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Summer Bulletin 2010

Welcome to the Summer Bulletin

As your new editor, I am pleased to welcome you to the latest edition of the bulletin. As you will see (right), John has decided to be Vice Chairman. Thanks to John and I hope to build on his previous achievements.

It has been some years since I was on the committee, and yet it feels just like yesterday, because as always the committee have been most welcoming.

I hope you have some great gardening this year.

AGM

Well, following on from that, at the AGM (way back in February), the Society again saw not many changes to the committee. This seems to be the norm each year, meaning that the committee members just move positions. With fewer people volunteering to assist with the running of the Society, the existing members have to continue to carry on - else the society could fail. **Come on**, this year give it a go by volunteering to shadow a committee member just to see what is involved. If by the next AGM you decide it's not for you - fine, but we think that will not be the case. If you are interested, please speak with your chosen incumbent or if not sure, any one of us for advice.

You will have noticed that we do not presently have a President. With the great loss of our last President (Rose) we (the Committee) will now have to decide who will replace her.

Changes to the Bulletin

As your 'New' Bulletin Editor, I shall no doubt make a few changes as I go along - just to be different. Not that I really know what I am doing (yet). Maybe, when you have read it and you have any comments or criticism, I would be interested to hear of them, also any ideas and articles/letters for future copies, you may have. You may email me, call or catch me whenever you can. However, I reserve the right to edit items submitted, for length and for clarity. Items that are published may not necessarily represent the views of the Society of course, but I shall give you credit for each one. If you care to send any pictures, remember when sending digital photographs, please set your camera to its highest resolution when taking the pictures, otherwise they may not print very well.

Did you realise that we regularly place pictures of the shows, on our web page? Not to mention all the bulletins, schedules, outings and much more. The Gazette used one of them from Spring Show.

Please take a look around it sometime. Somebody must be using it as the statistics show a lot of 'hits' for the site. The most popular pages appear to be the shows, schedules, programmes and bulletins. But all pages have their fair share of people looking at them. I would be interested to hear if you have joined because of finding us on the web site.

Our web site address is www.succulent-plant.com/ruislip. Save it as a shortcut in your favourites.

The reason for this unusual address is that our site is hosted (managed) by one of our horticultural friends (Dr. Richard Hodgkiss). Incidentally, he also looks after the Eastcote web site which can also be found at www.succulent-plant.com/eastcote

The Committee for 2010

<i>Chairman</i>	<i>Viv Ash</i>
<i>Vice Chairman</i>	<i>John Ormshaw</i>
<i>Hon Secretary</i>	<i>Pat White</i>
<i>Hon Treasurer</i>	<i>Chris Hoppett</i>
<i>Show Secretaries</i>	<i>David Minnion</i>
&	<i>Ernie Smith</i>
<i>Bulletin Editor</i>	<i>Bob Weeks</i>
<i>Bulletin Distributor</i>	<i>Angela Porter</i>
<i>& Registrar</i>	<i>Angela Porter</i>
<i>Lectures & Outings</i>	<i>Susan Kirk</i>
<i>Show Manager</i>	<i>Susan Kirk</i>
<i>Judges</i>	<i>Pat Smith</i>
<i>Refreshments</i>	<i>Mike Rawlinson</i>
<i>Supporting Officers</i>	<i>Tony McDonnell</i>

Going Green or keeping our costs down. Occasionally, if a bulletin warrants it, I shall place an extended version on our website. A note at the end will let you know if this is the case. Those members who have supplied an email address will get the full colour version. Unfortunately, for those members who continue to receive a copy through the letterbox, you may be missing out, as we shall only continue to print one sheet (on both sides), in black & white. However, I shall ensure that all the important details are on the first two pages of the printed copy. For instance I may no longer publish the Show Results in the bulletin unless I have nothing else to fill the space. Also, as the talks/programme is put into the Spring Bulletin, there is no reason to reproduce it again. Hopefully we shall plenty to fill the space and keep you interested.

