



BENFLEET HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2019

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www.benfleethorticulturalsociety.org.uk

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DELIVERY

We are only too pleased to deliver to members in the Benfleet area free of charge if they do not have a car. Owing to the increase in petrol prices we have decided we must make a charge to other members. Locally will be £1. Greater distances will be 30p per mile.



NEWS UPDATES

If you have an email address and have not received our news updates, please let us have your email address. You can either bring it to the stores, or send it to Terry Babbage at terrybabbage@gmail.com or register it as shown on the home page of the website.

From the chairman

REPORT FOR 2018

Another year, another report! A very happy gardening 2019 to you all, We have a very successful society, happy, friendly and a lot happening. Thank you for being a member of the best value horticultural society in the area. With a membership of nearly 600 thank you to all our volunteer helpers in the stores, selling, stocking, unloading and collecting stock; to all of you who help at running our 3 shows; all who attend the quiz evenings and the afternoon club events; and all who go on our outings. Thanks also go to Colin and Janet Andrews who steward our three shows each year which gives the committee time to attend to all the needs of the day. They also give many hours to compiling our year book so that it is ready to go to the printers.

The Stores

The centre of our society, some of you visit us every week for a chat, bird food, plants and accessories. Peter, as most of you know, has had an unpleasant year healthwise. We wish him well and pray for his health. Laurence has implemented our system to take credit card with a reader, so no need for cash. Thank you Laurence - Bob and I are pleased we have young talent and help on the committee with Laurence and Austin. We have a new kitchen and a toilet and plans to improve the front desk / till point.

Shows

Three shows; the Spring Show was good but the weather gave us a very wet time early in the year. Daffodils were late coming out but we had good entries. Then a hot summer which affected growth and show entries were well down for the Autumn show. Runner beans always a faithful veg was for most, poor. But we were pleased we filled the hall in the end with

good exhibits.

Thank you Hazel for organising our trips to Wisley, Mount Ephraim, Sussex Prairie Gardens. All were well supported.

Quiz Night

Always a success. Thanks to our Quiz Master Simon - a sell out on all three evenings and Jenny and her team.

Club Events

Five afternoons-well attended and free of charge. Our talks were:-

February - 'What Do I Do With Space' by Darren Lerigo

April - 'International Flowers' by Nick Dobson

July - 'Springtime in Japan' by Maz Morgan

September-'Right Place, Right Plant' by Alison Marsden

October - 'Growing Sweet Peas' by John Hewson

Join our regular members for these events.

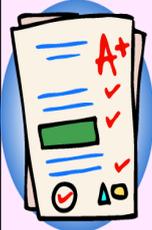
Newsletter/Email

As you know we only send out one hard copy of our newsletter now. All the others are sent by email. Thank you to Laurence for producing those.

I look forward to seeing you all at our various events and have a good gardening year.



CLUB EVENTS FOR 2019



22nd MARCH Quiz Night

For a great time with our quizmaster

Simon Foxen

held at St Mary's Church Hall,
376 High Road, Benfleet SS7 5HL at 8 pm
Don't forget - Book tables early



**BENFLEET
HORTICULTURAL
SOCIETY**

SPRING SHOW

Richmond Hall,
Benfleet, SS7 5HA

**Saturday
6th April**

*All members welcome
to exhibit Fruit,
Vegetables, Crafts,
Cakes & Flowers*

*Please help the Show Secretary and have
all your entries with us by Thursday, April
4th midday. As you probably know, this
can be done on our website.*

FREE - NO CHARGE CLUB EVENT 2019

Refreshments will be provided

Mon FEB 11th

GRANT MATON FROM ESSEX WILDLIFE TRUST

Grant has lived in Rayleigh since 1987 and has been interested in wildlife and its conservation. He joined Essex Wildlife Trust in 1984 and started to work for them in 2006. Grant is communications Officer. Essex Wildlife Trust is the County's leading conservation charity with more than 35000 members, manages 8400 acres of land on 87 nature reserves, 2 nature parks and runs 11 visitor centres.

