



The Village
GARDEN CLUB
of Sevenhampton & District

NOV / DEC 2019



Sweet Pea
Lathyrus odoratus

NEXT MEETINGS

- Thursday 28th November** - **Reg Moule: "Tree and Shrub Pruning"**
Thursday 23rd January - **Social Evening: Wine, nibbles and quiz** (*details overleaf*)



MY VEGETABLE GARDENING YEAR

In summary this was not a great one! Starting chronologically, a low spot was a muntjac eating all the shoots off my purple sprouting in March. I really didn't know that their noses were so small that they could eat the shoots through the pigeon netting. In the end all was not lost, since the plants re-sprouted and I had a good crop at the beginning of May.

Broad Bean, Aquadulce, sown in October into modules and then planted out when 5 cm high were fine, but I should have staked them better – they fell over onto the soil and I lost some to slugs.

Peas were, as ever, eaten by mice or, more likely I feel, the short-tailed vole. Whichever rodent, the outcome was the same – no peas.

Carrots Early Nantes sown in May emerged as tiny seedlings in July!

Onion family were a complete disaster this year. Yellow onions from sets of Stuttgarter Giant were anything but - more like golf balls. Red onions (Red Baron) were marginally larger. Shallots (Red Sun) didn't fatten up either, Garlic (Solent Wight) got rust and didn't bulk up at all. I think the lack of weeding probably didn't help.

Lettuce was fine, at least the first sowing was, but I always forget to successional sowing the next lot.

Lack of water was probably the cause of an extremely sparse **potato** crop with tiny tubers – Charlotte was my early salad potato and Pink Fir Apple the maincrop.

Courgettes, Soleil, another disaster area- I now grow yellow ones, so that I can see them turning into marrows, but this year few were fatter than pencils. My pumpkin (notice the singular) was meant to be Crown Prince, but it isn't - just large, round and green striped.

Tomatoes a huge success, Gardener's Delight and Sweet Million cropped endlessly, lots of tomato sauce in the freezer – I just needed tougher string to support them.

Ditto my small **cucumbers**, Diva and Mini Munch – I stopped counting when I got to 50 from 2 plants. The normal cucumber (I have lost the name) not such a success, the cucumbers tasted of nothing – just crisp wetness.

Sweetcorn – as usual I didn't have enough plants but hand pollination did the trick with full heads of really sweet kernels.

Undaunted, I will try again next year – I should just major on cucumbers, tomatoes and sweetcorn, but I know I won't – seed catalogues are so inviting!



SWEET PEA FACTFILE: Of the family *Fabacea* (Legumes), sweet peas are native to Cyprus, S. Italy and the Aegean Islands. Both the perennial (*Lathyrus latifolius*) and the annual (*L. odoratus*) have tendrils to help their tall growth habit and both enjoy full sun or partial shade. *L. odoratus* are the more colourful plants but cultivators have still not managed to grow a much-desired, yet elusive [yellow sweet pea](#).

In 1882, whilst working as head gardener at nearby Sandywell, Henry Eckford was given a top award by the RHS for introducing the sweet pea 'Bronze Prince'. He then moved to Wem, Shropshire continuing with his sweet pea cultivations in his own nursery and by 1901 had introduced 115 cultivars. Eckford was presented with the RHS Victoria Medal of Honour and Wem is home to the [National Sweet Pea Society](#).

Sweet peas can be sown in Spring but if sown in November, using deep pots with good compost, they tend to be much sturdier. Overwinter in a cold frame and pinch the tops out once or twice to encourage bushy growth. Plant out in the Spring, providing supports & importantly ensure good watering throughout the season. Cut flowers or dead-head often.

Note from editor: Do have a look at the National Sweet Pea Society's link above —there are a lot of good growing tips there. Also see the list of RHS sweet peas on page 3.

GREENHOUSE CLEANING

Whilst not the nicest of jobs, it's that time of year to clean your greenhouse. When you do tackle this task choose a nice day, as moveable objects and plants are best removed whilst cleaning takes place. Old crop plants, such as tomatoes, should be composted or placed in your green bin. Once the greenhouse is cleared brush/vacuum away all residual dirt & debris. Clean structures with disinfectant or detergent, paying particular attention to propagation areas as young plants are vulnerable to diseases. Hydrogen peroxide based cleaning products are effective & particularly benign to the user and the environment. Glazing should also be cleaned, not only to disinfect but also to remove algae and increase winter light levels.

There is a tendency to accumulate plastic flowerpots! If any of these are to be kept, clean them in warm soapy water before storing them for the winter. Otherwise, **RE-CYCLE THEM**. Cotswold District Council will take flowerpots of ALL colours (including black) in their 'plastics' kerbside collection.



