

WESTFIELD HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

December 2024 Newsletter

Email westfieldhorticulturalsociety@gmail.com

Your committee:- Chair:- Dave Miles, also Membership Secretary, Event Organiser & Newsletter Editor
Secretary :- Linda Baker, also Treasurer :- Show Secretary Tonia Munns
Committee members:- Eileen Hurton, Plants - Juni Parkhurst, Seeds - Maria Wells - Malcolm Shirley

Dear members,

This is the last newsletter of 2024 with plenty to read on those dark winter evenings.

It was with great sadness that we learned of the passing of lovely Margaret Crouch, a most loyal contributor and supporter of the WHS. Margaret helped work on her father's allotment as a child and then for a Horticultural company for approximately 40 years.

She had various roles on our committee and won countless prizes and awards for her entries to our shows over many years, including winning the prestigious Banksian medal an incredible 5 times.

We will truly miss her smiling face at our Horticultural Shows.

Thank you to everyone that attended our first ever Beetle Drive on Saturday 23rd November at the Church Hall after battling through the elements of wind and rain. The evening was full of fun, meeting/talking to other members of the society and guests as the nature of the game was to move around the tables after each round. Everyone appeared to enjoy the evening. One comment heard was 'Best fun I've had for many an evening'. Thanks goes to Adele for keeping control and guiding us through the playing process during the evening. Many thanks also go to Elaine, Jackie, Linda, Nicky and Valerie for making and providing us with delicious cakes, amazing sausage rolls and mince pies as well as tea and coffee at the halfway point. Our next Beetle Drive will be on Saturday 8th November 2025, an evening not to be missed. A must be diary entry.

Tuesday 10th December 9 members of the society attended a seasonal 2/3 course lunch of turkey and all the trimmings at the New Inn. Thanks go to Patrick and his staff for looking after us all. Food was exceptional.

For your information. Lloyds Bank who we have been banking with for as long as one can remember have decided to start charging clubs and societies from the 15th January. A monthly fee and charge for each cheque etc. would cost us well over £100 a year. The committee decided at a meeting to move our account to the Metro Bank who do not make any charges for the types of transactions that we make. Therefore all future bank payments to be made to Metro Bank, Sort code 23-05-80 and Account number 55312362, Cheques still to be made out to Westfield Horticultural Society please.

Our next event is on Saturday 16th February, we are holding our Valentines Quiz with supper and a pudding. Evening starts at 7pm in Westfield Church Hall, cost will be £7.50 per person. Please book your table as soon as possible of 4 or 6 people or we can make up tables if you want to come alone. Early booking would be appreciated so that we can plan the supper. Payment can be made direct into our Metro bank account, sort code 23-05-80, account number 55312362, cheque or cash in our box at Archers or to myself, Dave Miles 102 Westfield Lane, St Leonards on Sea, East Sussex TN37 7NQ.

Many thanks.

Here are a few suggestions of what we could be doing in the garden during January.

Check through winter-flowering pansies in pots, hanging baskets and borders once a week, and pinch out any fading flowers. Grip them between the nails of your index finger and thumb to pinch them out or snip them off with a pair of scissors or secateurs. Regular deadheading will promote more flowers and keep them coming for weeks more yet.

Look for self-seeded foxglove plants in the garden that have grown alongside border edges or close to other established plants. If they've sprung up in the wrong spot, give them more room to grow by digging them out and moving to another spot. Use a trowel or border spade to lift the plants with as much root as possible. Replant them by digging a hole, water the base, put in the plant and firm soil back around the roots – the plants will do best planted into firm ground. Finally give them a good soak.

Sow a few hardy perennials to bloom next summer. For flowering in their first year, agastache, delphiniums, echinacea will all do well. Fill a pot with loam-based propagation compost and tamp down the compost to give a firm, level surface. Scatter the seed sparsely over the surface, cover with a thin layer of vermiculite or sieved compost. Press down the surface lightly and place the pot in a tray of water to soak up through the compost. The seeds will germinate without heat, but a propagator will speed up germination.

Go through your stored potatoes and remove any with signs of mould, before it spreads to other tubers. Also look for any tiny holes that may have been caused by slugs burrowing into the tubers. This makes them much more vulnerable to rotting, so they should be discarded. Potatoes should be stored in cold, dark, airy conditions so they shouldn't sprout- if they do, rub off the shoots and use the potato straightaway.

