

WESTFIELD HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

December 2025 Newsletter

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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 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 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.

Saturday 21st February we are holding a workshop. Introduction to Macrame, 9:30am to 1:00pm Westfield Bowls Club, cost will be £30 Please contact us if you are interested in attending.

Date for your diary. A trip to Wisley has been booked for Wednesday 29th April 2026. An ideal time to see all the spring bulbs. I have managed to keep the cost the same as last year, £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.

Our yearly BEETLE DRIVE was held at the community hall on Saturday 8th November with 30 members and guests attending. Plenty of fun was had by all as the idea of the game is to throw a dice in turn, (four persons per table), the number thrown represents part of the beetle's body, legs and wings etc. and the first person with a fully drawn beetle wins that round. The person with the most point and least points moves to another table and the next game begins. Some beetle drawings were a bit strange but still counted. Thanks to our ladies for baking some delicious cakes to have with our tea and coffee. Next year's Beetle drive is on Saturday the 14th November. If you would like a fun evening, please add to next year's diary.

10 members enjoyed a delicious Christmas lunch on Tuesday 2nd December at the New Inn Westfield. Many thanks to Patrick and his staff for being great hosts. It would be nice if more members could join us next year on Thursday 3rd December, at the New Inn.



A few members have shown interest in visiting Beth Chatto's garden near Colchester. Beth transformed an overgrown wasteland deemed unfit for fruit farming, into a series of informal gardens. As the conditions within the garden vary widely, five distinct areas have been created providing useful examples of working with nature to find the right plant for the right place. You will travel through the Gravel garden, Scree garden (Raised beds), Water Garden, Woodland garden and the Reservoir garden. More details can be found on www.bethchatto.co.uk If you are interested in visiting around July/August would you please let us know and we will investigate the best possible time to visit and transport (Coach) etc.

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

Towards the end of the month, start your seed potatoes chitting ahead of planting in March and April. Chitting or encouraging them to sprout gives your potato crop a head start. Stand the tubers upright in an egg box or similar, with the old stalk end downwards and the tiny buds around the top. Put them in a dry, cool light place, such as in a cold greenhouse or unheated porch. Short dark shoots or chits will emerge from the buds. The tubers should be ready to plant in about six weeks, when the chits are 3cm long. Potatoes store well, so if you have room in your vegetable patch plant plenty this coming Spring.

Cut all hellebore leaves right back to the ground with secateurs. This should leave a stand of upright flower shoots that can be better appreciated without tatty old leaves around them. Removing the foliage now also helps to control hellebore leaf spot fungus which causes unsightly brown scars on the leaves. New, fresh green leaves will soon emerge from the base and make a perfect low backdrop to the flowers as they continue the display well into Spring.

Check dahlia tubers in storage and remove any that show signs of rot, before it spreads.

Before you winter prune a wisteria, identify the flowering wood or spurs. Spurs are short, budded branches which produce flower bud in the spring. Avoid cutting these out unless they have

become crowded. You will often see several spurs making a little group of short stubby shoots. Look for any thin shoots winding through the main framework and cut these back to two or three buds before they create a mass of congested shoots. Cut back any sideshoots growing into gutters or roof space as well.

Order flower seeds now to sow in early spring onwards so you can enjoy blooms during the Summer.

Pour warm water into you bird baths to defrost in sub zero temperatures. Avoid using boiling water as it may crack ceramic bird baths. Continue to feed the birds as they can struggle to find food in very cold weather.

Plants that you have in containers need to be checked to see if they require watering whether outside or in the greenhouse. The roots of bulbs and early flowering plants will be active enough to require some moisture, particularly those in peat free compost, pots can be dry on top but quite wet lower down. Do this every couple of weeks and water sparingly to avoid over watering.

Sow chillies, lobelias and snapdragons in a heated propagator at the end of the month.

Remove yellowing or rotting leaves from winter bedding plants.

Plant of the month is the Pointsettia



The **poinsettia** (*Euphorbia pulcherrima*) is a commercially important flowering plant species of the diverse spurge family Euphorbiaceae. Indigenous to Mexico and Central America, the poinsettia was first described by Europeans in 1834. It is particularly well known for its red and green foliage and is widely used in Christmas floral displays. It derives its common English name from Joel Roberts Poinsett, the first United States minister to Mexico, who is credited with introducing the plant to the US in the 1820's. Poinsettias are shrubs or small trees, with heights of 0.6 to 4 m (2.0 to 13.1 ft). Though often stated to be highly toxic, the poinsettia is not dangerous to pets or children.

They like the warmest room in the house, where fires or central heating keep the cosy. Don't place too close to heat sources on cold windowsills and let compost dry a little between waterings.



CHRISTMAS TREES IN WESTFIELD CHURCH

Local clubs and societies have again this year decorated Christmas Trees for the Christmas Tree Festival. All trees have been supplied by Littledown Christmas Tree Farm.

Our tree was decorated by the committee. This year theme was the carol 'Oh Christmas Tree'. The trees will be in position until 28th December for you to view.



2025 CHRISTMAS QUIZ

- Question 1 - Which is one of Santa's reindeer – Jingle – Comet – Sleepy?
- Question 2 - There are 365 days in a year, what number day is Christmas day in a non-leap year?
- Question 3 - How many reindeer pull Santa's sleigh?
- Question 4 - Which was the first drink company to use Santa Claus for their advert?
- Question 5 - If you were born on Christmas day what would be your star sign?
- Question 6 - What colour are the berries of the mistletoe plant?
- Question 7 - In which popular pantomime does Robin Hood and Maid Marion appear? appear?
- Question 8 - Which carol contains the lyrics "Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone" ?
- Question 9 - Terry's Chocolate Orange are great stocking fillers. How many segments in each orange?
- Question 10 - Which British group wished it could be Christmas every day?
- Question 11 - By what name do we better know 'viscum album'?
- Question 12 - Is Bethlehem a tiny farming village in Yorkshire, Ireland, Scotland or Wales?
- Question 13 - Bernard Matthews Foods Ltd have their headquarters in which English county?
- Question 14 - Christmas Island in the Indian Ocean is a territory belonging to which country?
- Question 15 - Which Hollywood actor played six different roles in 'The Polar Express'?
- Question 16 - What was manufactured in Halifax in 1936 and named after a play by J. M. Barrie?
- Question 17 - What's the name of the family in National Lampoon's Christmas vacation?
- Question 18 - Which UK Christmas number one was the first single to sell over two million copies?
- Question 19 - Which archangel foretold the birth of Jesus to the Virgin Mary?
- Question 20 - Which famous writer wrote the first ever King's Christmas message in 1932 for George V?
- Question 21 - In which country's tradition does Santa ride on a goat made of straw called Ukki?
- Question 22 - The song White Christmas was written by Irving Berlin for which 1942 musical film?
- Question 23 - 'Cars rims thinned' is an anagram of what Christmassy thing?
- Question 24 - Which Christmassy item was invented in Nuremberg, Germany in 1610 and called 'lametta'?
- Question 25 - Which fruit popular at Christmas is named after a seaport in Morocco?

Answers will be in the January Newsletter

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

FUTURE EVENTS:

2026

Saturday 14th February	Valentines Quiz at the Community Centre Starting at 7:00pm (Bookable event)
Saturday 21st February	Workshop. Introduction to Macrame 9:30am to 1:00pm Westfield Bowls Club
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



Members of the committee wish you all a very Happy Christmas and an enjoyable gardening year.

