

# WESTFIELD HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

## November 2024 Newsletter

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

**OUR AGM** on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> October was well attended and being moved to a Saturday morning brought out more members than at previous AGMs held in the evenings. Minutes and reports have been circulated. Please contact us if you have not received them.

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

Collect and chop up twigs or branches that have snapped and fallen from trees and shrubs during autumn months. Cut then into 4-5cm so they are small enough to go in the bottom of the compost heap where they will create some air gaps to help keep the bacteria active. This also allows the twigs to rot down more quickly. Alternatively, bundle them up and poke them into the hedge to provide more cover for hibernating bugs. Longer, sturdier twigs with a good structure can be saved for supporting next year's pea crop.

Despite the cold, plants can easily dry out in winter, particularly if it's very windy and dry. You can't rely on rain so it's wise to check. Press your fingers into the compost to test the moisture level or lift your pots to check their weight. If you suspect the roots are soaked but the surface is dry, push a thin green cane right down into the compost to see if water stains the end. When watering, do it directly onto the compost, rather than sprinkling the tops of your plants.

Limit the spread of rose disease such as black spot by removing any affected leaves that are still on the plant. Roses are largely dormant now so you can defoliate the whole thing to be sure – this also makes it easier to prune and train climbers and ramblers. Limit reinfection by raking up and removing all dropped foliage and stems. Leaves can be composted but most heaps are not enough to kill black spot, so it's usually best to put them in the municipal green waste bin.

Get some free summer colour for next year's container displays by tidying up and storing your pelargoniums through winter. Use a trowel to lift them out, or alternatively just turn out the container, then cut back all the soft foliage and flowers, leaving a cluster of stems about 10cm high. Trim straggly roots lightly then plunge the roots into pots or crates 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 again for next year's containers.

Place poinsettias in the perfect spot to ensure that they put on a vibrant display for the whole festive season and beyond. Keep your poinsettia in bright light but away from strong sunlight and draughts if placing it on a windowsill, make sure the sill is wide enough for the plant to be displayed without leaves being brushed by curtains or blinds.

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

Sow onions from seed now – it's cheaper than using sets and there's a wider choice of varieties, but you'll need space to keep them indoors until spring. Sowing is also a good option if your soil is prone to waterlogging in winter, which would rot onion sets planted in the ground. Fill a seed tray with peat-free compost and tamp down to make a firm surface. (A modular tray or small pots) Sow the seeds thinly and cover with perlite or vermiculite. Water from below by standing the tray or pots in water and remove once the compost is fully damp. Keep on a warm sunny windowsill or in a heated propagator at 15 degrees centigrade.

**Over the next few months** we will be giving tips for entering various classes as per the RHS Handbook (revised 2016) in our Spring and Autumn shows. **This month Fruit, Vegetable and Flower classes.**

**PLEASE READ THE SCHEDULE CAREFULLY** and check you enter the correct number and variety in the appropriate class. Failure to do so will result in your efforts not being judged and recorded as NAS (Not according to schedule) in the allotted section.

Complete the entry form in the WHS Schedule and submit it by the date specified.

On arrival at the hall for setting up proceed to the table that has your appropriate class cards displayed.

Allow plenty of time to arrange your exhibit(s) in the correct area, mindful that there will be other entries. Perhaps bring along spare specimens in case of casualties in transit!

Before assessing a class, the judge looks at the overall standard of entries and level of show. Points are awarded accordingly. They consider the presentation and uniformity of exhibits as well as their overall condition. Presenting them neatly on a plate or directly on the bench will enhance your vegetable section entries. Sand is useful to stabilise small items such as tomatoes and shallots. Exhibits must be clean but not scrubbed.

Flower exhibits should be picked in the morning or evening and stored in a cool place in fresh water. Buckets, bottles, jars and crates are all handy containers to transport flowers to the show. On arrival at the show bench, check blooms and remove any damaged petals/leaves. Cut stems as required and place in your exhibition vase. When several blooms are required in a single vase, consider how balanced they look and choose similar size/quality flowers.

