



The Village GARDEN CLUB of Sevenhampton & District



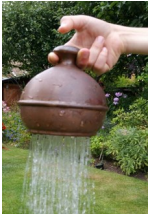
SEP/OCT 2016

NEXT MEETINGS

Friday 16th September — 'Autumn Containers' : Paul Williams (Please note altered date)
Wednesday 19th October — 'Bulbs for the Unusual' : Ross Barbour

FANCY WATERING

Water is essential for a garden and carrying it has always required ingenuity. The earliest water carriers were made from animal skin and leather. Greeks and Romans used vessels made of terracotta or clay. Later, in the 16th century, earthenware pottery was introduced. The thumb pot was the first watering pot



Thumb Pot

as we know it. The name 'watering can' dates from the mid 18th century and by then gardeners were using portable cans. It's known that the French were making copper cans and the Dutch manufacturing brass cans at this time.

By the early 19th century gardeners began using zinc and tin coated items.

1886 saw John Haws of Clapton in London patent his first watering can; his company also manufactured other watering devices such as water carts and sprayers. Today the company still produces traditional Victorian and Edwardian designs, as well as familiar plastic versions.



It is easy to date watering cans by their shape, spout and handle design as well as the materials used. Early 19th century cans had wire struts to support the pouring spout but by the 20th century few cans were made with these supports.

The 'Pluviette Lawn Sprinkler' was patented in Great Britain in 1912 & 1914 in the USA. Fed by a hose, water is sprayed through a perforated wheel, causing the wheel to rotate and spread the water droplets. The name *pluviette* is taken from the French word for a rain shower or *light rain*.



A Pluviette Sprinkler



V. bonariensis

Following on from the watering theme, the wet start to the year should be mentioned - but gosh, didn't it make things grow! Foxgloves towering, and easily 6 feet tall. *Verbena bonariensis* (Argentinian vervain), which went through the winter, reached at least 5ft, has a large spread and has produced many seedlings over a large area. Dahlias have grown taller and into much larger plants than ever before.

The downside to all this lush growth, however, is rust disease, which seems to have affected many plants, especially some of the fuchsias whose flower life seems limited.

(Note : *Rust is caused by a number of different fungal spores which are encouraged by damp conditions. Characterised by orange/brown blotches, streaks or pustules on leaves it can sometimes be controlled by removing affected foliage. Some rusts are very resilient so **do not compost this damaged material**. Whilst encouraging strong plant growth is favourable, if your garden suffers from rust avoid using nitrogen based fertilisers as they promote soft, fleshy growth which will be vulnerable to the rust.*)



If you have a conservatory (or any light airy room) then an ideal plant to grow is a lemon. It is attractive throughout the year holding flowers, immature fruits and ripe lemons simultaneously. Although the flowers are small they have the most delightful scent. How many of us remember the song lines:

*"Lemon tree very pretty and the lemon flower is sweet
But the fruit of the poor lemon is impossible to eat."*

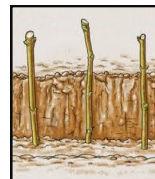
This may be so but such home grown fruit is a welcome addition to a G&T, which similarly can be enjoyed throughout the year!

Top tips for growing lemons:

- Provide plenty of light
- Water regularly (mustn't dry out)
- Feed periodically
- Keep frost free
- Can be placed outside in the summer, which will aid pollination

September / October is the ideal time to take **hardwood cuttings**. Such cuttings are ideal for propagating most deciduous trees, shrubs, roses and soft fruits such as currants and gooseberries.

Cut 10"-12" lengths of current season's woody stems just below a node (base) & above a node (top), remove



leaves and place upright in a trench; ideally with sharp sand at the bottom to encourage rooting. Replace & firm the soil, leaving the cuttings in situ until spring. Voila!

BULBS FOR CHRISTMAS



In the 1930's it was fashionable to decorate grand houses with flowers rather than baubles and tinsel. Hyacinths, crocuses and narcissi would have been grown by the garden staff in time to adorn and scent the rooms at this festive time. Nowadays 'forced' bulbs remain popular and many are given as gifts at Christmas time. As the end of September and the beginning of October is the ideal time to start forcing your bulbs, here's some information

on how to do it.....

- Choose a pot at least twice the depth of your bulbs and fill half with soilless potting mixture or bulb fibre. This will provide room for root growth.
- Arrange the bulbs in the pot in one or more layers, using the potting medium to prevent them touching.
- Cover with potting medium, leaving the tips showing. Do not fill to the rim so that there is room for watering.
- Water well, put potted bulbs in a labelled black plastic bag and place in a cool, dark place (eg unheated basement, garage, shed). This simulates Winter for the bulbs. *See timings below for the duration of this step.*
- Periodically check the pot's moisture, keeping soil damp but not wet.
- When chilling is complete the bulbs will just be starting to sprout.
- Move the potted bulbs into a warm room where they should bloom about 2-3 weeks later

Narcissi: 12-15 weeks of chilling; **Tulips:** 10-16 weeks of chilling;
Hyacinth: 12-15 weeks of chilling; **Iris reticulata:** 13-15 weeks of chilling;
Snowdrop (Galanthus): 15 weeks of chilling; **Crocus:** 8-15 weeks of chilling;
Grape hyacinth (Muscari): 8-15 weeks of chilling;

Alternatively hyacinth & tulip bulbs can easily be grown over water but they still need to undergo the chilling period. Such bulbs can be put in a bag in the fridge for the required period before placing in a suitable vase.



SPINACH

Spinach grows well in our climate but does need a fertile soil, preferably with a high level of compost/manure dug in. It is also prone to bolting if not provided with enough water, so it is an ideal crop to grow in the Autumn when rain is more plentiful; it will even over-winter given kind conditions. Perfect for filling those post harvest spaces in the vegetable plot.

Spinach is a 'super food' with high levels of nutrients and is one of the best sources of dietary magnesium and potassium (far greater than bananas). As with all green vegetables, it has a high level of chlorophyll. Research shows that these phytochemicals have anti-inflammatory and anti-cancerous properties and are especially important for healthy eye-sight, helping to prevent macular degeneration & cataracts. Maybe Popeye had it right after all!

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Fri 9th Sept. (10 - 3pm) **Autumn Plant Sale and Indulgence Day.** £5 entrance

'Coach House Ampney Crucis GL7 5RY

Sun 18th Sept. (11-5pm) **NGS: Cheltenham**

Town Gardens. £4 combined entrance
Map & details of all gardens at *Garlands*, 34 Cudnall Street, Charlton Kings.

Sat & Sun 24th/25th Sept. (9-6pm) **RHS Malvern Autumn Show.** £16 (adult) £5 (child)

Autumn approaches and **HEDGES** will be needing their final cut before the winter. If using a mechanical hedge trimmer **DO** use ear and eye protection **and** an RCD (Residual Current Device) if it's used with mains electricity. **DON'T BE TEMPTED TO SHORT CUT SAFETY.** Cut from the base of the hedge, moving upwards to maintain its shape. It's important to have the base wider than the top—not just for stability in the wind & when snow sits on the top but also to allow sunlight to reach the lower leaves. Without providing this tapering, lower leaves will eventually die back, leaving the branches bare and unsightly.

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