If you don't already have Internet/email and are considering it. - I appreciate that not everybody has access to email, but are you aware that living in the borough and being the holder of a Hillingdon First 'Gold Card' you can book up to 2 hours on a computer at any of their libraries? The Manor is particularly good and they have many computers/printers (and a coffee bar that is cheaper than the high street Starbucks). If you need assistance they do run courses, but I am willing to help you with the basics (search the web/email etc) and even set up the email account with you. We can arrange to do this at your home or at one of the borough libraries to suit.

Latest News

Increase in cost to attend meetings from September, 2010

Due to the increase in speaker's costs, we unfortunately shall be raising the cost of entry to our meetings (only by 50 pence). This increase will take place from September which means the new charge will be £1.50 per member (including our EHS members) and £2.50 for guests. Don't forget this does include a cup of tea/coffee and biscuits at the meeting.

Wisley Tickets

Not an RHS Member? Then were you aware that there are 2 RHS tickets available for RCHS members to borrow? These enable 30% discount on entry at the Wisley, Hyde Hall, Rosemoor and Harlow Carr Horticultural Gardens. If you are interested, please contact Pat White.

Help needed to put up and take down the tables at shows.

Your assistance would be gratefully appreciated at the shows. It may not be required at all shows, but if you could make it known beforehand (to a committee member), that you would be able to assist you will be contacted when you are required.

From the meetings - or what you missed

March 23rd - "Design of the Herbaceous Border"

Ylva Blid-Mackenzie - Landscape architect and garden designer, having over 10 years experience in Scandinavia, Sweden, Germany and England gave us a talk with digital slides. She explained the principals of garden design, including the planting process for borders in particular - tallest at back, lower to the fore. But, she also said it was ok to break this rule occasionally and showed examples. Audience participation was high throughout the evening, bombarding Ylva (or Mrs Mackenzie as it was easier to pronounce) with questions. She now lives in Kent with her family who manage the Madrona Nursery, 01233 820100. Website: www.madrona.co.uk

April 10th - Spring Show at the Great Barn



After what had been a very cold spell (similar to that in 2005), we were blessed with glorious sunshine.

The daffodils bounced back providing the day with a colourful display taking up quite a large area.

This was of course complimented by all of the other spring flowers, shrubs, floral displays and a large amount of cacti, all expertly grown by our members. Not forgetting the children's' and domestic exhibits too.

The prizes were presented by Peggy Osborne, widow of past President - Maurice who was a very active member in his time.

April 20th - Good in Bed

The intriguing title of our April talk was given by plants woman Anne Godfrey of Daisy Roots Nursery. She took us through a series of excellent digital slides of plants for a long season, many completely new, others familiar but via Anne, seen with new eyes, especially her planting combinations. Refreshingly, she did not shy away from not recommending a plant if she did not think it would suit our soils, or if it was a bit of a wanderer. A brisk sale of plants took place throughout the evening and many people went home with new plants and ideas to put into practice in their own gardens. Her nursery is on the outskirts of Hertford; open every Friday & Saturday from 10am - 4pm from the beginning of March until the end of October, or by appointment. Website: www.daisyroots.com/

Advertising - If space permits we may be able to accommodate a small advert for your gardening requirements. E.G. why not try to find that elusive plant you have been searching for. One of our members may be willing to share a cutting.

Do you need help in the garden? Why not advertise here

Do you have excess plants/tools? Why not advertise here

This is where the printed Bulletin ends, but why not visit our website for more information, such as the extended Bulletin, Programme of Events, Pictures & Results from shows, Schedules Outings etc. www.succulent-plant.com/ruislip.html

If this is a printed copy, why not recycle it to a neighbour or a house that you pass nearby that seems to have a keen gardener? You never know, you may generate a new member to travel to meetings with, or even better a friend that brings all the associated benefits of swapping plants and ideas.

The Society wishes to thank Robert Cooper and Co. for their help and support in the printing of this bulletin



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Welcome to the extended version of the Society Bulletin.

You will notice that my home address has been replaced by my email address. This is so you may click on the link to send me an email straight away.

