

Chichester Organic Gardening Society

Newsletter 84 September 2021

Notes from the Committee

A strange growing season is drawing to a close, where few things quite developed as they should. A cold dry April, followed by a grey and damp May, meant plants were off to a slow start and then tended to make too much green growth. Everything sprang to life during the hot spells in June and July, only to stall again during dreary August. Blight and slugs had a field day. In spite of that many things came through, especially soft and orchard fruits. The editor of this newsletter cannot resist boasting about her pear tree so laden that the branches are almost touching the ground. 2021 only goes to prove what we all know already that growing will never be an exact science. Just when you thought you had cracked growing courgettes or carrots or whatever, along comes nature in all its forms and proves you wrong!

In May we managed our first face to face meeting for 15 months, followed by our first summer outing since 2019. Reports are below. The Bassil Shippam Centre has been booked for our usual monthly meetings for all of 2022 and we are planning a full programme unless we are overtaken once again by events beyond our control.

26th April - a zoom presentation by Chichester's tree wardens, Jenny Cole and Paula Chatfield. We have to thank Jenny for hosting these Zoom meetings which meant we were able to keep meeting, in a way, and at least see each other during the lockdown period.

7th June – our normal Spring Fling bring and share supper was replaced by a social evening with tea and cake. There was initial confusion caused by a double-booking of the Bassil Shippam Centre, but about 15 of us managed to settle down in the room next to the kitchen at the Newell Centre and had an enjoyable evening with a quiz and plant swop. Mostly it was just wonderful to see each other face to face again.

9th & 11th August – 2 small parties visited Susan Maudsley-Maguire's Garden at her new house in Summersdale. From a pile of builders' rubble two and a half years ago, she has built a calm, small space full of fruit and vegetable plots and wildlife-friendly plants, including 2 young fig trees. The garden faces south and Susan is developing a small sitting area that she hopes will be usable all year round so that she can gain maximum enjoyment from what she has built.

Future Meetings

27th September – Presentation by **Paul Gallivan, head gardener at Woolbeding** – always a popular speaker. Some members may remember a visit to the gardens one chilly summer evening several years ago.

25th October – **AGM** at Bassil Shippam Centre. Whether it will be possible to hold our traditional harvest supper remains to be seen. Stephanie will update members. Ben promises another of his challenging quizzes.

29th November – a talk by Steve Millam on ‘Balancing your Garden’ The number of people undertaking ‘wildlife’ gardening in the interests of biodiversity has grown in recent years. However, Steve writes in the introduction to his talk, ‘gardens can be a menace to wildlife.’ Come along in November and learn more about this intriguing paradox.

Pesticides in West Sussex

In April a letter was sent on behalf of COGS to all the candidates in the West Sussex County Council elections asking for their support, if elected, in persuading the Council to phase out the routine use of chemical weedkillers especially glyphosates in the maintenance of pavements, verges and other green spaces. The response from candidates was disappointing but we did receive an assurance from the LibDems that all their candidates agreed with the initiative and would fight for it. As there are now 10 LibDem County Councillors, plus Sarah Sharp of the Green Party, there is hope that pressure can be increased on the diehards. A Freedom of Information (FOI) request that we sent, along with other Green and organic group in West Sussex, in June revealed that WSCC sprays the edges of roads, pavements and footways (although not other green spaces) with glyphosates twice a year, They experimented with replacing routine with targeted spraying in 2019 but received so many complaints from residents that they returned to the old system in 2020. This does not inspire confidence in the Council’s powers of moral leadership. Obviously much more work remains to be done.

The last Word

Members will be aware of the ‘Queen’s Canopy’ campaign to plant as many trees as possible, especially native species, in Platinum Jubilee year 2022, so this newsletter will conclude with the words of Thomas Fuller, a writer and physician, in 1732. ‘He that plants tree loves others beside himself’.

*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*

Your Cogs Organisers are:

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Committee Members – Treasurer, Secretary, Membership Secretary, plus:

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