



The Village GARDEN CLUB

of Sevenhampton & District



(See Factfile below)

NOV / DEC 2016

NEXT MEETINGS

Thursday 17th November — ‘Heritage Vegetables’: Chris Smith

No December meeting — so here’s wishing you all a very Happy Christmas and New Year!

Changing Times, Changing Gardens

There is a moment in time when one has to re-consider the best way to utilise different areas of the garden. I have always grown vegetables, but this year found that the early part of the year was not exactly ‘Garden Friendly’. The broad beans that were planted, even though they were the dwarf variety, were very slow and the peas remained permanently dormant - or were they inside a hungry creature? Normally I have good success with shallots but even these remained stubbornly button sized. In contrast, however, the early flowers were lovely with daffodils, primroses and hellebores lasting for a long time due to the cooler spring weather.



Although very rewarding, vegetable growing tends to be very labour intensive. With this in mind, a couple of years ago I had turf put down on half of my vegetable patch and also planted a few fruit trees. I’m still able to grow favourite crops (weather permitting) but this solution was so much easier for me to manage. In addition, following this year’s early disasters, I decided to have a small pond made replacing part of the area previously used for growing vegetables and which I hope will encourage wildlife. Now all I have left to maintain in my ‘kitchen garden’ is a small vegetable patch and an area used for growing herbs.

I don’t want to give the impression that I now dislike gardening, I enjoy it, but I just want to make things a little easier. More shrubs, less perennials; more ground cover, less weeds; more lawn, less vegetables. And a result of these changes? - more time to sit and enjoy the garden and less back ache!



FACTFILE: *Colchicum autumnale*, commonly known as **autumn crocus**, **meadow saffron** or **naked lady**, is an autumn flower resembling the crocus but is a member of the Colchicaceae plant family, unlike the true crocuses which belong to the Iridaceae family. They are poisonous due to their colchicine content, although they have been used in some medications — particularly to treat gout. Due to their toxicity they should only be handled using gloves, which includes the corms when being planted.

EXTRA, EXTRA, EXTRA—READ ALL ABOUT IT!



RHS MALVERN
SPRING FESTIVAL



Committee members are organising an extra trip next year to visit the RHS Spring Festival at Malvern on **Friday 12th May**. If coach travel is used, the transport costs will be £14 - £17.25 each (depending on numbers). Entry price is not yet available, but based on last year, group tickets will cost £18.50 per person.

For those who haven't yet visited, this is a super show which is well worth visiting, so do come along!

To register your interest, or for further information, please contact either

Carol Cann (Tel:820649/email:carol@cann1.eclipse.co.uk) or

Joanna Rolfe (Tel:820340/email: joannaforrest@aol.com)

(N.B. Places are limited, so tickets will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.)

Autumn colours



The chlorophylls in leaves turn to yellows and browns in the Autumn but the red colouring, seen so spectacularly recently, is down to anthocyanins, which are made afresh by plants as Autumn takes hold. These chemicals are common in many plants, for example

beetroot, red apples and purple grapes, and not just in the leaves of shrubs and trees. Why trees use energy turning red with Winter approaching is widely debated. Some suggest that the chemicals act as antioxidants, or that they might increase leaf temperature, helping to protect the plant from the cold. Others suggest that the colour helps to attract birds which will disperse its fruits and seeds. As is always the case with living things, we do not know for sure, but whatever the reason we are all pleased with the resulting autumnal colour!

For further info and some plants offering Autumn colour for the garden CTRL + click on: www.rhs.org.uk/advice

It's not just leaves that offer super autumnal colours though, there's a host of plants with **colourful berries** such as cotoneaster, spindle, rosa, callicarpa, pyracanthus, crab apples, gaultheria and many of the berberidaceae family including berberis & mahonia.

Dahlias



Baddesley Clinton, a National Trust property in Warwickshire, is well known for its

dahlia beds. Every October the tubers are lifted and sold to the public, with the NT choosing to restock these spectacular borders in the following year.

In milder climates, dahlia tubers can over Winter in the ground:

When plants blacken and die back with the first frosts, cut plants down and cover with a deep mulch (3-6 ins) to protect from frost.

In colder areas or on **heavy soils**, it is better to lift the tubers each year:

After first frost cut stems to 6-8ins and lift tubers. Clean off soil & trim any fine roots. Place upside down to dry off. Once dry, place (right way up) in dry sand or peat free potting compost, covering all of the tuber except the crown. Store in a dry, cool, frost-free place.

Having shed their leaves fruit trees are now dormant, so (with the exception of cherries & plums) now is a good time to prune them before cold winter weather sets in. When pruning fruit trees remember to make cuts clean and at an angle with the face of the wound sloping downwards. It's also the best time to plant bare-root fruit trees, fruit bushes (eg blackcurrants) & other bare-root plants such as roses. When doing so add a generous amount of compost or manure to the planting hole. Also the addition of mycorrhizal fungi, available from garden centres, will encourage secondary root growth and provide the plants with minerals and nutrients. (See accompanying leaflet). *Editor's Note: This really is well worth using. A struggling camellia of mine regained dark green leaves which had been a sickly yellow colour and literally started to blossom once I added the fungi to its soil.*

Some jobs to do in the following months.....

- Lawns:** Scarify & aerate, redefine damaged edges
- Leaves:** Continue to clear, especially from ponds & lawns
- Climbing/rambling Roses:** Prune to prevent wind-rock
- Water:** Insulate outdoor water supplies & protect ponds/pumps etc.
- Tools:** Clean, lubricate and service garden tools
- Dig:** Vegetable plots & borders, use boards to avoid compacting soil



With Christmas coming you may think of buying something 'garden related' as gifts. If so, **don't forget to use your Club Discounts**. A choice of six garden centres are listed on the back of membership cards offering up to 10% off.

* Have you anything of interest that can be included in the next newsletter? If so please contact Di Cook (editor) at *
* ditex.cook@btinternet.com or Tel: 01242 821018 *