For those new to the web site, if you are interested enough to want to make contact, please email myself – the Bulletin Editor and I'll either deal with your enquiry or pass it on to the correct person within the society.

If you have any items for the bulletin, please email them to the editor. It can be an article, item of interest, for sale/wanted (gardening related only), a web site or garden centre of interest, (links if possible). Or anything remotely connected with the Society and gardening.

Right, if you have already read the previous page that's enough about the changes – lets get on with what we are all about – GARDENING.



Items of interest

Here's an article recently submitted that might be of interest, especially if you grow tomatoes. Myself, I grow them outside in a grow-bag

Harvesting Tomatoes in February - Walter Butts

This year I grew 6 tomatoes plants as usual, from seed. They were kept on the windowsill until ready and then outside against the greenhouse inside feeder rings and grow-bags. These items were purchased at Ducks Hill Garden Centre – www.duckshillgardencentre.co.uk, using my Gardeners Reward Card of course. Nothing special about them or the way they were grown. However, I managed to keep the blight off them by covering them as soon as it got late into the season and the cooler evenings started.

I believe by covering them with horticultural fleece and subsequently when the frosts got too close - bubble wrap, I extended their growing season by quite a lot. So much so that in November there were tomatoes still ripening on the vines (albeit slowly).

It was not until December that I pulled them up, cut the unripe tomatoes off and left the vines on the windowsill, in a Tupperware style box, to ripen (along with a banana).

The last one to actually be eaten raw was just before Christmas (in my lunch box). But I still had more ripening, even if they were only fit for cooking, at the time of writing (February). Is this a record?

What to wear in the garden - Chris Weeks

In the colder months when you want to get outside but are put off because you don't feel comfortable, why not get yourself some walking clothes?

I have found that by wearing clothes designed for walking I can extend my gardening hours without feeling the cold.

Firstly use a base layer, made mainly from polyester, wool or a mix of both. These are soft against the skin, trap warmth and effectively wick away any sweat therefore won't smell. (I find these useful in the warmer months just as a tee shirt).

Over this is the mid-layer of a fleece jacket. Dependent on how cold, you could wear a lightweight fleece and a thicker one. Then if it's really windy or wet there is the waterproof jacket and even trousers.

Of course you can wear any combination of the above depending on how warm you got working in the outdoors.

Don't forget the boots waterproof or lightweight, and a pair of walking (or second pair of) socks. These will keep your feet feeling toasty as well as clean and dry.

Check out any decent walking store for them and you will not be disappointed next time you are itching to get outside on a cold day to do something in the garden that will not wait for the good weather, unless you are a fair weather gardener of course.

Rhubarb - Ed

Having just (March) had our first crop of rhubarb, which had been under a forcing jar for a couple of weeks, I made it into the usual crumble and stewed what was left. What do other growers do with it I wondered, so if you have something exciting you do with crumble, I would be interested to know of it. Ed.

On the web - Ed

I have been supplied with a seed web site. They supply mainly vegetable seeds, but have companion planting seeds and advice and a useful sowing guide.

Allotment owners get a discount of 10% on all seeds. Why not take a look at www.vegetableseeds.net or how about www.twowests.co.uk, www.organiccatalog.com, or even www.amazon.co.uk.

For Sale

*The Rolls Royce of a mower.
An 8 bladed Webb Witch
Hand Push Model. Excel cond.
£20. Contact Bulletin Editor*

I thought you might like the following tips.

Jobs to do in June - Cley Potts

Plant out your bedding. Make sure your plants are ready for the outdoors by taking them outside during the daytime and back in at night for a about a week or so. Plant them as recommended on any packaging and water well for a few weeks.

Train tomatoes. Your toms should be growing strongly by now and if you have cordon types they only need one central stem to channel the plants energy. Remove any side-shoots that appear between the central stem and the leaves. Don't forget to keep them tied in, else they will flop over.

Lawn - Give the grass a light trim once a week to keep it looking good and healthy.

Dead head roses - They should be in their prime right now. Many old fashioned varieties only bloom in June but modern roses go on well into the summer. So for flowers instead of seed, cut off the old blooms as soon as they fade, cutting back to just above a healthy leaf.

