

Newsletter

March 2

Cookham and Cookham Dean Horticultural Societ

NEXT MEETING:

Wednesday 31st March 7.30pm



SPRING SHOW

COOKHAM DEAN VILLAGE HALL

Staging 7.30pm-8.30pm

Chairman's letter

Our annual Spring Show is to be held on the last day of this month, and what a contrast to last year when we wondered if we'd be able to keep the daffodils looking good for long enough to exhibit them on the big night. This year they're barely above the ground in many places, and the weather is still very cold, particularly at night, and the ground really hasn't had time to warm up so that we can begin to think about spring planting. In my own garden it's already clear that I've lost quite a few plants, and some of the shrubs have really suffered from the strong winds we had before and just after Christmas, when we had all the snow. The consolation is that it gives one an excuse to go looking for good replacements and to perhaps try something different. I don't think I'm really ruthless enough, as if anything shows the slightest sign of life I tend to leave it to see if it'll revive enough to keep, but I should have learned by now that this always takes a long time and the end result is often not worth the wait. So this year I really am going to get busy and dig out a few 'oldies', and I shall also cut back ruthlessly when it gets a bit warmer to try and promote some stronger growth during spring and summer – that's the plan anyway!

I think also that a trip to Cornwall beckons, after Gill Townend's fascinating talk on Trevarno Estate last month. What an interesting place it sounds, and I really envy her having been able to see its development over some years, during her visits to her mother. We are so lucky to have members like Gill and Carolyn Foster who can add so much to our knowledge and enjoyment of gardening with their enthusiasm and expertise.

I do hope you will all try and come to the Spring Show, even if you don't want to put in an exhibit, we shall have a quiz going and it's always interesting to hear Les Waldren's comments on our efforts. The whole schedule of classes is included in this newsletter so there is plenty to encourage

you to show something. I look forward to a really good evening, and I'm sure we shall do well in spite of the weather.

Susie Tremlett

COOKHAM AND COOKHAM DEAN HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

Spring Show



Staging will take place from 7.30pm to 8.30pm when you can set up your exhibits. There will be a Help Desk should you have any queries and tea or coffee will be served from 8pm

A fun quiz will be held while the judging takes place and then we will find out who the winners of the Spring Show are and the reasons for their success

There are only three rules about who can enter the Cookham and Cookham Dean Horticultural Society Spring Show:

- You must grow the plants yourself
- You need to be member - you can join at the Spring Show (Membership fee: £7)
- There is a small fee of 30p per entry per person, and remember you can only have one entry in each Class.

With 15 different classes or categories to enter, the 2010 event will be judged by garden expert Les Waldren from Surrey, and a small cash prize awarded for 1st (£1), 2nd (60p) and 3rd place (40p). There are coveted silver cups for the winner of Class 1, Class 2 and for the most successful exhibitor overall.

For those of you who haven't exhibited at a Show before here are some basic guideline about what Les will be looking for:

- Flowers that are open but not blown
- Daffodils at right angle to the stem, not pointing up or drooping
- Clean leaves with no brown marks or damage. It is better to take a marked one off as carefully and inconspicuously as possible rather than leave it on
- It is better to stake and tie a plant nicely, rather than leave it floppy
- Remove any insects or bugs
- See 'Notes for exhibitors' below for more information about what to do and how best to do it

Notes for exhibitors

- *Don't forget your schedule. Work out in advance which classes you will enter. It probably helps to label your blooms before you get to the hall. Any exhibit which is slightly past its best will not score highly so pick fresh stems, preferably the day before the show depending on the weather at the time....one bad storm and the whole lot*

could be flattened on the day of the show, so if you remember, try to listen to the forecast.

- When cutting your daffodils from the garden look for flowers of a similar size, with heads at right angles to the stem, and cut more than you need. When you return to the house select the best blooms, without blemishes, tears or discolouration. Also avoid those blooms where the seed head behind the flower is starting to swell as this means it is past its best and Les will say it is 'going over'
- Place the blooms in a deep container of water and keep them in a cool, dark room (garage is ideal). I then transport them to the hall in the same tall flower bucket (minus the water) Di Benson always carries her exhibits horizontally in a lovely trug which is much more stylish! Again, take a few spare blooms in case of accidents.
- Vases are supplied. Before you start arranging make sure that there is water in your vase. It helps if you have some wet newspaper to scrunch up in the vase which will support your stems. Alternatively, take a small plastic bag of moss from the lawn or the woods. This is very flexible for arranging and looks attractive. Collect this a week or two before if you need to. (Newspaper will be supplied)
- Take a pair of secateurs to the show for final trimming of stems.
- The judge will be looking for symmetry in your exhibit so try to select your stems accordingly and 'face' them up well i.e. when you look directly at the daffodils they should be looking back at you! The blooms at the back of the arrangement should be slightly higher than those at the front.
- If exhibiting hellebores, Les Waldren will be looking for fresh blooms that are not developing their seed heads. Previous winners of the Society bulb class have often supported the foliage with thin sticks and twine if it is floppy. Again, moss around the base of the bulbs does look attractive but will not affect the result.
- I think professionals then do a lot of tweeking of the petals and cleaning of pollen, but that is for advanced exhibitors!
- Finally, don't worry about your neighbours' exhibits on the bench: just trust your own judgement and remember it is fun!

