

www.ststephengardeningclub.co.uk

St. Stephens Gardening Club



(Formerly St. Stephens Horticultural Society)

NEWSLETTER - SPRING 2018

GARDEN STORE OPENS 3 FEBRUARY

Welcome once again to the start of a new gardening year and the spring edition of our Newsletter, together with our Programme of Events for 2018.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

WE ARE CHANGING THE WAY WE DO THINGS!

If you have given us your E-mail address you will have received an electronic version of this Newsletter. We are now extending the use of the technology:

- We will no longer automatically provide you with a membership card, but will send you an E-mail notification when your membership has been renewed together with your membership number for the year.
- Bookings for outings will be acknowledged and tickets issued via E-mail.

Should you wish to have a hard copy of the Newsletter and/or membership card, these will be available at the hut.

Please make sure that we have your current E-mail address and notify Pat Holland at: patricia.holland50@gmail.com of any changes.

If you do not have E-mail or have chosen not to receive E-mails from us then you will continue to receive this information in the usual way.

We are making these changes as it is becoming increasingly time consuming and expensive to deliver these communications by hand/post.

Last year our outings were again well supported. In addition to our usual outings we are offering our members the opportunity to go on a five day break to Norfolk for which we are now taking bookings. Details of this year's outings and booking forms are included in this Newsletter.

MEMBERSHIP FEES

Membership fees for 2018 are now due, £3, payable at the hut when it re-opens. Alternatively you can pay by standing order, which would help us enormously. Standing Order forms can be obtained from Martyn Dadswell 01727 872127 or at the hut.

GARDEN STORE NEWS

Traditionally we have sold fertilizer etc. in both 3Kg and 6Kg bags. Sales of 6Kg bags have declined significantly so we will no longer offer them as a standard option (they will still be available on request). Instead, in addition to the 3Kg bags we will be offering 1Kg bags for those members who have a need for smaller quantities - prices will be posted in the hut.

We had planned to stock peat free compost but unfortunately our supplier has been unable to source the product we requested. (Believe it or not but there is no shortage of compost, but the manufacturer is unable to get the bags to put it in.)

SEED POTATOES

Seed potatoes will be available as from 3rd February. **All are certified, high quality, Scottish seed potatoes, free from blackleg, blight and virus diseases.** This year we are offering the following varieties:-

MARIS BARD - **First early.** Good flavoured early scraper. Firm, white oval tuber. High yielding. Plant late March, harvest end of June.

SWIFT - **First early.** Very early. Good in pots, short stems. Good disease resistance, Plant late March, harvest June.

KESTREL - **Second early.** Blue eyes. Good disease resistance, slug resistant. Roasts and fries well. Does well on the show bench. Plant early April, harvest July/Aug.

CARA- **Maincrop.** Massive yields. Good keeper with large uniform tubers. Stunning red eyes. Blight tolerant. Sow early April, harvest July/August.

CHARLOTTE - **Salad/Second early.** This French bred, highly popular potato is the salad variety of choice. The smooth skinned tubers have a light yellow flesh which has wonderful flavour and delightful waxy texture. Sow late March, harvest June - Sept.

PRICE - All varieties - £1 per Kg.

These prices represent outstanding value at an unbeatable price.

We do not supply quantities of less than 1kg but in response to members requests we are happy to provide a 1kg mixed bag (£1.20) to customer requirements.

Each Kg will contain approx 12 - 16 tubers (depending on variety).

Plant 10cms/4ins deep; 30cms/12ins to 38cms/15ins apart; 50cms/18ins between rows except for Cara, 68cms/27ins between rows.

Onion sets and shallots are also in stock.

Shallots - £1.10 per 250g, £2.00 per 500g

Onion sets - 80p per 250g, £1.50 per 500g

PLASTIC REDUCTION - We would like to reduce our use of plastic bags at the hut. When you are buying fertilisers etc it would be great if you could bring your own container/bag bucket etc. As the saying goes - every little helps.