Remove pond weed - Skim off any floating weed or debris with a net and pull out any blanket weed with a stick or your hands. Always leave the items on the side of the pond for 24 hours to allow any wildlife picked up by mistake to escape back into the water before you put it on the compost heap.

Trim hedges - As long as they do not contain any bird's nests.

Red lily beetle - Squash any you find along with their black larvae before they do any damage to your lilies or fritillaries. But don't confuse them with ladybirds. These are about 8mm long (lady birds tend to be rounder) with a red thorax and wing cases with black head and legs. The larvae are a dirty orange and up to 10mm long, usually covered in their own slimy black excreta. Not to be confused with the ladybird larvae who are not at all shiny and move around more quickly. For more information, visit www.rhs.org.uk/science/plant-pests/lily-beetle.

Cut Sweet peas - If you don't, they will stop flowering as they think they have done their work for the year. Squash any greenfly you find as they can spread sweet pea virus which can cause your plant to cease flowering prematurely.

Spring-flowering shrubs - For instance Weigela, flowering currant, philadelphus and forsythia can all be pruned once flowering has finished. Cut all flowered stems back to strong young shoots lower down. Some older stems can be cut back to the base to encourage young growth.

Salad/herbs - Cut salad or pick herbs as needed and they should resprout in a week or so to give more crops. Don't leave them too long as they will go to seed.

Potatoes - Earth up your spuds, so that about 5cm of shoots remain above the surface. This will stop them turning green in the light and protect them from the cold.

Tomatoes - For a good crop of tomatoes, feed them regularly when you water – more so in hot weather.

Apples - Look out for any woolly aphids (white fluff) on the trunk and branches of your trees. You can scrub the affected areas with soapy water. Thin out any apples so that they are about 10-15cm apart for desserts and 15-22cm apart for cookers.

Jobs to do in July/August - Cley Potts

Patio - Keep the displays looking good by keeping everything watered. Check the compost at least once everyday. Feed your container plants weekly to keep them going until the first frosts.

Watering - If the weather's dry, don't panic and waste water on everything. Established plants and lawns will be fine and quickly turn green again when the rain returns. It's only the plants that you have planted in the last couple of months that will need it. Give them a quick drench once a week rather than a sprinkle once a day, which would only encourage shallow roots anyhow. Don't forget to keep those grow-bags watered and use collected rainwater where possible rather than tap water.

Lawn - If the weather is dry, keep the mower blades on the raised setting for fear of scalping your grass.

Ponds - See June.

Disease - Look out for powdery mildew which is common in late summer, especially if we are lucky enough to have a dry hot one. This is a fungal disease covering plants in a white coating, resulting in poor growth. Most plants do recover, but to reduce the risk of recurring next year, mulch around the base of the plants to help trap moisture in the soil.

Weeds - Now is the time to spray tough weeds with a weedkiller containing glyphosate which will be drawn back into the roots. Be careful not to spray anything you want to keep.

Bag a bargain - Check out the garden centres for any summer sales. It can be a great chance for them to clear their stock and for you to snap it up cheap. Try our local centre - www.duckshillgardencentre.co.uk.

Bulbs - At the same time, why not get your bulbs now; most garden centres will have them on display. And it's far better to get them earlier rather than later, as they will be in great condition. Apart from tulips the majority can be planted now, but if you are not ready, store them in a dry, cool place. Make a note so that you remember where you put them.

Climbers - These flower at their best when the stems are trained horizontally. Check on them regularly and tie in while growth is still flexible.

Vegetables - These will be ripening fast in the warm weather, so check daily to catch it while it's fresh and ready to cook. It will be at it's tastiest after picking, so harvest and straight into the pot for juiciness.

Cabbage Whites - Keep an eye out for these yellow and black caterpillars which can swarm over your plants, especially the brassica family, stripping their leaves. Pick off as many as you can or spray with a pesticide suitable.

