

WESTFIELD HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

January 2025 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,

Please note our Valentines Quiz on Saturday 15th February, will now be in the small hall at the Community centre, Workhouse Lane as the Church Hall has issues with the ceiling. 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/coffee and cake will be available.

Payment can be made on the night or 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.



2024 saw the return of the Christmas Tree Festival to Westfield Church St John the Baptist. Trees were supplied by Littledown Christmas Tree Farm for decoration by local village groups. One of the trees was dedicated to our own Society, many thanks go to Linda Barker, Dawn Miles and Maria Wells who decorated the tree. This year's theme was 'Christmas Carols' and our carol was 'The Holly and the Ivy' The trees were in place between 9th December and the 28th of December.

A Christmas Quiz ANSWERS

Question 1 Who was the bad guy Rudolph tried to avoid?

Answer The Abominable Snowman.

Question 2 How many ghosts are there in "a Christmas Carol"?

Answer Four, Being Jacob Marley, Ghost of Christmas past, Christmas present and Christmas yet to come.

Question 3 Where does the Polar Express take the children?

Answer North Pole.

- Question 4 Which country started the tradition of putting up a Christmas Tree?
Answer Germany.
- Question 5 In the UK what is Santa's postcode?
Answer XM4 5HQ.
- Question 6 How many windows are in an Advent Calendar?
Answer 24 .
- Question 7 What is pomology the study of?
Answer Fruit
- Question 8 What word is used to describe plants that like acid soil and will not grow in alkaline soils?
Answer Ericaceous
- Question 9 Which Garden plant in the 17th century was exchanged as a form of currency?
Answer Tulips. (In the Netherlands)
- Question 10 What country do Amaryllis bulbs originate from?
Answer South Africa.
- Question 11 Bedford, Fillbasket, Cromwell and Wellington are all types of what?
Answer Brussel Sprout.
- Question 12 What is placed in front of the Temperate Glasshouse at Kew Gardens over Christmas?
Answer Ice Rink.
- Question 13 Traditionally white Chess pieces are made from the wood of what type of tree?
Answer Holly.
- 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?
Answer Help from Britain during WW2
- Question 15 What can be added to oranges to make a pleasant-smelling Christmas decoration?
Answer Cloves.
- Question 16 For the UK to have an official White Christmas, according to the Met Office how much snow has to fall?
Answer One single snowflake within the 24-hour period.
- 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?
Answer Windsor.
- Question 18 Norfolk Bronze is a type of what?
Answer Turkey.
- Question 19 Which type of Palm tree found in the Middle East produces fruit often ate over the Christmas period?
Answer Dates.
- Question 20 What type of bedding plant has a winter version that can survive the cold months?
Answer Pansies
- Question 21 How are Hellebore seeds spread?
Answer By Snail. The snails eat the oil covering the seed and carry the rest away in their slime, spreading it as they go.
- Question 22 Frost changes the taste of veg such as parsnips and sprouts. In what way?
Answer It makes them taste sweeter.
- Question 23 How old is the average Christmas tree when cut?
Answer 15 Years
- Question 24 Who composed the Nutcracker Suite?
Answer Tchaikovsky
- Question 25 Why does Father Christmas need not one, not two but three gardens?
Answer So he can Ho, Ho, Ho.

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

Replenish the compost at the top of permanently planted containers. This gives the plant(s) a nutrient boost and encourages the fresh root development required to keep the plant (s) healthy. Scrape off any gravel or bark mulch, use the point of a trowel to gently loosen the top layer of compost being careful not to damage the root at the surface. Take out the loose compost, add fresh and firm it down. Water with a fine rose before adding a fresh layer of mulch of gravel or bark over the surface to help stop weeds taking advantage.

Keep deadheading pansies as they have an extraordinary energy to keep flowering over winter and will perform for much longer if you prick off the old flowers. You'll also delay any chance of them setting seed, which will save you having to weed hundreds of young pansies out of nearby pots, borders or paths next year. Pick off damaged leaves to keep fungal rots at bay.

Clean up over-wintered tendered fuchsias and get them ready for this year's growing season. Remove any leaf debris that could harbour last year's pests and diseases. Prune back remaining shoots to leave a strong new framework, cut out weak shoots completely and reduce the rest to about 10cm. Check the roots – if they have filled the pot, use fresh potting compost and pot on into slightly larger containers. Leave them in the same pot if you intend to put them into a basket or plant into a border for the summer. Water sparingly, at which point you can move into a full feeding and watering regime.

Grow lilies in containers to liven up areas of the garden. Most lilies grow best with cool feet and sunny heads. They do not like to be planted in exposed positions, but their heads do best if they get the sun for at least half the day. That can be awkward to provide, especially if your soil is very alkaline as most lilies prefer ericaceous soil – other than Madonna lilies that also grow happily in pots. Growing them in pots or containers is a good idea so you can give them the soil and position they will thrive in. You can plant them at any time between the beginning of the year and through to the end of March. You will not go wrong if you provide good drainage and a nice loose compost containing grit, adding just a little perlite or vermiculite will greatly help. Plant the scaly bulbs with about 10cm of compost above the crown and put them somewhere shaded to grow. Keep them well watered and move to their final position when the buds develop in May and June. A west or east facing sheltered spot is ideal for their flowering performance.

Give your mophead hydrangeas a trim before they start to leaf. Trim the shrub by selecting some of the oldest branches and cutting them out from the base. This thinning improves air circulation and light getting into the shrub to give you healthier, compact flowering shoots next year. This year's flowers will be formed on the branches that are left. Just snip off the old flowers and make the cut near the top, above a strong, swelling pair of buds. Finish by spreading a good layer of mulch underneath the shrub.

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 – depth 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.

Home Produce was in the December newsletter.

Identify this Shrub from this picture: December's shrub was the Viburnum.



Plant of the month will be returning in February as very little if anything is in flower in January.

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.

How to use bananas to make roses bloom

According to gardening experts at [House Digest](#), bananas could be the answer to a beautiful, blooming rose garden – and, as an added bonus, they protect flowers from bugs and can save you money on fertiliser.

It's very simple: chop up your leftover banana peel and, when you go to plant your rose in the ground, place it at the bottom of the hole where the roots will be or around existing plants.

This works because it allows nutrients from the peels to gradually release into the soil, meaning the roses are nourished from the root up. it's best to add banana peels to the base of your roses in February – and then again once they're in full bloom.

Many thanks to Malcolm Shirley for this piece.

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. Are moving from their position on the A21 to a new location. It is hoped that they will reopen in time for the spring season. We will advise as soon as details are known.

(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 on Saturday 15th February please contact me Dave Miles on daveatwhs@gmail.com or 07455 944849. Cost will be £2.50 per person, please bring your own refreshments as we are unable to provide a supper this year. (Please book your place as soon as possible to avoid disappointment)

FUTURE EVENTS:

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| Saturday 8th February | Willow Obelisk workshop. Now full, contact us for any cancellations. |
| Saturday 15th February | Valentines Quiz at the Community centre small hall starting at 7:00pm |
| Tuesday 4th March | Talk on all things Bees. This will now be held at the Bowls pavilion starting at 7:00pm.
By kind permission of the Bowls club. Free entry. Tea /coffee will be provided. |
| 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 at the New Inn |
| Saturday 8th March 2026 | 2024/5 AGM at the Church Hall 11:00am |

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