HELP NEEDED - We are very short of helpers at the hut on a Saturday afternoon, between 2.00pm and 4.00pm. We will be so grateful if anyone is able to help for just one or two afternoons between February and October.

If anyone can help please speak to any member of the committee.

Thank you.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The meeting was preceded by an enjoyable and colourful talk on Butterflies.

The Chairman welcomed all members present and told the meeting on the whole it had been a successful year with membership remaining roughly unchanged. Hut sales were maintained, although potatoes were difficult to shift. Repairs to the external fabric of the hut and pending a roof inspection we hope to have no major repairs in the near future.

The Annual Show was, once again, a success with a number of first time winners. A very big thank you to Ginder & sons for their continued sponsorship of the show. The chairman continues to represent the Club on the Parish in Bloom initiatives and we once again sponsored the Inter Schools Competition, which was won by Park Street school. The Open Gardens Proved to be a most successful event raising £312 for Keech Cottage Hospice. There were three, well attended, excellent talks during the year and outings to Hyde Hall, Audley End and Kew Gardens.

In July our "Gardens of Yorkshire" 5 day tour was thoroughly enjoyable and this year we will be going to Norfolk.

Help is always needed at the hut and we will also need helpers on our stall at the Parish Fete on Sunday 20 May.

REMEMBER - MORE HANDS MAKE LIGHT WORK.

Thanks to the committee for their hard work and support, volunteers on the rota and other helpers during the year plus thanks to the Parish Council for their help and support. Graham thanked all our members for giving their support in various ways.

The Treasurer presented the financial report and the audited accounts were unanimously approved by a show of hands.

All Officers and existing committee members were re-elected (see end of Newsletter for details).

A written motion had been received proposing that the annual subscription of £3 be raised immediately to £5. After some discussion the motion was defeated by a show of hands. It was agreed that although the membership subscription is low, the club finances were in a healthy state and should we need additional income there were other alternatives that should be considered.

There being no other business the raffle was drawn and the meeting closed

CHOOSING THE RIGHT FERTILISER

It's all too easy to feed plants at the wrong time with the wrong fertiliser. So let's explain the principle of what we are up to, then it should make sense.

Feeding plants is like spinning plates. It takes a big burst of energy to get things started, then they just need to be kept going. In plant terms that means nitrogen (or N as it appears on packets) in spring to get things growing - it produces fast leaf and stem growth, which is what plants naturally do in spring.

After that it needs energy of a more gradual kind to keep things going, that is the other two substances you'll see on a packet, phosphorous (P) and potassium (K), also known as potash. This is called the NPK ratio and gives you the complete picture of what that fertiliser offers. Potash especially encourages fruiting and firm ripe growth - that's what you might want to increase for your summer feeding. But here's the important thing. During summer growth is now slowing so it is important not to keep piling on the nitrogen because you don't want to encourage fast, soft growth that will be destroyed by the first early frost. So in late summer stick to a high potash fertiliser containing only modest amounts of nitrogen and phosphorous. High nitrogen fertilisers such as sulphate of ammonia which are great for leafy spring vegetables are the wrong thing now.

So what kinds of fertiliser are good for summer and how do you apply them. A general rule for summer feeding, a nitrogen level less than 14 is good as is a potassium level between 10 and 16. Bonemeal, for instance contains no potassium, very little nitrogen but lots of phosphorous, so keep it for winter. Phosphorous produces lots of root growth. Growmore has a 7-7-7 NPK and takes some beating for summer feeding.

Pelleted or granular fertiliser scattered on the soil and scratched in are suitable for tired shrubs or shrubs cut hard back in winter and need a long season of vigorous growth.

Liquid feeds watered onto the roots are produced by diluting a concentrate. They are designed to have a quick effect and need to be re-applied every couple of weeks. They are effective for container plants as well as bedding plants. Generous liquid feeding is good for hungry flowering climbers such as clematis, which enjoy the water as much as the food. At greater dilution liquid feeds can be used as a foliar feed watered onto the leaves for the fastest effect of all.