Fruit exhibits should be picked as freshly as possible with their stalks intact. Exceptions are peaches, nectarines, apricots and nuts. Care should be taken not to damage fruit through handling. Do not polish fruit. Present exhibits symmetrically, if possible, on plates. Apples are presented stalk end downwards.

When you have finished setting out each item, clear away any debris and ensure your entry card is name side down beside the exhibit. Before leaving the hall, make a final check of your exhibits. Variety labels are helpful but not compulsory.

On arrival at the show, check the outcome of your efforts and learn from those exhibitors that were more successful than you. There are always seasoned growers and exhibitors around to chat to for advice. Enjoy it – and remember - READ THE SCHEDULE CAREFULLY.

**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.**

**Identify this Shub from this picture:** September's shrub was Pyracantha



**Plant of the month is the** :- Button Chrysanthemum



Chrysanthemums have been around for a long time; they were originally cultivated in China and were first recorded in writing in the 15th century BC (over 3,000 years ago). It was believed to have medicinal properties as an herb; for example, the boiled roots were used as a cure for headaches. It's also one of the four noble plants in Chinese culture, along with plum blossoms, orchids, and bamboo. All four plants are widely used in ancient paintings and poems, and are thought to represent the four seasons, and human virtues (with chrysanthemums representing fall and nobility).

Some of our older members may remember Arthur Farnes who recently passed away. He lived in Pett, an extremely knowledgeable Horticultural man who came to judge the Westfield shows for many years. He knew his stuff when it came to flowers, fruit and veg, but he was a technical expert in dahlias and could spend a generous amount of time examining each dahlia bloom for detail, perfections and flaws. When judgement was pronounced, you knew it was accurate! He always had a soft spot for WHS and when I joined the committee, I was lucky enough to see him in action, before he hung up his trowel. Catherine Collingwood.

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

## **BOOK YOUR PLACE**

**To book a place** at our Beetle Drive on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> November please contact me Dave Miles on [daveatwhs@gmail.com](mailto:daveatwhs@gmail.com) or 07455 944849. Cost will be £2.50 per person with Tea/coffee and cake in the interval. (You are more than welcome to bring any other refreshments you may want) (Please book your place as soon as possible to avoid disappointment)

**To book a place** on our Seasonal lunch at the New Inn on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> December would you please contact me Dave Miles on [daveatwhs@gmail.com](mailto:daveatwhs@gmail.com) or 07455 944849 with your menu selection. Menu is attached. 2 Courses are £28 and 3 courses are £32. A deposit is required at time of booking and balance payable by 26<sup>th</sup> of November. Deposit for 2 courses is £14 and £16 for 3 courses. Cancellations will only be accepted for a refund up to and including 8<sup>th</sup> December. Payment by Cash or cheque to our box in Archers or by banker's draft.  
Sort code 30-97-66 Account number 00095788 (**PLEASE NOTE:-** There are only a certain number of places available so if not already booked it is advisable to do so before all available places are taken) (A free glass of wine, beer or soft drink for all members)

## **FUTURE EVENTS:**

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| <b>Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2024</b>  | Beetle Drive at the Church Hall starting at 7:00pm (See above)                   |
| <b>Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2024</b>   | Seasonal lunch at the New Inn 12:30 for 1pm (See above)                          |
| <b>Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2025</b>   | Garden Willow Obelisk workshop. Now full, contact us for any cancellations.      |
| <b>Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> February 2025</b>  | Valentines Quiz at the Church Hall starting at 7:00pm                            |
| <b>Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2025</b>       | Talk on Bee keeping at the Church Hall starting at 7:00pm.                       |
| <b>Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> April 2025</b>      | Spring Show 2:30pm to 4:30pm at the Westfield Community Centre.                  |
| <b>Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> May 2025</b>        | Join Dave and Dawn on a visit to Sarah Raven's Garden at Perch Hill. 1 to 4:00pm |
| <b>Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2025</b> | Visit to Wisley  |
| <b>Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2025</b> | Autumn Show 2:30pm to 4:30pm at the Westfield Community Centre.                  |

For more information on any of the above please contact Dave Miles on [daveatwhs@gmail.com](mailto:daveatwhs@gmail.com) or 07455 944849