



NEWSLETTER

July 2022

Dear Members,

Well, we wanted some sun – and now a little rain wouldn't go amiss! The weather was fine for our outing to Cerney House Gardens, and a happy group of members enjoyed their visit (a 'get well soon' to those who had to pull out because of Covid!). The Garden Party did not attract as many members as usual, but those of us who were there appreciated the lovely gardens on display; thank you to those who opened their gardens for us.

For the first time since 2019 we are looking forward to holding a proper **Annual Show** this summer. The date is **Saturday 3rd September**, and all the information you need is in the Schedule, which should reach you with this newsletter. It will also be available on our webpage (the Garden Society tab at www.brimpsfieldvillage.org), and paper copies will be available for you to collect from the Brimpsfield phone box, village hall bar and Birdlip bus shelter. We rely on members entering for the Show to be a success, so do look through the Schedule and think what you can enter; there's something for everyone there! At least one trophy almost always goes to a first-timer, so don't hold back if you haven't entered before.

Most of you will know that I always include lots of tips in this pre-Show newsletter, and I wonder whether you really need me to repeat them; but there does seem to be value in doing so, so here goes:

First point, for first-timers: the Show is in **BIRDLIP Village Hall** NOT BRIMPSFIELD, which isn't big enough. Birdlip Village Hall is behind Birdlip school.

Second, and this is the most important tip for exhibitors: **PLEASE READ THE SCHEDULE CAREFULLY!** Sorry for making the point so prominently, but most of the questions that exhibitors ask, or get wrong, are covered in there. This newsletter also contains useful information, and if there's anything that you can't find the answer to, please ask me (my contact details are on the front page of the Schedule). And please **read it all again** before you bring your exhibits to the Show so that you know what to expect. There will be stewards on hand in the hall to show you what to do once you're there.

Whether you enter or not, do remember to **come along in the afternoon**, from 2.30, to admire the exhibits and to enjoy tea and homemade cakes; prizegiving is at 4pm and is followed by a charity auction of any exhibits that exhibitors would like to offer. We know that you will be keen to collect your winnings at the end, but please do wait until proceedings are over before doing that and taking your exhibits away; it's distracting to those taking part in the auction when exhibitors are packing up and going to and fro. We won't keep you late.

If you're going to enter, decide on your classes, fill up an entry form and get it to me by the deadline (and preferably earlier if you can). You can put the form and entry money in the post or through my letterbox, or phone/email the details and pay the entry fees on the day. Apart from the Children's classes, which are open to anyone below the age of 17, you need to be a paid-up member to enter, so if you haven't paid your subscription for the year, please include £3 (£5 for a couple) for that. Before you send your entry form in, make a note for your own use of which classes you have entered, and double-check that you have ticked the correct boxes. Our policy is not to accept new entries, or changes to existing ones, on the day of the Show; I am often lenient about this, but frankly it depends on our having space for unexpected entries, and it involves extra paperwork that we can do without on what is already a fraught day and I reserve the right to refuse you. Last time we had an unusually high

number of 'on the day' entries, and **this year we are charging £1 each** for them. (It doesn't matter if you enter a class and subsequently decide you don't have an exhibit for it; we get several such entries every year, including some of mine!) I suggest you tick off the relevant classes in your copy of the Schedule, and bring it to the Show on the day so that you can quickly and easily match up your exhibits with the correct class numbers (your exhibitor's cards will only have the class numbers on them), although copies of the Schedule will be available if you forget.

Make a note also of what you need to bring to the Show, for example how many of each type of fruit, vegetables or flowers, and whether you will need vases or plates ('a plate of ...' means exactly that, and you have to provide the plate). You will be able to get water from the hall kitchen, but you have to bring everything else yourself.

On the day, Birdlip Village Hall will be open from 8.30am for the staging of exhibits; you must have completed this and be out of the hall by 10.30am, when judging begins. I and the stewards will be available to guide you, although exhibitors or their representatives should actually stage the exhibit themselves. It's ok to ask someone to bring your exhibit to the Show if you can't be there yourself.

Here are some **tips** for specific classes. In **Section A**, it's fine for the contents in your 'tray of vegetable' classes to spill over the sides of the tray if they're too big to sit fully within it; arrange the vegetables so that they are all visible. For other classes it's best to put the produce on a plate (a paper one is fine). For the best-tasting tomato class and the herbs class, place a slip of paper with the tomato variety name/names of the herbs alongside your exhibit; in the case of the tomatoes, this is so that other gardeners can see which varieties taste best.

Roses: watch out for unwanted extra buds – you must have the exact number of stems and blooms, or you may be disqualified. It's late for roses; keep yours deadheaded for the best chance of having flowers on the day, and remember that, if your roses peak early, you can put them, vase, water and all, in the fridge for a few days (they do it for Chelsea ...). You can persuade a partly-opened rose to open fully by cupping the bloom in your hand and blowing gently into the centre of the flower. Remember to bring a slip of paper with the variety name on it for class 20 (don't know the variety? - make it up).

Flower arrangements: you **MUST NOT exceed the dimensions** given for each class, including the container. Only fresh plant material may be used, not dried or artificial, and it doesn't have to be grown by you.

Nor are the **classes in Section D** a test of your gardening skills; you may use bought fruit etc if you like. Check that contents of jars have not shrunk, that there is no mould, and that all traces of old labels, sticky patches or clouding have been cleaned off the jars (use white spirit or WD40). **Do your baking the day before the Show** (except for the gingerbread, which is best made a few days ahead); warm baking in a hot hall is not good for hygiene, and cutting into it while warm damages the texture and makes it difficult to judge. Bread, cakes and the like should be presented on a plate, whether the Schedule specifies this or not, and the quiche should be removed from its tin so that the pastry base can be judged. The best way to get both halves of your Victoria sponge the same size is to use two identical tins and, before baking, to check that they and their contents weigh the same. We have decided to dispense with the 'Men Only' class this year as our gentlemen exhibitors do not seem to be shy about competing with the ladies in other classes!

Crafters: don't forget to provide a slip of paper stating how much of the exhibit is your own work, except where this is obvious. There's nothing at all wrong with using professional design, mounting or finishing services, not with decorating a bought item, but the judges would like to give credit to those who do the design or finishing for themselves or make the decorated item.

After the Show we hope to see you at our next event, our Coffee Morning on **Saturday 1st October** at 10.30 for 11am, when we shall have a talk on 'The Curious History of Vegetables' – and that information is in the Schedule too!

Good luck and happy exhibiting!
Frances Ellery