Mon APRIL 8th

KEITH LOVELL "HISTORY THROUGH FAMOUS PEOPLE OF ESSEX"

Paul is well known for talking on many topics related to Essex, he visited us in 2015

Mon JULY 1st

BRIAN CARLINE "ORGANIC VEGETABLE GROWING"

Brian was last with us in 2017, he is a retired teacher and has a wide number of topics related to gardening

Mon SEPTEMBER 2nd

DARREN LERIGO "A VERY BRITISH GARDEN"

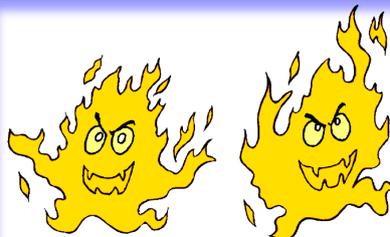
Darren gave us a very interesting talk last year on what to do with space, he also gave us some free seeds. did you have any luck with yours? Darren is very knowledgeable on gardens and plants from around the world.

Mon OCT 28th

NICK DOBSON "TULIPS A TERRIBLE TRIUMPHANT HISTORY"

Nick spoke to us last year on International Flowers a talk on Tulips just right before planting time for Spring 2020

St Mary's Church Hall, 376 High Road,
Benfleet, SS7 5HL
at 2 p.m.



UTILITY BILLS

Although not horticultural related the following is a benefit to members and the society.

This company won the best ever offer from Dragons Den TV programme and I have successfully used them.

When your current contract for Gas and Electricity runs out they will automatically find you the best deal available and if you agree they make all the arrangements. On the first time you use them they will pay you £20 and the society will also benefit if you use this link to contact them

<https://lookaftermybills.com/?source=marketing&referral=RJFRI142904>

You will be sent a signing up page where you enter your details. You won't need a code if you use the above link in your computer.

They do all the work and make the changeover simple.



NEWS FROM THE STORE

Has a year ever passed so quickly. The weather made it a difficult one for gardeners. But I am sure Brexit was the cause for our fall in-takings.

It is interesting, well I think it is, that during the non-existent spring the national gardening trade was down by over 15%. Ours was an alarming 25%. BUT what is unusual is despite the heatwave of a summer we finished the year only 10% down. I know that the improvement is due to all the hard work the committee and others put in to make our shop something for which the society should be proud. It is the heart of the society. It provides the funds that ensure we continue to survive while others do not. It provides a meeting place for like-minded gardeners to discuss the vagaries of the weather and the success or failure of various crops. The other important subject discussed was of course Brexit I now know that backstop is not a cricket fielding position and a hard border is not sun-baked clay at the edge of an allotment.

Despite the bad spring we managed to sell most of our seed potatoes. But again for next year I have reduced the number of bags ordered. So all members need to come to the shop on opening day in 2019 to avoid disappointment.

Seeds sold well, I wonder if, or hopefully when, we will return to the days of growing annual plants from seed in colourful borders.

Wild bird feed continues to be a great introduction to our stock. I have noticed that members usually leave the shop with some other purchase with their bird feed. And that leads me on to why I think we picked up our trade through a difficult year, the all-round presentation in the shop encourages members to peruse and buy. From the permanently stocked shelves of weighed goods the methodically arranged pest destroyers feeds and other sundries encourages customers to buy. Thanks for that Peter and Doreen it is appreciated what you silently do in the shop.

We purchased various shrubs, grasses etc from a business that was closing down. These sold very well and helped to display a greater variety at the front of the shop.

The much-needed rewiring of the Stores and the installation of a toilet was carried out during our closed month of January and both are very much appreciated. We can now boil a kettle without having to turn the heater off. The wonders of the 21st century.

The area immediately at the back of the stores was concreted over mainly to prevent the build-up of water, but also the drop was a safety hazard.

Thanks Hazel for all your trips to buy plants and wild bird food. Also thanks Hazel for taking on the onerous task of organising the staff rota for manning the shop. Actually manning is not politically correct.

I want to thank all the helpers who through all weathers unload the composts etc.

Thanks Dan, Mick, Peter, John, Peter & Chris.

However next year we desperately need more volunteers for this task. I will not be available for the first 3 months and the team are getting older, so please contact me so I can put you on the list. It is not a commitment I will ring and say when a delivery is coming in it is no problem if you have to say no.

Do we have a member who would like to do a paid job of painting the inside of the shop. This can be done gradually as time permits. If anyone is interested please contact me.

The shop would not be successful without all who serve in there.

Thanks Alice, Lyn, Kathy, Laurence, Austin, Peter, Doreen, Neville, Hazel, Terry & June.

It was sad that Bernadette had to stop helping this year and we hope your back is improving now.

I hope I have not left any helpers out but if I have *Thank You*.