Clean greenhouse gutters which can easily collect fallen leaves etc. If you collect rain into a water butt, a mesh at each end of the down pipe will stop the build up of detritus in the butt (an excellent use for old tights!).

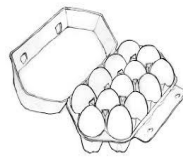
Safety First: Take care lifting items in the greenhouse. Keep back straight, hold the weight close to your body and do not twist whilst carrying a load.

Greenhouse glass is usually quite thin so do not lean on it or rest ladders on it.

Wear eye protection and rubber gloves when handling disinfectant, bleach etc.

Britain in Bloom

The Scottish city of Perth has won the RHS annual Britain in Bloom competition 2019. RHS judges particularly applauded the city's use of pollinator-friendly planting. Many traditional bedding displays had been swapped for more permanent planting, including foxgloves, salvias & flowering shrubs, designed to provide year-round food for bees and other wildlife. The competition had 68 entries throughout the UK who were judged on their horticultural achievement, community participation and environmental responsibility.



'The Laughing Gardener', Darren Rudge, gave a very interesting (and humorous) talk last month on using household items in the garden. For those that missed it, here are some alternative uses for things from the **kitchen**:

- When rinsing out **milk** bottles, pour the milky contents onto the soil of potted plants to increase its calcium levels.
- Use **bicarbonate of soda** as a fungicide; it is particularly good for powdery mildew. Make a 1% solution with water, add a little liquid soap/oil to aid its adhesion to leaves and spray onto affected plants.
- Steep used **teabags** in water for 3 weeks to create a liquid feed for acid loving plants such as camellias, azaleas and pieris.
- **Egg shells** can be used as individual seed pots. They can also be crushed and placed around plants to deter slugs & snails.
- **Banana skins**, high in nutrients and especially potassium, can be cut into strips and placed at the base of planting holes for a slow release fertiliser.

If not otherwise re-used, always compost the above with your other kitchen waste — even the milk bottle washes!



Wyevale Garden Centres

In 2009 a BBC *Gardeners' World* survey voted Wyevale Garden Centres as the Best UK Garden Centre. Unfortunately, in the same year, Wyevale owners had to sell its business due to poor investment. The new buyer was a company called Terra Firma, although the original name of *Wyevale* was kept. In 2018 this company decided to sell the centres, either as a whole or as individual businesses. Unable to sell the business in its entirety, the latter has been happening over time. Now, in 2019, the last of its 154 outlets has been sold. Many continue as garden centres though, including the local ones in Cheltenham and Brockworth.

Please note, if you still have Wyevale gift vouchers they can be redeemed at any 'Dobbies' garden centres, our nearest of which is at Cirencester.

SOCIAL EVENING

January's social evening will take place on **Thursday 23rd**, starting at the usual time of 7.30pm. Rather than a more formal meal, wine and nibbles will be provided — free of charge.

To enhance the evening even further, small teams will be invited to participate in a light-hearted quiz —with prizes!!

IMPORTANT: PLEASE LET PIPPA OR ANNIE KNOW IF YOU WILL BE COMING SO THAT THEY CAN ORGANISE CATERING.

Pippa — 01242 821419 Annie — 01242 820718



The following (annual) sweet peas have gained the RHS Award of Garden Merit

<u>Variety</u>	<u>Colour</u>	<u>Height</u>	<u>Fragrance</u>
America	white/purple	1.8m	medium
Bobby's Girl	pale salmon pink	1.8m	medium
Bristol	pale violet	1.7m	strong
Cathy	white	2.0m	medium
Charlie's Angel	pale violet	2.0m	strong
Dorothy Eckford	white	1.9m	medium
Evening Glow	pale pink	1.7m	medium
Florencecourt	coral pink/white	1.8m	slight
Gwendoline	pale pink	2.0m	medium
Hannah's Harmony	white/red	1.1m	slight
Janet Scott	pale pink	1.8m	strong
Jilly	white	2.2m	medium
King Edward VII	crimson	1.5m	medium
Margaret Joyce	violet	1.9m	strong
Marie's Melody	white/red	1.0m	medium
Mrs Bernard Jones	pink/white	2.3m	strong
Noel Sutton	violet blue	2.2m	medium
Oklahoma	white/crimson	1.8m	strong
Patricia Anne	white/violet	1.8m	medium
Pocahontas	white/pink	2.5m	medium
Sicilian Pink	cerise/white/purple	1.8m	strong
Solway Fanfare	reddish-purple	1.0m	slight
Starlight	magenta	2.5m	medium
Tahiti Sunrise	white/coral	1.7m	strong
Teresa Maureen	white/purple	0.9m	medium
Valerie Harrod	white/pink	2.1m	medium
Wedding Day	white	2.1m	strong
White Supreme	white	2.3m	strong