Don't waste a good Christmas tree. If you have a shredder, your tree can be shredded and added to the compost or put straight onto the ground as mulch. You could cut the main stem into sections, leaving each tiered rosette of leaves to use as weed suppressant beneath trees and shrubs. The remaining sections of stem can be piled in a corner of the garden to create habitats for bugs and amphibians that will help with slug control when the spring shoots appear.

A Christmas Quiz

Answers will be in the January issue of the Newsletter.

- Question 1 Who was the bad guy Rudolph tried to avoid?
- Question 2 How many ghosts are there in "a Christmas Carol"?
- Question 3 Where does the Polar Express take the children?
- Question 4 Which country started the tradition of putting up a Christmas Tree?
- Question 5 In the UK what is Santa's postcode?
- Question 6 How many windows are in an Advent Calendar?
- Question 7 What is pomology the study of?
- Question 8 What word is used to describe plants that like acid soil and will not grow in alkaline soils?
- Question 9 Which garden plant in the 17th century was exchanged as a form of currency?
- Question 10 What country do Amaryllis bulbs originate from?
- Question 11 Bedford, Fillbasket, Cromwell and Wellington are all types of what?
- Question 12 What is placed in front of the Temperate Glasshouse at Kew Gardens over Christmas?
- Question 13 Traditionally white Chess pieces are made from the wood of what type of tree?
- Question 14 Each year Bergen sends a Christmas tree to the people of Newcastle and the people of Oslo send a Christmas tree to London, in thanks of what?
- Question 15 What can be added to oranges to make a pleasant-smelling Christmas decoration?
- Question 16 For the UK to have an official White Christmas, according to the Met Office how much snow has to fall?
- Question 17 Prince Albert, Queen Victoria's German husband made the tradition of having a Christmas tree indoors popular. In 1841 he put a tree in which royal residence?
- Question 18 Norfolk Bronze is a type of what?

- Question 19 Which type of Palm tree found in the Middle East produces fruit often ate over the Christmas period?
- Question 20 What type of bedding plant has a winter version that can survive the cold months?
- Question 21 How are Hellebore seeds spread?
- Question 22 Frost changes the taste of veg such as parsnips and sprouts. In what way?
- Question 23 How old is the average Christmas tree when cut?
- Question 24 Who composed the Nutcracker Suite?
- Question 25 Why does Father Christmas need not one, not two but three gardens?

Over the next few months we will be giving tips for entering various classes into our Spring and Autumn shows. This month it's **Home Produce** (cookery and Preserves) Reference NFWI "On with the Show 2012 edition)

1. Being aware of how cookery and preserves classes are judged will help you consider your own entries.
2. The Home Produce section is assessed by NFQI qualified cookery and preserve judges. They use a marking system totalling 20 points for both sections broken down as follows:-
 - a. Cookery:
 - 4 points – External appearance – Colour, shape and uniformity.
 - 4 points – Internal conditions– dept of crust. texture and distribution of ingredients.
 - 12 points – Flavour and aroma.
 - b. Preserves:
 - 2 points – content, cover and label appearance.
 - 5 points – Internal standard – colour and quantity
 - 6 points – Quality - Consistency and texture.
 - 7 points – Flavour and aroma.
3. Always check you have the correct number/size of exhibit as listed in the show schedule, as failure to do so will result in your efforts deemed 'not according to schedule'
4. More specific advice about home produce presentation can be found in the Show Schedule. If you have any queries about a class do contact a member of the show committee.
5. Remember that each entry is assessed on its own merits and not compared with others in the class. The judge should always leave helpful comments and if needed handy tips to encourage you to enter further shows and improve your skills.

Fruit, Vegetable and Flower classes were in the November newsletter.

Identify this Shub from this picture: November's shrub was the Mahonia



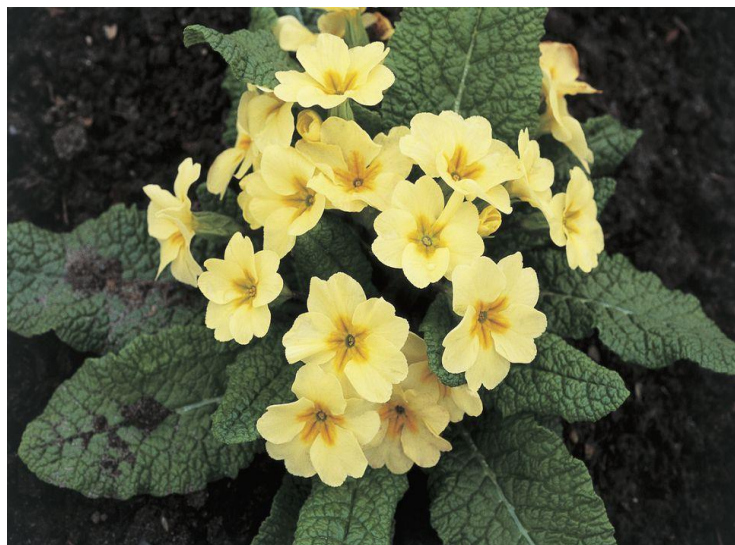
Would anyone like to suggest items they think may be of interest to our members for future Newsletters?