For help in sorting out your large cups from your small cups look on www.thedaffodilsociety.com GT and CF

Walks on the Wild Side at Stonor

I spotted this tucked away in the Maidenhead Advertiser and thought some of you may be interested....

"Stonor Park is offering the opportunity of guided walks, led by our Gardener, through areas of the park which have been restored after the 1990 storm, and not normally accessible to visitors.

See drifts of snowdrops, the many varieties of daffodils and narcissi, plus primroses, and later in the spring, the flowering cherries and rhododendrons.

Walks will be held on the following Thursdays, 11th and 25th March, 8 and 22 April, and 6th May starting at 10.30am. Tickets cost £12 to include coffee on arrival, the guided tour and a warming bowl of soup after the tour. Limited numbers on each tour so early booking recommended on 01491 638587 or email: administrator@stonor.com

(The snowdrop walks were in February but if anyone goes on these walks please let us know if you enjoyed the experience.)

Stonor Park, Henley on Thames, Oxon RG9 6HF www.stonor.com

GT



SPRING SHOW SCHEDULE

(Vases are provided for all classes but you can use your own container in Classes 1 and 14)

Class 1: An Arrangement of spring flowers and foliage in a container of your choice. The finished result must be no more than 18" (46cm) wide but can be any height

Daffodils

Class 2 Also known as **The Society Class** because you have to have been a member of the Horticultural Society since last autumn to enter this Class when daffodil bulbs could be purchased for planting in pots of 5 and presenting here

Class 3 **3 large cup/trumpet** daffodils in a vase

(A large cup daffodil has one flower to a stem and when you bend the top petal down it is shorter or equal in length to the cup)

Class 4 **3 double** daffodils in a vase

(A double daffodil can have one or more flowers to a stem, with doubling of the petals or the cup or both)

Class 5 **3 bi colour** daffodils in a vase

(A bi colour daffodil has a variation in the colour of the petals and/or cups)

Class 6 5 daffodils **of the same variety** in a vase

Class 7 **5 miniature** daffodils in a vase *(Flowers less than 2 inches in diameter, with short stems)*

Class 8 **3 multi head** daffodils in a vase

Other Spring Flowers

Class 9 Any pot or bowl of growing spring bulbs

- Class 10 A single primula plant in a pot (*This can be anything from a primrose to a polyanthus of any colour*)
- Class 11 Any decorative indoor pot plant (*That you have owned for a minimum of 12 months*)
- Class 12 3 stems of hellebores in a vase (*With no seed heads showing*)
- Class 13 Cut spring flowers from your garden. (*No flowering shrubs or tree blossom*)
- Class 14 1 Stem of camellia in a vase, can be of your own choice
- Class 15 Spring flowering shrubs. 5 stems with one of each variety

If you have any further queries please call Claire Phillipot on 01628 473631

Planting the Seeds of Success



A timely reminder to start planting now for the Cookham Dean Village Fete Horticultural Show on Saturday 18th September 2009. Anyone can enter and it is great fun, especially if you win one of the coveted certificates for 1st, 2nd or 3rd prize.

In the Fruit and Vegetable section, Classes are likely to include ones for the heaviest onion, a giant pumpkin, the heaviest marrow and the longest runner bean. And if you don't think big is beautiful there are another sixteen categories you can enter for everything from leeks to cherry tomatoes.

Here is a rough guide to the growing seasons to help you plan ahead.

To sow from March onwards **Onions** (*can be sown as early as Christmas Day*) **Leeks Parsnip**
Shallots Potatoes

To sow from April onwards **Carrots** **Runner Beans** (*after the last frost*)

To sow from May onwards **Tomatoes** **Marrows** **Pumpkins**

For other categories you may not have to plan ahead at all – 5 apples for example may already be growing in your garden. In the Flower Section the Classes are likely to include ones for dahlias, chrysanthemums and specimen roses.

Finally there is the Cooking and Handicraft Section where your skills as Cookham Dean's very own Domestic God or Goddess come to the fore with Classes for a plate of shortbread and a Victoria Sandwich amongst others.

If you would like more information about the Cookham Dean Village Fete Horticultural Show please contact Claire on 01628 473631 clairephillpot@btinternet.com

Look out for the **Be Plantwise** campaign which has been launched to urge gardeners to help eradicate alien plant species which are threatening Britain's native species. We all know about the threat of Japanese knotweed and Rhododendron ponticum, but additional invasive plants have been taking over waterways, sand dunes and countryside.

The National Trust is at the forefront of attempts to eradicate skunk cabbage from properties in Cumbria and Holm oak from the cliffs above Dover. Himalayan Balsam, introduced from India, is a very efficient pollinator and can grow to 2M in height, choking native species. Until recently, the Horse Pond at Corfe Castle was a refuge for the Greater Crested newt and a site of special scientific interest, but now it is covered with a matt of swamp stonecrop, a native of New Zealand. The 'Be Plantwise' campaign organized by DEFRA is particularly aimed at pond plants "Gardeners can do their bit by knowing what they grow in ponds and disposing of unwanted plants with the utmost care".

Sunday, 14th June Thames Hospicecare Cookham Dean Open Gardens. Put this date in your diary now!

Contributions to the April newsletter to Gill Townend gilltownend@aol.com 01628 483092