Don't forget that fertiliser put into compost lasts only a couple of months and plants can starve surprisingly quickly and remember too much fertiliser can be nearly as bad as too little.

General Purpose

Growmore NPK 7-7-7

Fish, blood & bone 5-5-6.5

High Potash

Sulphate of potash 0-0-48

Flower & veg fertiliser 5-7.5-10

High Nitrogen

Sulphate of ammonia 21-0-0

Dried blood 13-0-0

High Phosphorous

Superphosphate 0-17.5-0

Bonemeal 3.5-20-0

Liquid fertiliser

Maxicrop 5-2-5

Maxicrop tomato 5-5-7

All the above are available at the hut.

40% DISCOUNT ON SEEDS

Order your seeds through the Garden Club and enjoy a massive **40% discount** on the catalogue price of Thompson & Morgan seeds.

Seed catalogues and order forms are available **NOW** from the hut.

We will be taking orders right through Spring. Hand your order in at the hut or give it to Percy Brazier, 01727 868541.

Please send cash with order and remember - **No order is too small**

TEA & TALK - TUESDAY 20 MARCH

What Do I Do With This Space? - Darren Leggio

2.30pm, Parish Centre, Bricket Wood

- This is one of the most important questions you can ask when looking at your garden.
- This talk attempts to find the answer.

The talk is enormous fun and provides eye-opening inspiration for those who hear it. Suitable for gardeners of all abilities.

“Seriously good fun” - SE Essex Organic Gardeners

“ He was so enthusiastic, full of refreshing new ideas” - Hartest Garden Club.

About our speaker - Has had radio scripts commissioned and spent time as a stand-up comedian. He has appeared alongside Jo Swift at the National Flower Show and again with Jo and Mary Berry at the Blenheim Palace Flower Show. Has also appeared with Alan Titchmarsh. We can look forward to a very entertaining afternoon. Not one to be missed.

AND THERE'S CAKE.

GARDENS OF NORFOLK GARDEN TOUR

25 to 29 JUNE

Following yet another very successful tour to Yorkshire last year we are, this year, visiting the Gardens of Norfolk from the 25th to 29th June at a cost of £425 per person (based on two people sharing a double/twin room).

The cost includes:

- 4 nights bed, breakfast and evening meal in a three star Best Western hotel.
- All coach travel.
- Entry to Sandringham House & Estate, Priory Gardens (Sheringham), East Ruston Old Vicarage Gardens, Peter Beale's Roses and Bressingham Gardens.
- A day in Norwich, sightseeing/shopping.
- A visit to Ely en -route.
- Coach driver gratuity.

Having given the first opportunity to last year's participants, all of whom have booked for this year's tour, there are only a limited number of places remaining. Please note - all single rooms have been booked.

A non-returnable deposit of £50 per person will be required.

If anyone is interested please contact Graham Wilson 01727 872718.

VISIT - WINDSOR CASTLE & SAVILL GARDENS
WEDNESDAY 9 MAY

Enjoy 35 acres of stunning gardens at their seasonal best with rhododendrons, azaleas and magnolias. Take lunch in the Savill Garden Kitchen before moving on to Windsor Castle, where you will tour the State Apartments, St George's chapel etc. For mobility access details visit: www.royalcollection.org.uk/visit/windsor-castle/mobility-access#/

The cost of the trip is £35 for members, £38 for non-members, which includes coach, driver tip and entry to castle & gardens.

The coach will leave Bricket Wood Social Club at 8.30am, with pick-up points at How Wood shops (8.35am) and Chiswell Green (8.45am), bus stop opposite Three Hammers).

Please detach the form below and return it with a non-returnable deposit of £5 per person or payment in full. FINAL PAYMENT REQUIRED BY 27 APRIL.

WINDSOR CASTLE & SAVILL GARDEN - BOOKING FORM

Cheques to be made payable to St Stephens Gardening Club and sent to
Graham Wilson 51 Mayflower Road, Park Street, St Albans, AL2 2QN or
Martyn Dadswell 59 Orchard Drive, Park Street, St Albans, AL2 2QQ, or hand in at the Trading Hut.