Please let us have items on say your garden, visits to interesting gardens or places.

We would all like to hear about them.

Many thanks

Plant of the month is the :- Primrose



A hardy little plant, the primrose can flower from as early as December in mild years, appearing all the way through the spring until May. It favours woodland clearings, hedgerows and grassland habitats, and sometimes even gardens. Primroses are the foodplant of the caterpillars of the rare Duke of Burgundy butterfly, which is a Priority Species under the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework. Since Victorian times, April 19th has been known as 'Primrose Day' in honour of the late Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli; primroses, his favourite flowers, are placed at his statue in Westminster Abbey and his grave at Hughenden in Buckinghamshire.

Advice Corner:- Our Gardening Wizard is taking a short winter break and will return in February
PLEASE STILL KEEP YOUR QUESTIONS COMING IN which will be answered on the Wizard's return. THANK YOU.

WHS members can receive a 10% discount applicable to plants only from the following nurseries on showing a valid membership card:-

Ed's Nursery, Cripps Corner Road, Staplecross TN32 5QA 01580 830701

Oak Cottage Plants, Kent Street (A21) (Open Friday, Saturdays and Sundays or by special appointment) 01424 754666 (**Please note they are closed until February/March 2025, details of opening in future newsletters**)
(Checkout their Facebook page [#OakCottagePlants](#) [#Gardening](#) [#NurseryLife](#) [#CustomerService](#))

Rotherview Nursery, Three Oaks, Ivy House Lane, Hastings TN35 4NP 01424 756228
(Checkout their Facebook page [rotherview nursery](#))

The Old Rose Nursery, Quickbourne Lane, (off Beales Lane) Northiam, TN31 6QY 01797 252680.
WEB site www.theoldrosenursery.co.uk (**Please note The Rose Nursery is now closed until February, details of opening in future newsletters**)

As our society is affiliated to the RHS we have been issued with a 50% RHS Garden Entry discount card for use by our members on a one-off entry to any RHS garden (Bridgewater, Harlow Carr, Hyde Hall, Rosemoor and Wisley) except for flower shows and Glow illuminations events.

If you would like to use the card, please contact our secretary Linda Baker via our email address westfieldhorticulturalsociety@gmail.com

BOOK YOUR PLACE

To book a place at our Valentines Quiz with supper on Saturday 15th February please contact me Dave Miles on daveatwhs@gmail.com or 07455 944849. Cost will be £7.50 per person and include a supper. (Please book your place as soon as possible to avoid disappointment)

FUTURE EVENTS:

Saturday 8th February	Willow Obelisk workshop. Now full, contact us for any cancellations.
Saturday 15th February	Valentines Quiz with supper at the Church Hall starting at 7:00pm
Tuesday 4th March	Talk on all things Bees Starting at 7:00pm. Entrance is free with refreshments and cake
Saturday 5th April	Spring Show 2:30pm to 4:30pm at the Westfield Community Centre.
Thursday 17th April	Tulley's Farm Tulip Festival: subject to booking
Thursday 1st May	Join Dave and Dawn on a visit to Sarah Raven's Garden at Perch Hill. 1:00 to 4:00pm
June	Talk - Date and subject tba
July	Cream Tea - Date and venue tba
Thursday 11th September	Visit to Wisley
Saturday 20th September	Autumn Show 2:30pm to 4:30pm at the Westfield Community Centre.
October	Talk - date and subject tba
Saturday 8th November	Beetle Drive at the Church Hall starting at 7:00pm
Tuesday 2nd December	Seasonal Lunch The New Inn
Saturday 8th March 2026	2024/5 AGM

The committee wish you all a Very Merry Christmas and a perfect Gardening 2025

For more information on any of the above please contact Dave Miles on daveatwhs@gmail.com or 07455 944849