



# The Village GARDEN CLUB

of Sevenhampton & District



MAR / APR 2018

## NEXT MEETINGS

Thursday 22 <sup>nd</sup> March	Amy Dadachanji	– Wild Medicine & Herbal First Aid
Wednesday 18 <sup>th</sup> April	Georgie Newbery	– Growing Your Own Cut Flowers

### Garden Railways !



I must admit that until I arrived at Sunny View, I had assumed that garden railways were confined to the gardens of stately homes and large estates. How wrong I was! Whilst I looked around the house and wondered whether it was the right place to become our new home, my husband was captivated by the trains running around the rear garden. The garden is terraced, and the whole of the upper terrace had been given over to the railway. And I do not mean simply that trains ran around on tracks – the entire area had been landscaped and included a quarry where cranes loaded stones onto the trains, (very apt given the location) a viaduct, and a pond to represent an area where the trains unloaded onto boats! There were hills, tunnels and bridges, and a shed from which it was all controlled. Plants were also an integral element, with dwarf varieties to keep them in proper proportion.

I have since discovered that growing numbers of ordinary home owners are running model railways through their gardens, in homes around the world. Garden railways have been around for over one hundred years, and as the earliest trains were expensive steam models they were indeed restricted to the wealthier garden owners. However, as the model trains became cheaper and more accessible to the general public the hobby became more popular. There was a brief decline in the 1940's, but interest soared in the 1960's, and today we are, according to some authors, experiencing a golden age in garden railways. I found some fantastic examples appearing on platforms such as YouTube. A number of societies and magazines exist to help enthusiasts to plan and design their layouts, and specialist shops provide all of the materials. If adding a new feature to your own garden appeals to you, try 'Garden Rail' or 'Garden Railways' magazines, or visit [www.gardenrailways.com](http://www.gardenrailways.com) and [www.gardenrailwayclub.com](http://www.gardenrailwayclub.com). A quick Google search offers many more options.



Or check out Garden Railway Centres Ltd, which is based in Charlton Kings, and has everything to get you started. Sadly, the downside of garden railways is that they require a level of maintenance and operation that my husband was unable to commit to, and our tracks and engines are now gone. And as that part of the garden has the best views of the surrounding countryside, I have plans for somewhere to sit with a nice glass of wine on a sunny day!



**SPRING TIME BLOSSOM:** If the weather is kind to us (and the fruit trees), a trip around the famous Vale of Evesham blossom trail may offer a welcome distraction from gardening. There is now a 40 mile route through the apple and plum orchards around Evesham, linking Broadway, Pershore and the 'Lench' villages. For centuries mainly apples and pears were grown in the Vale, with most of the crop being made into cider or perry. By the 19<sup>th</sup> century fruit growing had become big business, with many new varieties being produced, including the famous Pershore Yellow Egg plum which had been discovered growing wild in Tiddesley

Wood near Pershore, in 1827.

For further info and routes see [www.visitwychavon.com/attractions/theblossomtrail](http://www.visitwychavon.com/attractions/theblossomtrail) or [www.visitworcestershireshire.org](http://www.visitworcestershireshire.org)

**DON'T FORGET:** To access the internet hyperlinks (in blue) press 'Ctrl' and left hand mouse click on the link at the same time.

### A Win, Win Situation



This plant, *Capiscum frutescens* 'Peruvian Purple', was seen in a botanical garden in north Croatia. Despite poor soil, average January temperatures below freezing and those in summer around 20°C (similar to home really), it was flourishing. Approx. 2 feet high, its colours were spectacular with its bright red fruit contrasting with the purple-green foliage. Its flowers are purple as are its fruits before they ripen into a deep red. Not only does it look good but its 1inch fruits, a mildly hot chilli, are a valuable culinary addition!

Chilli plants are perennials from Central & S. America. Although often grown as annuals, many, including this one, are able to withstand our winters.