Happy New Year for 2019 to all our members without you we would not have this successful society.

Bob



• Outings 2019

PLEASE RESERVE YOUR SEAT FOR ANY OF THE OUTINGS AT THE STORE WITH A £5 (non returnable) DEPOSIT.

Little Bentley Gardens And Waterways

Sunday 2nd June 2019

£20 per person

Main features apart from the gardens and waterways will be children's gardens competition, art show by local artists, brass bands and over 80 trade stalls

Chenies Manor Plant Fair

Sunday 14th July 2019

£20 per person

Wisley Plant Show

Sunday 8th Sept 2019

£13 per person



IN THE GARDEN

The new gardening year begins - the autumn/winter digging complete (I wish!) At the time of writing a cold winter was forecast, so protection of plants is important. Wrap vulnerable plants in fleece to offer some cover. Also the ground can be warmed by covering with fleece or placing cloches where early sowings and planting will be made.

JANUARY:

Flower garden: Prune Wisterias now cutting back summer side shoots to 2 - 3 buds. For early Roses prune now whilst dormant, cut back to just above a bud and remove crossing or dead branches. Cut back the old foliage from ornamental grasses before growth begins. Cut down old stems of perennial plants like Sedum, be careful of new growth. Remove old Hellebore leaves also faded flowers from winter Pansies.

Vegetable garden: For early Peas, put the cloche in place now for a few weeks to warm up the soil. Prune Blackcurrant and Gooseberry bushes to

maintain a productive framework. Try forcing Rhubarb by placing an upturned bucket or bin over the crown - tender pink stems will be available in 8 weeks' time. From the armchair, plan the vegetable plot by browsing the seed catalogues, but of course, wait to buy all your seeds at a discount from your Store opening in February.

FEBRUARY:

Flower garden: Towards the end of the month, prune summer flowering Clematis. Prune overwintered Fuchsias back to one or two buds on each shoot. Lift and divide Snowdrops still in the green if you want to create more plants. Plant bare root Roses, providing there are no frosts.

Vegetable garden: Start chitting the seed Potatoes you have purchased from the Store at bargain prices - I think it is the 6th year at the same price! Start sowing Leek and Onion seed now under cover with heat. Prepare vegetable beds by removing all weeds and forking in plenty of manure. If they need shaping, now is the time to prune Apple and Pear trees. Leave Plum, Cherry and Apricots till summer to avoid silver leaf disease. To give them

a good start, I sow some Onion and Shallot sets in a seed tray, transplanting them when the weather warms up.

MARCH:

Flower garden: If the soil is workable, dig in compost or well rotted manure into your beds. You can also work in pelleted chicken manure or fish, blood and bone - both available in the Store. Plant summer flowering bulbs, Gladiolus, Lillies, etc. Feed your Roses and treat with a fungicide to prevent blackspot. Sow your annual flower seeds - they can be very rewarding as you watch them grow into full bloom.

Vegetable garden: Sow early Broad Beans in a seed tray for transplanting later. Cover seed beds after preparation with black plastic to keep it drier and warmer. Towards the end of the month, plant your seed Potatoes if the ground is suitable. Plant out Onion sets and Shallots and transplant those grown in seed trays. Again, only if the ground is suitable, sow Carrots, Radishes and Lettuce under cloches. Mulch Rhubarb with a thick layer of compost or well rotted manure to keep it healthy and reduce moisture loss, but take care not to cover the crown. In the greenhouse, seed sowing can begin, winter Brassicas, Tomatoes, Lettuce and annual bedding. Keep a diary of what you sowed when and when harvested. This helps so you can ensure your best vegetables are ready for our Shows. Bob

If you are unable to get to the store to renew your membership for 2019, then complete the form and post to Bob

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM FOR 2019

Name.....

Address.....

Post Code..... Tel:.....

e-Mail.....

Send this form with a cheque for £2.50 made payable to "Benfleet Horticultural Society" to:-

Mr R Frith, 57 Cumberland Avenue, Benfleet, Essex. SS7 5NU

If you require a year book, please enclose a C5 stamped addressed envelope with a 2nd class stamp on it, or bring your new membership card into the store and collect your copy.

Benfleet Horticultural Society works hard to keep your personal data secure. As a membership organisation we do not and will not share your data with any other organisation or individual who is not a member of our Committee.

PLEASE SIGN HERE to agree to the society contacting you, i.e. sending newsletters etc.

Signed.....