

WESTFIELD HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

May 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 – Jackie Fellows, Patricia Oakland and Malcolm Shirley

Dear Members,

Visit to Dave and Dawn's Garden.

Dawn and I will open our garden to our members on **Tuesday 16th June 2:00 to 4:00pm** at 102 Westfield Lane, St Leonards on Sea TN37 7NQ. Refreshments will be available. Parking in the drive, if full you can park close by in Baldslow Down. Please let me know if you would like to come so we can ensure we have enough cake. Email westfieldhorticulturalsociety@gmail.com or daveatwhs@gmail.com or phone 07455 944849. Many thanks. Dave Miles.

BOOK YOUR PLACE:- We are holding a cream tea at Westfield Bowls Pavilion on Wednesday 1st July 2:30 for 3:00pm. Cost to members is free and £3:50 for guests. We are limited to 40 spaces, so early reservation is advisable. Please reserve your place by contacting our email address westfieldhorticulturalsociety@gmail.com or daveatwhs@gmail.com or 07455 94484

Trip to Wisley

Wednesday 29th April 41 members and guests boarded the coach in Moor Lane for the journey to Wisley. There was a slight delay going through Hurst Green because of road works but still arrived at Wisley dead on 11:00 as predicted. We were very fortunate with the weather, sunshine throughout our visit but we did experience a brisk wind in parts of the garden.

Due to the timing we missed the daffodils but caught the last of the tulips. As usual there was plenty to see to keep our interest throughout. One area that was at its best was the Alpine house, so many of the plants in flower. Pictures on page 1.

The day ended with a visit to the very extensive shop and garden centre where there were a good number of purchases. A very smooth journey back to Westfield thanks to our driver Darren who got us back at 6:00pm again as predicted. Next year's visit to Wisley is planned for either 12th or 19th October for the Autumn colours. A date for your diary.

Spring Show. Just a few facts and figures that may be of interest.

49 people entered the show. Also 10/12 Cubs entered Tomato plants.

3 Beavers entered Grow Cress on a Potato.

There were 70 Classes that could be entered and there was a total of 250 class entries overall.

Thank you to everyone that entered.

On Wednesday 22nd April Dawn and I (Dave) visited Tulleys Tulip festival at Turners Hill near Crawley when the sun shone all the time, we were there but the sting in the tail was a very fresh wind. On entering the site we found ourselves surrounded by various food and drink outlets with 3 very large marquees where one was able to enjoy purchases under cover. With five lakes of varying size all with a tulip theme of tulips on the lake side, or in round floating tulip gardens to other themes like the Immersion Garden, Whispering Windmill and Spring Dreams etc. There was also a 33-meter Observation big wheel where one could take in the view of the whole site. We were impressed by the freshness of the tulips considering the festival had already been open for about four weeks. Where there was a cluster of tulips in a bed, on a patch of grass or on a bank, the tulips had been planted in containers to form a row or curve with sand around the sides to hide the container and shape the bed.

Everywhere we looked there were tulips in one form or another in beds, containers along walkways and floating on the various lakes. Not forgetting two very large fields with rows and rows of tulips in many colours that you could walk amongst. We are told that around one and half million tulips are planted every year with over 120 different varieties. With the festival on for about five weeks, we wondered how ever after four and a half weeks the tulips were mostly in their prime, we think that when the heads start to fade the plants were replaced with new plants that had been kept in storage.

Apart from the refreshments on entry there were three other areas where you could get light refreshments. Toilets were plentiful in four different locations. A very enjoyable and colourful day out but one does need the weather to really appreciate the presentation. I would suggest if you have not been to Tulleys it is well worth a visit to see so many tulips in various settings.





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

Feed plants that are growing in containers. Add a liquid feed to the watering can to keep your container plants in top condition. Most composts run out of fertiliser after a few weeks, so giving plants growing in pots and baskets a liquid feed will strengthen them. Check the dose rate according to the supplier's instructions and measure the concentrate into the watering can. Add water and stir well. Water the plants slowly which will allow the roots to take in water rather than drain straight out around the sides. For the best results, feed weekly and when the compost is slightly moist.

Choose tender bedding plants to fill gaps in your borders. Before planting, pinch out any fading flowers or yellowing leaves and give the plants a good soak. Prepare the planting site by loosening the soil surface and remove any weeds. Scatter a granular fertiliser or rose feed and rake it in. Knock the plants out of their pots and loosen any tight rootballs from the base. Use a trowel to plant them, then firm in, keeping the top of the compost level with the surface. Water them again to help settle them in.

