



# The Village GARDEN CLUB

of Sevenhampton & District



Tomato  
(*Solanum lycopersicum*)

May/June 2019

## NEXT MEETINGS

Wednesday 15th May	Evening visit to Kingham Lodge Gardens (postcode OX7 6YL) - meeting at 4.30 pm. Own transport.
Wednesday 5th June	Coach outing to Spetchley Gardens & Croome Walled Garden - coach pick up starts at 9am

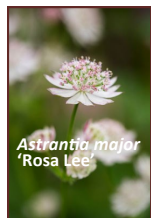
## A GARDEN THROUGH THE SEASONS

Over many decades I have tried to plant a garden on our damp clay that encourages me to appreciate the rhythm of the seasons and take advantage of the changing light levels and sun angle.

In the low light levels of winter, I love the muted straw colour of grasses; upright Gardeners Garters (*Phalaris arundinacea*) and wavy *Stipa tenuissima* both left uncut, plus a glaucous lavender dome and the pale mauve of Ipheions (star flowers) in weathered terracotta pots. In sight of the windows a mass of snowdrops shines out of the gloom at the foot of a dry stone wall covered in lime green moss. Short stemmed narcissus, 'Tête-a-Tête', follow on; the combined dying foliage is hidden as the herbaceous plants get going.

In March come the nodding flowers of Oriental hellebores, which for the rest of the year provide restrained sculptural foliage as ground cover, and through which fireworks of *Allium hollandicum* 'Purple Sensation' and *Camassia leichtlinii* 'Caerulea' grow, flowering in late April and May.

By June the border is humming with insects on white and wine coloured astrantia, geraniums 'Nimbus' and 'Johnson's Blue', Siberian iris and the globe thistle *Echinops bannaticus*, all brilliant growers in a clay soil. The latter should be planted to the west where the setting sun highlights the globe flowers. Jacob's Ladder, *Polemonium caeruleum*, seeds freely through this mix and is easy to remove if it's in the wrong place.



I am content to have big pots of agapanthus and lavender grabbing attention during July and August with bay (in a large container for overwintering indoors) and rosemary giving some structure.

Elsewhere in the garden in September and October, the low autumn sun catches Aster Samoa (*Symphiotrichum novi-belgii* 'Samoa'), Sedum spectabile (ice plant) and the coral stems of *Euphorbia griffithsi* below the yellowing leaves of shrub rose *Rosa Roseraie de l'Hay*.

Finally, the gloom of November and December is lifted by leaving *Phlomis russelliana* (Jerusalem sage) and allium seedheads standing out above surrounding herbaceous plants that have been cut back. Evergreens such as variegated holly, complete with berries, and the ivy *Hedera colchica* 'Dentata Variegata' bring some fresh colour against the warm brown backdrop of hornbeam and beech hedges.

**TOMATO FACTFILE:** *Solanum lycopersicum* is a flowering plant of the family Solanaceae; the same family as deadly nightshade and the potato. It originated from South America and its name is derived from the Aztec word 'tomatl'. The plant, which then had small yellow fruits, was brought to Europe by the Spanish in the early C16<sup>th</sup>. Although Spain & Italy used it as a food (Italians called it 'pomodoro' or 'golden apple'), the rest of Europe initially grew it as an ornamental plant. At the end of the C18<sup>th</sup>, tomatoes once again crossed the Atlantic back to North America, possibly introduced by Thomas Jefferson who sent seeds back to the U.S. after eating and enjoying tomatoes in Paris.



Although often referred to as a vegetable, the tomato is botanically a fruit. Its sugar content is low, as with cucumbers, aubergines etc, and is thus used in savoury dishes rather than deserts. This use led to a legal dispute in U.S. in 1893, as vegetables were taxed but not fruits. After deliberation of the case, the Supreme Court declared the tomato a vegetable!

As well as high levels of vitamins, tomatoes contain carotenoids, in particular lycopene, which is said to help prevent certain types of cancers. They are therefore better eaten than thrown, which used to happen in theatres by unappreciative audiences; similarly today to register disapproval of public figures, like politicians. In Bunyol, near Valencia in Spain, during the Tomatina festival, more light-hearted throwing takes place where more than 30,000 people throw tomatoes for an hour on the last Wednesday in August.

A wide variety of tomato plants are available to today's gardeners (on 4th-6th May, Dundry Nurseries will have more than 40 varieties of unusual tomatoes available). All need good ventilation, high soil fertility (nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium) and regular watering. The latter is essential to avoid problems such as 'blossom end rot' & splitting & cracking of the fruit.

### SLUGS AND SNAILS (& PUPPY DOG TAILS?)



Collectively there are over 100 species of slugs and snails in the UK. Few, if any, gardeners welcome them and often resort to the use of slug pellets to control them. However, the blue metaldehyde pellets are also harmful to other animals and easily enter the 'food chain'. This known risk to wildlife has prompted DEFRA to ban these toxic pellets from Spring 2020. There are, however, alternatives such as:

**Ferric phosphate pellets** - but these also kill worms and other soil organisms, so are to be avoided.

**Improve drainage & soil structure** - slugs thrive in damp, coarse soil. The better the tilth, the less attractive it is to them.

