

WESTFIELD HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

FEBRUARY 2026 Newsletter

Email westfieldhorticulturalsociety@gmail.com

Website 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,

Our Valentine's Quiz is on THIS coming Saturday, 14th February at the Community centre, Workhouse Lane. Evening starts at 7pm and the cost will be £2.50 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. Unfortunately, due to the lack of facilities in the kitchen, we are unable to offer a hot supper this time. Please bring your own food and drink. Tea and coffee will be available. Payment can be made on the night. If anyone would like to donate a prize for the Raffle it would be most welcome.

Due to lack of interest we have had to cancel the planned Macrame workshop.

The trip to Wisley on Wednesday 29th of April is booking fast, so please book as soon as possible to avoid disappointment. The cost is the same as last year, £22 for members and £25 for guests. Same times, 9:00am from Moor Lane and returning about 6:00pm. Email westfieldhorticulturalsociety@gmail.com or daveatwhs@gmail.com or phone 07455 944849

Membership

This was due in January, if you have already renewed, we thank you. Details of how to pay can be found in the Schedule and Handbook that was delivered to your door. Email copy was also sent to those members with access to email. Membership cards will be available at our Spring show.

Spring Show - Saturday 11th April 2:30 to 4:30pm

We should all now be planning what we are going to enter the show this year, and there are plenty of classes to choose from. **CAN YOU HELP PLEASE** If you are dividing plants or sowing seeds, please think about doing a few extra to enter our plant sale. We don't want to leave it just to one or two members. They can be delivered to the hall on the morning of the show or at 102 Westfield Lane. Any spare seeds that you may have left over after your sowing are welcome into our seed swop at the show, also any gardening books you no longer need.

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

Spring is a good time to divide and repot streptocarpus or Cape primroses, while flowering. They pull apart easily and it does not harm them to do this when in flower. Use compost with added grit or perlite to keep it loose and open. Do not move the plants into too bigger a pot, as their roots like to

be constrained for them to flower freely. Put them in a shady cool (but frost free) spot with humid air but not too much moisture at their roots. They tend to be happiest on the floor of the greenhouse, preferably beneath any wooden staging. A daily misting caters for most of their watering needs, with a 'proper' watering no more than once a week- being careful not to splash the leaves as you do so, as this risks scorching them in sunlight.

Now is the time to pot on dormant canna rhizomes to start them in growth. They need a long season to get the best display of their tall, showy flowers. Fill a large pot with potting compost and place the canna just under the surface of the compost. Replenish the compost if they are already in pots. Water them in, then move to a sunny spot in the greenhouse (or windowsill) or on a heated mat, so they get enough warmth to start into growth. Keep them indoors until early June.

Plant gladiolus corms for a vibrant display, plant them in a sunny border with free-draining soil. Choose a variety of colours and heights. In containers, plant the bulb like corms close together, 15cm deep in potting compost, in borders, plant them at the same depth but give them more room, setting them out about 10cm apart. Firm the surface, then water in. Also consider saving some corms for planting in a few weeks, to get a succession of flowers through summer.

When polyanthus finish flowering it's a good idea to split them up to rejuvenate them ready for next year. This also gives you more plants for free that you can grow on over the coming months. Carefully dig up your polyanthus or remove them from their pots. Tease individual plants apart with your hands or lever them apart with a hand fork. Trim off the larger outer leaves and nip out the old flower stems. You should be left with a small rosette of fresh, inner leaves on a strong root system. The roots benefit from a trim at this stage too- snip off a third of their length. Finally pot up each rosette in fresh potting compost or plant back into your border. Firm in and water well.

Slugs and snails become more active in warm, damp spring weather and they love to eat fresh, young seedlings. Remove any you find close to your plants and place a few organic slug pellets by the seedlings for protection.

Pot anemone corms now for flowers in early summer. They'll go dormant after flowering, but you can keep them for future years. Plant several corms in a pot and when the weather is warmer put them outside to flower. First step is to place corms in warm water to soak and swell overnight. Fill a pot with potting compost and firm to 5cm below the rim of the pot, then place the corms 5cm apart on their longest side. It's hard to tell which way up they go, but the roots and shoots always grow in the right direction. Cover with compost to the brim. Label, water and place in the light for the corms to shoot.

Now is the time to make new begonias. Cut a few new leaves with their leaf stalks attached from a begonia houseplant to make leaf cuttings. Fill pots with propagation compost firm and water. Take a leaf and trim the leafstalk down to 2-5cm. Use a dibber to insert the stalk into the compost and firm it in with the leaf just at the surface of the compost. Cover with a plastic bag or propagator lid and put somewhere warm to root. A tiny new plant will emerge from the base and the old leaf can be cut away.

Water flowering amaryllis (*hippeastrum*) and start regular feeding with tomato fertiliser.

House Plant of the month is

The Peacock plant



The **Peacock Plant**, scientifically known as **Calathea makoyana**, is a tropical foliage plant native to South America, particularly Brazil. It is admired for its large, broad leaves that feature a striking peacock feather-like pattern, with pale green on dark olive green and maroon undersides. This evergreen perennial typically grows to a height of 30 – 60cm, although some varieties can reach to a height of 1one meter. The Peacock plant thrives in warm, frost-free climates and is commonly used as an indoor plant due to its decorative foliage. Proper care includes maintaining humidity and avoiding direct sunlight to keep its vibrant colours.

The RHS monthly magazine ‘**The Garden**’ has a monthly Horty quiz consisting of nine questions. Questions 1 to 3 are for the new gardeners amongst us, questions 4 to 6 are for the more experienced and questions 7 to 9 are for the experienced gardeners.

