

Chichester Organic Gardening Society

Newsletter 78 September 2019

Notes from the Committee

As usual, summer seems to have flown by and we are getting ready again for our Autumn and Winter programme of talks and social events. Before we go further, there is sad news to report. Our Treasurer, David Scott, died in August after a short illness. There seems no more fitting tribute to pay to David than the simple but heart-felt one that he was thoroughly nice man. In spite of the physical problems that plagued them in recent years, he and Gina remained so positive and involved in the world around them. Our thoughts are with Gina and the family at this time, and we hope that our friendship and care will help Gina in the months to come.

The West Sussex Records Office have accepted Penelope's idea of taking in the back numbers of our newsletter, as they do not currently have any information about organic gardening in the area. She will be taking them round next week. Who knows, there may be booklet about Cogs waiting to be written in the future! Many thanks to Penelope for this initiative.

Barry Newman's talk on Growing Vegetables at our April meeting was well-attended. Barry is the former chairman of the National Vegetable Society and it would be surprising if even the most experienced organic grower among us did not learn at least one thing that they did not know before. One interesting bit of advice was that thinning out carrots in the time-honoured manner is a bad idea as it releases the scents that attract the carrot root fly. It is much better to cut off the tops of the unwanted plants and leave the root to shrivel under the ground. Barry has guidance notes on growing some common vegetables on the National Vegetable Society website – www.nvsuk.org.uk.

Attendance at this year's Plant Swop and Spring Fling in May was lower than in previous years but a convivial time was had by all. There was the usual delicious range of home-cooked food provided by our members and a challenging quiz set by Ben including a fiendishly difficult Dingbats round. The answers, of course, were obvious when they were pointed out but not before!

Our Summer Visits this year gave those who went two very different experiences of British summer weather. At **Culberry Herb Nursery** near Angmering in June a hardy handful dodged heavy showers by sheltering in polytunnels with the herbs. The Nursery's efforts to run a commercial organisation sustainably are impressive. They use pots made from rice husks, which can be broken up and composted, to grow the herbs; have just a installed a second tank to collect rainwater for watering; use a compostable toilet to compost the fruit trees; and do their best to control pests through natural means such as traps and companion planting. They have branched out into vegetable growing and deliver a small number of vegetable boxes in the Worthing area – www.culberry.com.

Our visit to **Aldingbourne Country Centre**, by contrast, took place on one of the hottest afternoons of the year, when our party enjoyed a guided tour of the new facilities, built to the highest sustainable standards, and the open farm. Among the skills-based opportunities for the young people employed there are catering and restaurant services, horticulture, and furniture restoration. The carpentry workshop uses salvaged wood to make customised items such as garden troughs and benches – certainly worth a visit if you are looking for something new and original for the house or garden or as a gift. With the new safe play facilities, farm and woodland walks the Centre offers a great family day out, as well as doing invaluable work with vulnerable young people.

Autumn and Winter Meetings 2019/20

September 30th Dr Steve Millam on Shrubs and Foliage. A return visit from this popular lecturer from Brinsbury College, who will talk about the more long-lasting parts of the garden.

October 28th AGM 2019 and Harvest Supper. Please bring a dish to share.

November 25th Kerry Jackson of RSPB on Birds in our Gardens. Kerry will illustrate her talk with photos and recordings of bird songs.

January 27th 2020 – a members' get-together and discussion evening, so bring your queries and anecdotes from the 2019 growing season to share and maybe pick up some tips. Last year members brought lots of homemade jams and chutneys to sample and this was enjoyed by all, so please bring your goodies along this time.

February 24th a talk about the Aldingbourne Centre by ones of its representatives.

March 30th Following the talk given by Nick Mole a couple of years ago, **Hannah Conway of Pesticide Action Network UK (PAN UK)** will update us about their work. PAN UK is a partner organisation of Garden Organic, and the campaign for pesticide-free towns has gathered momentum recently (see below).

April 27th a talk by **Dave Lucas ('Chainsaw Dave')** from the **Woodland Centre** on how a 300 year-old oak tree on the Little Breach allotments, which was blown down in the storms of February 2014, was transformed into the First World War memorial statue in Litten Gardens set up to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the armistice in November 2018. This carving is only one of many that the Centre has made from recycled wood, and there will undoubtedly be a chance to see pictures of many of them.

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

Other Matters

Weald and Downland Autumn Show 5th & 6th October – Cogs will be running its usual stall. There is a skeleton crew already in place but we could really do with more helpers. If you can spare some time, even if just for an hour or so, on either of the days, Penelope will be glad to hear from you. (Stephanie will be on holiday).

AGM – we are always looking for more committee members. The committee meets 3-4 times a year. It is not onerous but the more members we have, the more good ideas come up! So please consider helping out if you can. If you cannot make the AGM, just contact Stephanie with any offers of help. We also need a new Treasurer.

Out and About in the Area

Historic Decision by Chichester City Council – on 11th September Chichester City Councillors voted unanimously to support a motion put by Green Councillor, Sarah Sharp: to organise a **Tree Summit** to coordinate efforts to get more trees planted locally; to manage public spaces for improved biodiversity and to protect pollinators; to join the **Pesticide-free Towns Network**, which envisions a world in which the use of pesticides is minimised and replaced with sustainable alternatives, thus improving the environment and the health and well-being of citizens.

Your Cogs Organisers are:

Treasurer – post vacant

Membership Secretary – Stephanie Carn (01243 533393; stephcarn@gmail.com)

Website – Tom Broughton (01243 790026; tom@chicogs.org.uk)

Committee Members – Treasurer, Membership Secretary, plus:

Pat Alderton (01243 822615)

Penelope Johnstone (01243 771881)

Diana Morgan (01243 786386)

Liz Campling (01243 532910; lizcamplinguk@hotmail.com)

www.chicogs.org.uk