Now is the time to plant courgettes and other summer squashes now the ground is warm. Add organic matter to the planting hole and a handful of granular fertiliser. Avoid planting small seedlings out as they can be slayed to ground level by a hungry bug. Choose a plant with at least one set of true leaves and a slightly hardened stem at the base. Give each plant a square meter of space and expect to be cropping at least two or three courgettes a week from each plant in a month's time.

Mow lawns little and often to encourage a thick covering of grass and increase their resistance to drought.

If you have naturalised daffodils in areas of grass that now need to be mown, it's best to pull out the yellowed or papery daffodil leaves first. They should come away from the bulb easily without any damage. These faded leaves tend to get flattened rather than mown, so this helps to give a clean first cut of the long grass. Faded daffodil leaves in borders can be tidied away too, once they can be pulled away easily.

Deadhead repeat flowering roses frequently to ensure that they continue to produce buds throughout the summer months. Using secateurs, cut the spent flowers down to the next set of leaves. This will avoid leaving behind stems that die back and can act as entry points for disease and fungus.

Trimming little and often throughout the flowering season also helps to keep the rose in a balanced shape and prevents it becoming congested. Black spot and powdery- mildew thrive in plants that are overcrowded, another great reason to keep on top of your pruning. Check for any die-back that may have occurred and remove this too.

House Plant of the month is the Bird of Paradise.



Bird of paradise plant is not hard to grow but it does need specific conditions – warmth, bright light and a humid atmosphere. A south facing room, bathroom or conservatory is ideal. It also needs plenty of room, as the leaves can reach 2m tall. To keep the atmosphere humid, place the pot on a tray of pebbles and water, or mist frequently. Give it as much light as possible. Keep the compost moist in spring and summer but allow it to dry out between waterings in autumn and winter. Wipe the leaves occasionally to keep them dust-free. Repot when roots are visible at the top of the compost.

Keep the soil moist (but not soaking wet) from April to September, then gradually reduce watering in autumn and winter, allowing the compost to dry out before watering again. Raise humidity by misting daily. Feed with a liquid house plant feed every two weeks from April to September. In summer, open the window so plenty of air can circulate around the plant.

Strelitzias do well when slightly pot bound (their roots are fitting snugly in the pot) so only repot when roots appear at the top of the compost. Plant into a slightly larger pot, in spring. In the meantime, you can replace the top layer of compost with fresh every spring. Strelitzias don't need pruning, but you can remove tatty or yellowed leaves in spring, cutting them down to the base of the stem.

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.

March answers to the quiz are:- Question **1** - Iris. Question **2** - Aspidistra.
Question **3** - Plants growing with a flat or creeping habit. Question **4** - Forsythia.
Question **5** - Aster. Question **6** - Loganberry. Question **7** - Fritillaria.
Question **8** - The Garden of Cosmic Speculation. Question **9** - Bent at a sharp angle.

This month's questions are:-

- Question 1 What group of plants are associated with the terms floribunda and hybrid tea?
Question 2 'Formative', renovation' and 'coppicing are all types of which gardening activity?
Question 3 Why are ladybirds considered beneficial to have in the garden?
Question 4 'Onondaga', Roseum' and 'Gwenllian' are all cultivars of what popular shrub?
Question 5 What is a 'hydrophytic' plant adapted to do?
Question 6 What name is given to the process of pegging down a flexible stem at multiple nodes to produce new plants?
Question 7 In what type of habitat would you find plants described as xerophytes?
Question 8 On what group of plants might you find a coleoptile protecting the shoot tips?
Question 9 What are the characteristics of plant organs described as rudimentary?

Answers will be in the JULY Newsletter

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

Question 1 : Why hasn't my wisteria got any flower.

Answer : There are three common reasons why wisteria fails to flower

- a) buying a plant that's a seedling rather than a grafted one. Seedlings can take up to 20 years to flower.so the safest way to make sure you're buying a plant that's capable of flowering is to buy one while in flower
b) a lack of pruning can cause plants not to flower or flower late. Cut back side shoots to about 30cm in August. This will encourage flower buds to develop near the base of the shoots. These shorten shoots should then be cut back to 5cm in winter
c) Wisterias need a sunny position to flower well. If shade is a problem where your one is, you could try and move it to a sunnier spot or remove any overhead cover, or train some of the wisteria shoots into a sunnier spot.