January answers to the quiz are:- Question **1** - Betula or Birch. Question **2** - Mahonia. Question **3** - Cornus. Question **4** - Flowers appearing on bare stems. Question **5** - Carex. Question **6** - Winter dormancy. Question **7** - Winter aconite. Question **8** - A plant’s flowing period through winter. Question **9** - A geophyte.

This month’s questions are:-

- Question 1 What soil type and position best suits most camellias?
- Question 2 Allowing seed potatoes to start sprouting before you plant them is known as what?
- Question 3 How deep should you apply an organic-based mulch?
- Question 4 Apricots and peaches belong to which genus?
- Question 5 Can you name the popular climber with cascading flowers that benefits from both February and August prune?
- Question 6 Which hardy Cyclamen species flowers around February to March?
- Question 7 ‘Poulton’s Special’ AGM, ‘African Sunset’ and ‘Raspberry Ice’ are cultivars of what tropical (needs winter protection) climber?
- Question 8 Which late-winter-flowering bulb had cultivars ‘Sunshine’, Blue Note’ and ‘Sea Breeze’?
- Question 9 What characteristics would a plant have if described as ‘tomentose’?

Answers will be in the March Newsletter,

Advice Corner:- This month's questions for our Gardening Wizard

Question 1 : Why is my pot planted camellia turning yellow and not flowering well?

Answer: It may be pot bound. Take it out of its present pot and gently tease the roots out especially around the edges then repot in a pot a couple of sizes bigger. Camellias need acid soil so use ericaceous soil mixed with slow-release feed. Place in a partially shaded spot and keep it well watered especially during summer

Question 2 : Why has my camellia dropped its flower buds?

Answer: Some varieties shed excess buds naturally otherwise there are two main causes. The most common is the rapid thawing of frosted buds in early morning sunshine. Camellias planted in an east facing site are particularly vulnerable so if you can, try and move the plant. The other cause is summer drought, camellias are shallow rooted so need moisture to be readily available especially from July to October. As this is when new buds are forming for next years flowers. So water regularly during dry spells. You could also help your plants by mulching round them.

Question 3 : Why did the tips of my camellia's leaves turn brown?

Answer: The plant has either reacted to dry conditions or it's been scorched by the sun. Make sure you keep it well watered in dry spells especially if growing in a pot. Mulching around the plant helps keep the root area moist. Camellias ideally like to be grown in dappled shade

PLEASE STILL KEEP YOUR QUESTIONS COMING IN.

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 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

RHS Partner Gardens. There are 17 being reachable in Kent and Sussex. Full list can be found in the January Newsletter

Every month I will include details of a couple of gardens. This month is Sissinghurst Castle Garden and Walmer Castle and Gardens.

SISSINGHURST CASTLE GARDEN (Also National Trust) “The garden is a synthesis of strong design and exuberant planting” says Head Gardener Troy Smith. “Bare of flowers, its design comes to the fore – climb the tower and you’ll appreciate the geometry of the garden rooms, the precision of the yew hedges, the drawing together of all five acres with vista running north to south and east to west.” As the garden starts to awaken this month, a carpet of *Crocus tommasinianus* AGM is followed by fabulous magnolia blooms that wrap around the Elizabethan walls of the tower.

WALMER CASTLE AND GARDENS The Plant Heritage National Plant Collection of *Galanthus doubles* is held at this new RHS Partner Garden, together with more than 100 other cultivars in displays across the site. Drifts of snowdrops brighten the Woodland Walk, culminating in a display of *Iris reticulata*, winter aconites and hellebores in the Woodland Garden. Enjoy the scents of winter-flowering shrubs such as *Chimonanthus* and *Sarcococca* and find early-flowering *Crocus tommasinianus* AGM in the meadow, where you can take in views of the castle and the English Channel.

Sedlescombe and District Garden Society have a talk on Wednesday 18th February by Sophie Leathart about Constance Spry who was initially a teacher but went on to run a vast fashionable and successful number of flower shops in the west end of London. Talk starts at 2:00pm and is in the Sedlescombe village hall. Our members are invited to attend free of charge.

FUTURE EVENTS: 2026

Saturday 14th February	Valentines Quiz at the Community Centre Starting at 7:00pm
Saturday 7th March	2024/5 AGM 11:00am at Westfield Bowls Club.
Wednesday 18th March	Talk by Sophie Leathart on ‘Setting up a cutting garden’ with slides and demonstration on flower arranging. 2:00pm
Saturday 11th April	Spring Show 2:30pm to 4:30pm at the Westfield Community Hall.
April Date to be arranged	Open Garden. Malcolm and Elaine Shirley (WHS Members)
Wednesday 29th April	Trip to Wisley
May Date to be arranged	Talk
Tuesday 16th June	Open Garden at Dave and Dawn’s. 1:00pm to 4:00pm
July Date to be arranged	Cream Tea
August Date to be arranged	Open Garden Susan Fletcher (WHS Member)
Saturday 5th September	Autumn show 2:30pm to 4:30pm at the Westfield Community Hall
Tuesday 27th October	Talk by Graham Blunt from Plant Base UK. 2:00pm at Westfield Bowls Club
Saturday 14th November	Beetle Drive 7:00pm. Westfield Community Hall
Thursday 3rd December	Seasonal Lunch 1:00pm at the New Inn Westfield

Sue Howard has asked if anyone is interested in a couple seed trays and an outside portable greenhouse. They're used, not new as in pics.

Please contact me if you are interested and I will put you in contact with Sue. daveatwhs@gmail.com or phone 07455 944849

