsletter. I then collate them and place the order which is delivered to Susan Maguire's house in Church Norton near Selsey 8 days later. Members pick up their goods from Susan, ideally within a day or two of the delivery. We ask for payment of most of the expected cost of the order in advance either by internet transfer or cheque and any difference is paid/refunded on collection.

If you would like to order something the Infinity catalogue is available to download on-line at <http://infinityfoodswholesale.co.uk/catalogue/> or let me know if you would like to look at a hard-copy catalogue. One thing to watch out for is that non-food items and some sweets and chocolates are subject to VAT - look out for the indicator in the catalogue.

The advantages are the ability to choose from a wide range of high quality organic products, both food and non-food items which are not easily available elsewhere and tend to be quite expensive to buy in small quantities. And of course it's much more pleasant to pick up bulky or heavy things from Susan's garage and put them straight into your car than to struggle round the shops for them!

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## **COGS MEETINGS 2015**

**January 26 DVD ‘Permaculture in Practice: ecologically sound living – by design’** followed by discussion

**February 23 Martin Duncan, ‘Arundel Castle Gardens and Projects’** This garden was recently highlighted in the *Daily Telegraph* gardening section, and we shall hear behind-the-scenes details and plans

**March 30 Roger Parsons, ‘The National Collection of Sweet Peas’**

(we hope to visit both Arundel Castle gardens and Roger Parsons’ sweet pea nurseries later in the summer)

**April 27 Mark Saunders from Fittleworth, Growing Vegetables**  
A return visit from a very popular speaker; this time with all we ever needed to know about how to grow tasty and healthy vegetables.

**June 1 Plant Swop and Spring Fling (note: not in May)**  
Our spring-into-summer meeting, with lots of plants and some very tasty dishes to share; and a Quiz

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 May, outdoors June 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 £6.00 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 – David Scott (01243 778689) [d4davidscott@btinternet.com](mailto:d4davidscott@btinternet.com)

Membership Secretary – Nina Guilfoyle (01243 776063) [nina@nrlearning.co.uk](mailto:nina@nrlearning.co.uk)

#### **Organisers:**

Speaker Secretary – vacant; temporarily filled by Committee

Bookshop/Librarian - Barbara MacGregor (01243 781849)

Infinity Orders – Pat (01243 602713) [pat\\_adams@btopenworld.com](mailto:pat_adams@btopenworld.com)

Publicity - Susan Sinnett-Jones (02392 341813) [a3ssj@mac.com](mailto:a3ssj@mac.com)

Website – Tom Broughton (01243 530019) [tom@chicogs.org.uk](mailto:tom@chicogs.org.uk)

#### **Committee Members:**

Pat Alderton (01243 822615)

Nina Guilfoyle

Penelope Johnstone

Susan Sinnett-Jones

David Scott

John Bennett (01243 781289)

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