Veg - Outdoors you can now sow things like Autumn/winter salads, carrots, French beans, oriental veg., quick-growing summer salads, spring cabbage, turnips etc.

Summer pruning - Now is the time to prune trained apple and pear trees, such as cordons, plum pyramids and fans. On apples and pears, cut back any new side-shoots growing from the main stem to 3 leaves and cut any shoots growing in established side-shoots back to 1 leaf. Completely remove any vigorous, upright shoots. On pyramid plums, cut back new shoots on main stems to 20cm and side-shoots to 15cm. On fan-trained plums, cut non-essential new shoots to 3 leaves after fruiting.

Rot - Brown rot begins as a soft brown area on the skin of tree fruits and rapidly spreads turning the whole fruit brown. Rings of white pustules also appear and the fruit may fall off the tree, some will hang on and dry out. Gather them up and put them in the green waste compost for the council to take away and stop it spreading.

Berries - Cut back your summer fruiting raspberries, blackberries and hybrid berries' shoots that have fruited this year, to ground level. Tie in any new growth as this will produce next year's crop.

Fruit - Rake up any fruit that has fallen from the trees and will not be eaten or given away, as it will attract wasps.

Jobs to do in September - *Cley Potts*

Bulbs - If you haven't already done so, get your spring bulbs planted now.

Potatoes - Harvest your main crop spuds as they should be a nice size by now and before the slugs start eating them before you do. They should store for several months if you let them dry out for a couple of hours before putting them in boxes or paper sacks. Any damaged ones, use straight away as they would only rot if stored away.

Veg. - Some veg. to sow outdoors. Carrots, beetroot, dwarf French beans, leafy salads, spring onions and turnips.

Blight - The dreaded fungal disease blight has devastated most potato and tomato crops in the last few years during the spells of warm, wet weather. Watch out for the first signs of black patches on the foliage and cut off any stems of affected plants. Bin or burn them to prevent spreading. Potatoes underground should be OK to use, but wait a couple of weeks before digging them up to allow the blight spores on the surface to die. Unfortunately, any affected tomatoes will either rot on the plant or a few days after picking.

Onions - Lift any onions and shallots once the foliage starts to die back. Don't bend the tops over as this can cause the bulbs to rot. Leave them outdoors to dry naturally, but if the weather is wet, put them in seed trays and bring indoors or the greenhouse. Store in nets or plaited into strings to hang.

Patio - There should be a month or two before any frosts, so to keep your container/hanging baskets in good shape, remove flowers as they fade water if compost feels dry and keep feeding.

Bugs - Put up bug boxes to provide places for beneficial insects to hibernate in.

Ponds - Keep your ponds free of leaves and foliage by netting or remove them as soon as you notice them falling into the water. Failure to do so could end up with it smelling and getting murky.

Hardy plants - Most hardy annuals will be past their best by now. Collect any seed you want to keep and store them in labelled envelopes (preferably in the cool). Dig up the plants and put them on the compost heap. You now have some space for something else to be planted such as bulbs or spring bedding.

Lawns - After a good summer, wear and tear will have taken its toll on your lawn. Give it good raking over with a spring tine rake and then aerate it with a fork at approx 20cm intervals to improve drainage. Give it a top dressing either shop bought or of your own mix of 6 parts sharp sand, 3 parts sieved soil and 1 part sieved garden compost. Apply 1kg of dressing per sq metre and brush in. Don't bother to feed it with autumn lawn food The Which Gardening magazine (2007) found that this did not give any long term benefit. If you have moss problems, use lawn sand instead.

Apples - This month you should be able to pick (or scrimp) your apples. You can tell if they are ripe by gently lifting the fruit and twisting it. If it's ready, it will easily come away in your hand. If it does not, resist pulling it. If you have glut, store them in a cool dry place in plastic bags with small holes in them for later. Or, if too many, let your friends and neighbours have some.

Seeds - Collect any seeds of plants you particularly liked. Lay them out to dry, put them in packets labelled up and store them in a cool dry place until required.



That's all for this edition. Thanks for reading it and if you didn't enjoy it or want something changed, please let me know. (Ed)