

# WESTFIELD HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

## November 2025 Newsletter

Email [westfieldhorticulturalsociety@gmail.com](mailto:westfieldhorticulturalsociety@gmail.com)

Website [www.westfieldhorticulturalsociety.co.uk](http://www.westfieldhorticulturalsociety.co.uk)

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

Dear members,

**Last orders for booking a place.** If you have not already booked a place for our Seasonal lunch at the New Inn on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December at 1:00pm and wish to join us would you please contact me Dave Miles on [daveatwhs@gmail.com](mailto:daveatwhs@gmail.com) or 07455 944849 by 22<sup>nd</sup> November with your menu selection, menu attached. Payment can be made by BACS to Sort code 23-05-80 Account No. 55312362 or by cheque/cash which can be placed in our post box at Archers the butchers or to me at 102 Westfield Lane.

**Date for your diary.** A trip to Wisley has been booked for Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> April 2026. An ideal time to see all the spring bulbs. I have managed to keep the cost the same as this year, being £22 for members and £25 for guests. Same times, 9:00am from Moor Lane and returning about 6:00pm. Please let us know if you would like to join us.

**You may be interested** in a Christmas Market at Sedlescombe Organic Vineyard, Hawkhurst Road TN32 5SA on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> November 10:00am – 5:00pm. Numerous stalls from unique gifts, crafts etc. Free Entry and Parking.

**Tonia Munns** has been our show secretary since we returned to normal working after covid. She has now decided to retire from the position. The functions will be divided between the committee members instead of everything falling on one person. I would like to thank Tonia for all her hard work ensuring the shows ran smoothly over the past few years.

**Fergus Garrett of Great Dixter** gave us a very interesting talk on “Designing with plants the Great Dixter way” at Westfield Bowls club on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> October. He mentioned that he joined GD in 1992 when Christopher Lloyd owned the property and was his great mentor. Fergus knew GD in the mid 80’s as a student and did a little bit of work there. The house sits in the middle with various gardens around it with great structure; topiary, hedges, buildings and plants. He spoke about plants etc that were punctuation points and pulls the eye in. Fergus then mentioned a few gardens that did not have punctuation meaning you can see long grass meadow far beyond that gives connection with the countryside. Dixter is a place where people meet which goes back to Christopher’s time when he had people staying there nearly most weekends from students, botanists, garden writers, garden designer’s artists and potters etc. which is still the case today. Today Dixter has several students from early in the year that come from all over the world. Over 70 people are employed at Dixter, only five are employed in the ornamental gardens with the rest being guides, curators, archivists, publicist etc.

For the education of the young, Dixter is regarded in the industry as the best place in the world to train in flower gardening. They have a 4 to 5 year waiting list for gardeners to come from all over the world.

Not everyone sees eye to eye with the planting of how parts of the garden are planted as at times the colour wheel just is not used, and plants spill over walls, buildings and cracks in the paving. Fergus admitted that they don't always get it right in their planting as they like to experiment with different combinations of plants and colours. They try never to repeat the same combinations, so every year is different. He continued to talk about how the garden has looked through the seasons and discussed the division of plants to create around 70 to 80,000 stock plants for planting the following year.

A lot of experiments are undertaken like one year they sowed Zinnia seed in mid-July which was a month and a half later than ever before and were successful in having them in flower right through to early November. Instead of planting tulips on their own is to make a combination with them, a light-coloured tulip planted with another coloured flower, like blue forget-me-nots.

Fergus covered so much in an hour with his description of slides which were of great variety, it is nearly impossible to document in detail, so this is only a snippet of everything he spoke about.

Our thanks go to the Bowls Club for allowing us to use their pavilion and facilities.

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

Get any remaining unplanted tulip bulbs into the ground now so that they have enough time to root and flower along with the rest. Tulips planted later often flower on shorter stems, but they still give a colourful display.

Trim and store pelargoniums. Get some free colour for next year's container displays by tidying up and storing through winter. Use a trowel to lift them out of the ground or tip out from the container, then cut back the soft foliage and flowers, leaving a cluster of stems about 10cm high. Trim straggly roots slightly and put them into pots or boxes of loose compost and do not water. Keep them somewhere frost free and away from rainfall through winter and early spring. Then they can be potted on or planted into the garden.

Place poinsettias in the perfect spot to ensure that they put on a vibrant display for the whole of the festive season and beyond. Keep them in bright light but away from strong sunlight and draughts. If placing on a windowsill, ensure it is wide enough for the plant to be displayed without the leaves being brushed by curtains or blinds. Take care when transporting your plant from the shop to your home, shielding it from strong wind, which can damage foliage and can lead to premature leaf drop. Once your plant is finally in place, water sparingly each time the compost is dry, and mist the plant regularly to increase humidity and keep it healthier for longer.

Warm yourself up on a cold day by spreading homemade compost on your vegetable beds. Fork a deep layer onto the bare soil and between any winter crops. There is no need to dig it in, as it will be worked on by soil-dwelling bugs and worms, who will draw it into the soil. It will improve the soil's structure and add a small amount of nutrients. It will also suppress weeds and hold moisture. The soil surface will be dark and crumbly by spring, perfect for seed sowing.

## Plant of the month is the Christmas Rose or Hellebore



### The Christmas Rose in Myth and legend

The Christmas Rose isn't actually a rose at all, but a hellebore. The word Helleborus originally comes from the Greek "hellein" meaning food and "bora" meaning to kill - indicating that the Christmas Rose is toxic if consumed. As with many poisons, the plant was used as a medicine in ancient times and myth has it that an overdose of medication containing Helleborus resulted in the death of Alexander the great.

A much more charming myth surrounding the Christmas Rose concerns a story about a young shepherdess called Madelon. Legend has it that Madelon was tending to her flock one cold night and saw three wise men of the Nativity pass by carrying their gifts to baby Jesus. Madelon wept because she had nothing to give. However, as her tears fell to the ground an angel parted the snow to reveal a plant with beautiful white flowers – a Christmas Rose – and the perfect gift. Submitted by Malcolm Shirley.

**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.

Carol and Steve have moved all the plants from their previous nursery at Kent Street on the A21 to their garden at Oak Cottage. They are busy renovating their garden now and will welcome visitors going to see what they are doing, and plants are still available to purchase. Please contact them on 01424 754666 to make arrangements.

(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](http://www.theoldrosenursery.co.uk) Closed at present, open again spring 2026

**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](mailto:westfieldhorticulturalsociety@gmail.com)

### FUTURE EVENTS:

**Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December** Seasonal Lunch at the New Inn, Westfield. **(Bookable event 2026)**

**Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> February** Valentines Quiz at the Community Centre Starting at 7:00pm **(Bookable event)**

**Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> March** 2024/5 AGM 11:00am at Westfield Bowls Club.

**Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> April** Spring Show 2:30pm to 4:30pm at the Westfield Community Centre.

**Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> April** Trip to Wisley

**Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> September** Autumn Show 2:30 pm to 4:30pm at the Westfield Community Centre ...