**Encourage natural predators**- beetles, frogs, hedgehogs and birds who will feast on slugs & snails.

**Traps** - sunken pots of a lure, such as beer.

**Physical Barriers** - bottle cloches / collars of plastic or copper on the soil or flower pots (copper conducts electrons when in contact with the pest's slimy underside) / granules (eg grit, egg shells) / bran (which swells inside the pest they eat it)

**Biological control** - Nematodes

**Keep a tidy garden**—avoid piles of rubble, old stones, heaps of discarded flowerpots which are havens for snails.

*Thanks go to Victoria who alerted members at the last meeting to this topic.*



**Footnote:** Did you know that slugs and snails are both molluscs and belong to the class of 'gastropods', which literally means eating foot!

### **This year there are two splendid Garden Club trips arranged.**



We start next month with an early evening's private visit to Kingham Lodge Gardens. Renowned for their sculpture exhibitions, there are 5 acres of gardens with azaleas, rhododendrons and a laburnum arch. There are also formal borders, shaded walks with a quarry pond, a pergola, parterre and unique Islamic garden. The evening will be rounded off with a pub supper at [The Kingham Plough](#).

In June there's a day outing to Worcestershire, visiting [Spetchley Gardens](#) which will be followed by a private tour of the [walled garden](#) at the National Trust's Croome Park.

Spetchley has been owned by the Berkeley family for over 400 yrs during which family members have collected rare plants, shrubs & trees. Most of the plants in the extensive grounds are labelled & their large collection of peonies should be in bloom during our visit.



If you missed the owner of the walled garden, Chris Cronin, give his talk to our club in 2017 now's your chance to see it in 'the flesh'. The once neglected garden has been revived and is now one of the finest and largest Georgian gardens in the UK. Our tour around the garden will be complemented with afternoon tea.

**More details on both of these trips can be found at the 'Next Meetings' on the front cover and on the membership form.**

### What's On

#### Rare Plant Fairs

**Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> June:** High Glanau Manor, Monmouthshire, NP25 4AD. 11am-4pm Cost: £5

**Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> June:** Waterperry Gardens, Oxon, OX33 1JZ. 10am-4pm. Cost:£6

**Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> June:** Rodmarton Manor, Tetbury, Glos. GL7 6PF. 11am-4pm Cost: £5

#### NGS

**Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup> June:** Lord Vesty's Stowell Park, Northleach, GL54 3LE 2pm-5pm Cost: £6

**June 2<sup>nd</sup>** Blockley Open Gardens & Allotments GL54 9DB & GL54 9EA resp. 2pm-6pm Cost £6

**June 9<sup>th</sup>** Brize Norton Open Gardens. OX18 3LY Open 1pm-6pm Cost £5

Click [here](#) for info on many more NGS open gardens.

#### Also ...

**18th May** Barnsley Village Garden Festival from 10.30 am. Cost £7

**13-16<sup>th</sup> June:** [BBC Gardeners World Live](#), NEC Birmingham. Tickets vary from £24.50[see link]

**16<sup>th</sup> June-7<sup>th</sup> July** Fresh Air Sculpture Show at The Old Rectory, Quenington, GL7 5BN Cost:£7

### COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The departure of Chairman John Benson (as reported in the last newsletter) saw the need to re-organise duties of the Garden Club committee. Specific responsibilities will now be:

Gordon Day—Chairman

Ann Van Rossem—Secretary

Joanna Ruddock—Treasurer

Di Cook—Newsletter editor

Pippa Shouler, Joanna Rolfe, Sue Tallents and Victoria Logue will also be on the committee

& working hard to make our club as successful and enjoyable as possible.

We all hope that you will enjoy this year's programme. Please consider bringing guests along and encourage new members so that the club continues to thrive.

### GARDENING KEEPS YOU HEALTHY

Gardens have long offered a peaceful haven, somewhere to regain health and wellbeing. Now run by the National Trust, "Overbecks" in S.Devon was used by the Red Cross for many years for the recuperation of WW1 soldiers. Starting 6<sup>th</sup> April, NT & *Combat Stress* will deliver an exhibition here about the trauma experienced by soldiers and how gardens helped their recovery. From 11<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> May the NGS will hold their 'Gardens & Health' week which will focus on the importance of gardens: working, visiting, relaxing in them and importantly, enjoying them. Gardening offers the opportunity for physical activity and mental well being, as well as providing fresh produce, flowers & beauty. What's not to like?



Although fibre pots (eg coir, bamboo) and degradable mesh bags are being used more by nurseries, the majority still supply their plants in plastic pots. If your newly bought plants grow in plastic pots try to re-use the pots but if you have a surplus do remember that local authorities (including Cotswold DC) recycle old flowerpots with household plastic waste.

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](mailto:ditex.cook@btinternet.com) or Tel: 01242 821018