Fruit colour (usually yellow, orange or red) varies according to cultivar and stage of ripeness. Culinary uses vary too—they can be fried, stuffed or added to salads according to their pungency and personal preference. The pungency in chillies is caused by chemicals called capsaicinoids; the degree of pungency is measured in Scoville heat units (SHU), after the American pharmacist Wilbur Scoville who invented the scale in 1912. Sweet peppers (*Capiscum annuum*) for example, are 0 SHU & a spicy hot 'scotch bonnet' (*Capiscum chinense*) can reach 350,000 SHU.



Scotch bonnet chilli



The **2018 book of the National Gardens Scheme** (NGS) is now available. The scheme sees over 3,600 gardens open each year throughout the country, raising financial support for many nursing charities. Search for a garden to visit [here](#).

Between **15<sup>th</sup> March – 28<sup>th</sup> August** they are running their second annual photography competition in association with BBC Gardeners' World Magazine, [to find out more click here](#).



The Gloucestershire Federation of Gardening Societies ([GFGS](#)), to which our club is affiliated, is 100 yrs. old this year.

Towards celebrating their centenary **Timothy Walker**, former director of the **Oxford Botanic Garden and Harcourt Arboretum** (& also a very good speaker) will give a lecture entitled

**"What have plants ever done for us!"**

at the Royal Agricultural University, Cirencester on Saturday 22nd September. Tickets are £6 and can be purchased by GFGS club members in advance of more widespread advertising.

Contact our treasurer/secretary, Annie van Rossem, who is kindly collating our club members' requests for tickets **before March 31st** Alternatively email [secretary@gfgs.org.uk](mailto:secretary@gfgs.org.uk) for additional information.

### Top Tips (with planters in mind)

- Use polystyrene packaging at the bottom of flowerpots instead of broken pots etc. Not only does it solve a problem of unwanted waste but it insulates the bottom of the pot and allows good free drainage.
- If the soil surface in a basket/pot gets too dry and water 'run-off' occurs, use a little washing up liquid in the water, which reduces surface tension and allows the water to penetrate the soil better.
- Instead of using the usual 3 cut holes in a growbag, split the contents of the bag into four pots. It makes the compost go further and gives more space for the plants' roots.

### Important Diary

#### Dates

This year's trips will be on:

**Wed. 6th June**—Evening visit to [Miserden Gardens](#), followed by a pub supper.

**Thurs. 5th July**—Coach outing to [The Bishop's Palace & Gardens](#), Wells.

Full details will be given nearer the time but save a place in your diaries for these two super trips.

### More Dates for your Diary

**Sat. 3<sup>rd</sup> March** (10.30am-4pm) Cheltenham & District Orchid Society's Annual Show at Churchdown Community Centre, Parton Road, Churchdown, Gloucester, GL3 2JH. See [www.cheltenhamorchids.org](http://www.cheltenhamorchids.org) Cost: £2.50 or [Download vouchers](#) for reduced price entry.

**Sun. 18<sup>th</sup> March** (12.30-3.30pm) [Cheltenham Horticultural Society](#) Spring Flower & Craft Show Pittville Pump Room, Cheltenham, GL52 3JE Cost: £2 (under 16s free)

**Sun 25th March** (11am-3pm) Daffodil Walk at Ampney Park, Ampney Crucis, GL7 5RY. A rare public opening in support of the Cobalt Unit. Cost £6 (under 16s free)

**Fri 30<sup>th</sup> March** NGS Open gardens at Spetchley Park Gardens, Spetchley, Worcester, Worcs., WR5 1RS . Cost £7 adults,. See [www.spetchleygardens.co.uk](http://www.spetchleygardens.co.uk)

**Easter Mon. 2<sup>nd</sup> April** (12-4pm) Cotswold & Malvern AGS Group Alpine Show & Plant Sale at Maisemore Village Hall, Church Road, Maisemore, Gloucester, GL2 8JE

**Sun. 8th April** (11am-5pm) NGS Scheme Highnam Court, Highnam, Gloucester, Gloucestershire, GL2 8DP. Cost £5

**Sun 22<sup>nd</sup> April** (11-5pm) Annual Specialist Plant Fair at Spetchley Park Gardens, Spetchley, Worcester, Worcestershire, WR5 1RS . Cost £6 (under 16s free).

\*\*\*\*\*  
 \* 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 \*  
 \* \*\*\*\*\*