Question 2 : How can I keep aubretia and Iberia looking tidy

Answer : These plants can become straw like and messy looking ,so after flowering cut them back almost to the base of the plant give them a good water and spread some compost around the plant.

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 **Open 10:00am to 4:00 pm Tuesday to Saturday** (Closed Sunday and Monday)

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 Aker 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 one or two gardens. This month it's Great Comp Garden, Nr Sevenoaks.

Great Comp has built up an enviable reputation over the years as being one of Kent's finest gardens to visit.

The wonderfully quirky garden showcasing seven acres of beautiful and rare plants surrounding a 17th century manor house. This hidden gem of a garden is home to an Italian Garden, romantic ruins, enchanting woodland walks and the [Old Dairy Tearooms](#).

In Spring this tranquil garden erupts into bloom with numerous Magnolias, Azaleas and Rhododendrons, underplanted with large drifts of Helebores and bulbs while summer brings warmth and extravagance from one of the most comprehensive and exciting collections of Salvias in Europe. Ornamental grasses in great variety punctuate the colourful borders and combine beautifully with the myriad colours of late autumn.

The site of Great Comp house has been detailed since the 13th century when it was known as Camp de Wrotha (an abbreviation of Wrotham). The name 'Camp', or later 'Compe' (in 1461) means campus or field.

The original 700-acre estate was owned by the Lambard family, descendants of William Lambard, author of the first ever guidebook to Kent: The Perambulation of Kent.

The large country manor house was built in 1597 by Sir John Howell. The frontage still looks the same as it did in the 17th century, however the rear of the building has seen many alterations, especially during the 19th century. The house has enjoyed 19 registered owners. One notable owner was the redoubtable Mrs Frances J Heron Maxwell who occupied the house in the early 20th century for more than 50 years and turned Great Comp into a centre for women's cricket. Mrs Maxwell; a suffragette and campaigner for women's sports, laid out her own cricket grounds within the garden, including one described as 'The Oval'. During Mrs Maxwell's tenure, Great Comp hosted a number of international touring women's teams, including Australia in 1917. A friend of Vita Sackville-West, Mrs Maxwell was an energetic figure in the community and the first chair of the Kent branch of the Women's Institute.

Great Comp Garden as we know it now, owes its planting, design and personality to Roderick (known as Eric) and Joy. Eric and Joy Cameron moved to the 17th Century Manor of Great Comp in 1957 with the intention of building a wonderful garden to enjoy. They rolled up their sleeves and created a peaceful hide-away in Platt; developing the paddock land into a seven-acre plantsman's delight of a garden which they decided to open to visitors. News began to spread about Great Comp's burgeoning garden with its collection of rare and exotic plants. The Camerons first opened the garden to the public in 1968. In 1984 the Camerons set up the 'Great Comp Charitable Trust' (charity no. 286118), a registered charity, in order to ensure the future of Great Comp as a garden of the highest quality regularly open to the public. In October 2020 the Trustees created and migrated Great Comp Charitable Trust to a new charitable incorporated organisation called 'Great Comp'.

GARDEN OPEN DAILY 1st March – 31st October, 10am – 5pm

Monday – Sunday, inc Bank Holidays

(Last admission 4pm).

Sedlescombe and District Garden Society are planning a coach visit on Wednesday 12th August.

Contact sdgs.secretar@hotmail.co.uk for details.

THE OLD DAIRY TEAROOM: The Tearoom is open daily from 10am – 4:30pm (1st March – 31st October).

Future Events

Tuesday 16th June

Open Garden at Dave and Dawn's. 2:00pm to 4:00pm

Wednesday 1st July

Cream Tea. Westfield Bowls Club 2:00pm

Tuesday 25th August

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

Sedlescombe & District Garden Society talks;

We are invited to attend at Sedlescombe Village Hall free of charge. Please have your WHS membership card.

Wednesday 10th June

Christine - Subject - Bohemia Walled Garden At 7:00pm

Tuesday 29th September

Ian Currie – Subject - Weatherman Gales, Greenhouses and global Warming At 2:00pm

2027 WHS Events

Saturday 13th February

Valentines Quiz at the Community Centre Starting at 7:00pm

Saturday 20th March

Spring show 2:30pm to 4:30pm at the Westfield Community Hall

Saturday 11th September

Autumn show 2:30pm to 4:30pm at the Westfield Community Hall

Wisley Pictures taken by Valerie Richardson