Member Name & No (please print).....

First line of address.....

I will be accompanied by.....

Pick-up point

(Please state Bricket Wood, How Wood or Chiswell Green)

Contact telephone number

VISIT TO ARUNDEL CASTLE & GARDENS
WEDNESDAY 18 JULY

Arundel is one of the finest country houses in England overlooking some of the most beautiful downland scenery. Tour the finely preserved interior. Stroll through the different themed gardens, the rose garden, white garden, cut flower garden, kitchen garden and the stunning herbaceous border. A visit not to be missed

Most areas have disabled access. For more mobility access details visit:

www.arundelcastle.org/plan-a-visit/disabled-access.html

The cost of the trip is £32 to Gardening Club members and £35 for non-members, which includes coach, entry and driver's tip.

The coach will leave Bricket Wood Social Club at 8.30am, with pick-up points at How Wood shops (8.35am) and Chiswell Green (8.45am), bus stop opposite Three Hammers).

Please detach the form below and return it with a non-returnable deposit of £5 per person or payment in full. FINAL PAYMENT REQUIRED BY 6 JULY.

ARUNDEL CASTLE - BOOKING FORM

Cheques to be made payable to St Stephens Gardening Club and sent to
Graham Wilson 51 Mayflower Road, Park Street, St Albans, AL2 2QN or
Martyn Dadswell 59 Orchard Drive, Park Street, St Albans, AL2 2QQ, or hand in at the Trading Hut.

Member Name & No (please print).....

First line of address.....

I will be accompanied by.....

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Pick-up point
(Please state Bricket Wood, How Wood or Chiswell Green)

Contact telephone number

VISIT - RHS WISLEY FLOWER SHOW
TUESDAY 4 SEPTEMBER

This is the flagship garden of the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS), which captures the imagination with richly planted borders, rose gardens, rock gardens, model gardens, trial fields etc. Our visit coincides with the RHS Annual Flower Show. There will be Plant Nurseries and Trade stands, the National Dahlia Soc Annual Show(100+ exhibits), floral displays and much more, including access to the RHS gardens.

The cost of the trip is £15 for members, £18 for non-members, which includes coach, entry (inc flower show) and driver's tip.

The coach will leave Bricket Wood Social Club at 9.00am, with pick-up points at How Wood shops (9.05am) and Chiswell Green (9.15am, bus stop opposite Three Hammers).

Please detach the form below and return it with a non-returnable deposit of £5 per person or payment in full. FINAL PAYMENT REQUIRED BY 24 AUGUST.

RHS WISLEY GARDEN SHOW- BOOKING FORM

Cheques to be made payable to St Stephens Gardening Club and sent to
Graham Wilson 51 Mayflower Road, Park Street, St Albans, AL2 2QN or
Martyn Dadswell 59 Orchard Drive, Park Street, St Albans, AL2 2QQ, or hand in at the Trading Hut.

Member Name & No (please print).....

First line of address.....

I will be accompanied by.....

Pick-up point
(Please state Bricket Wood, How Wood or Chiswell Green)

Contact telephone number

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairman Graham Wilson, 51 Mayflower Road, Park Street 01727 872718
Secretary Pat Holland, 8 Wych Elms, Park Street, 01727 568057
Treasurer Martyn Dadswell, 59 Orchard Drive, Park Street, 01727 872127
Committee Colin Leach, 31 Newlyn Close, Bricket Wood, 01923 673019
Andrew Keates, 38 Maplefield, Park Street, 01727 872708
Elizabeth Upton, 51 Mount Drive, Park Street, 01727 872150
Derrick Davis, 10 Wych Elms, Park Street, 01727 873657
Dennis Wilson, 3 Ash Copse, Bricket Wood, 01923 672325
Bill Whitehead, 19 Spooners Drive, Park Street, 01727 873309
Pat Solomons, 12 Woodside Road, Bricket Wood, 01923 671277
Percy/Val Brazier, 9 Glevum Close, St Albans, 01727 86854