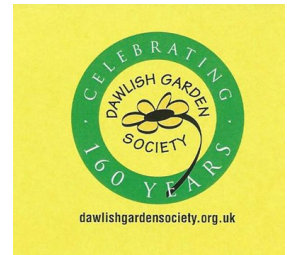




Dawlish Garden Society

Newsletter Spring 2025



Spring Programme

Spring Flower Show and AGM—March 27th

The hall will be accessible to set up displays between 6.45 & 7.15. You must use the society vases, but please bring your posy in your own vase.

The AGM starts at 7.15

Ann Swithinbank—The Scented Garden April 11th

At the Shaftsbury Theatre, doors open from 6.30, the bar will be open, talk starts at 7.30

Hospice Open Gardens April 24th 7.15

Sharon Collins is coming to tell us about the work of the Hospice and how the open gardens support this work. The society is planning to arrange a trip by train to at least one group of gardens open to support Exeter's Hospice.

Toby's Garden Festival at Powderham May 2&3

The society has group rate tickets of £15 each to attend this event; contact Suzanne or sign up at the March or April meeting.

Fuchsias My Way May 29th 7.15

Derek Dexter has 25 years experience of growing award winning fuchsias. He has won a silver-gilt award at Hampton Court Flower Show and had 12 first class wins at the London Fuchsias show and is coming to tell us all how to achieve first class fuchsias.

The Spring Plant Sale is May 10th outside the Strand Centre as usual. There will be an antiques fair taking place in the Strand Hall at the same time, so logistics will be a little more complicated this year.

Call out for pots—between us we have plenty of small pots, however we have a shortage of medium pots, that is between 1/3 litre to 2 litre in size. If you have any spares could you let Suzanne know on

suzanne@dawlish-gardensociety.uk

Entry to the Manor House

It is all change at the Manor House with the new part time caretaker and the council putting more of its functions on line. As this affects our meetings, it will mean that the entrance to the Council Chamber where we hold the meetings will be through the BACK DOOR of the hall, as the front door to the Manor House will be locked. At the end of the meeting the society has to stow away the tables and chairs and ensure the cups / jugs etc are washed up and put away. It would be good if occasionally a couple of members could stay help us with this.

Summer Outings

Visits to Gardens Open for Hospice Care

Topsham Secret Gardens—June 8th

There will be 15 gardens open between 12– 5 with two offering refreshments. We plan to take the 11.26 train and then we can look around the gardens as individuals or in small groups.

Lympstone—date to be announced

Full details of both will be sent out 7-14 days before hand

Dartmoor Tea Gardens—June

We are arranging a visit to the Tea Gardens following the really enjoyable talk that Jo Harper gave to us last November. It will be self transport, however we can sort out car share from those without transport and it will be £15 each, as long as there are more than 8 people in our group.

Wine and Cheese Evening

We are hoping to arrange an evening in a local garden open under the NGS scheme as we did last year. When we have confirmed details we will send them out.

For enquires contact: Chair, June Cassidy on 07486 370880
or Secretary Suzanne Jones on 889184

The Spring Flowering Crocus



Christopher Lloyd of Great Dixter fame, said that the first crocus of the year is the slim mauve *C. tommasinianus* which contrasts excitedly with the rich orange of *C. flavus*, and he also said we can all do with a bit of excitement in February.

The crocus was depicted in wall paintings as early as the 4th century BCE in the Eastern Mediterranean and there is evidence that they were grown in ancient Egypt and Assyria. The Romans had crocus in their gardens and brought them over to Britain, as did the crusaders. However, the real influx came in the 16th century from

Turkey, when we see them in paintings and tapestries across Europe. The crocus was recommended in flower planting lists of the 18th century and used in planting in the Arts and Crafts Gardens. There are now over 100 species, with two of the oldest being Dutch Yellow grown since 1697 and the Scotch Crocus (*C. biflorus*) with a white flower flushed with silvery blue.

Crocus like open sunny situations and naturalise in lawns and meadows, and are fine under deciduous shrubs

Rosemoor Trip September 10th

We will be going to Rosemoor to see its late summer colours. Dawlish Garden Society is affiliated to the RHS which means that we can take a coach visit to a RHS garden each year and our members receive free entry, so all you need to do is pay for the coach, which will be £15 for current members. Current non-members prices will come out once we start taking bookings, which will be from our April meeting.



Meet Gill Hill, Member of the Committee

I have always had an interest in gardening, but it became especially important during my time as a Vicar looking after two rural parishes in Hampshire. Together with my husband Alex (also a member of the DGS), I inherited a vicarage garden of around three quarters of an acre. After basic landscaping we established a vegetable patch and large flower borders following a cottage garden theme.

In time my hobby overflowed into the establishment of a fruit, flower and produce show in the parish which drew folk in from the surrounding area. My forte was onion growing, but I can't seem to reproduce the same results on Devon's sandy soil; however, I can now grow carrots which didn't enjoy Hampshire clay – a clear case of swings and roundabouts.

I sincerely advocate gardening for sound mental health; ten minutes dead heading or harvesting enabled me to recentre and focus when involved in challenging pastoral situations. It is lovely now to belong to the Dawlish Gardening Society where we have found a warm welcome and like-minded people – long may it continue!

Mulching

Early March is the perfect time to apply mulch to your garden. Mulches are best applied in early spring as the soil is starting to warm up. This can increase soil temperatures to speed up plant development and achieve earlier cropping. But timing is everything, apply mulch too early, while the ground is still cold, and they can trap cold in the soil and slow down development of plants. And consider what you're using to mulch: you will get different results depending on the type of mulch and when you apply it.

Applying a layer of organic material helps to protect the soil surface from heavy rainfall, which can leach nutrients, and avoids capping. This is when the soil forms a hard crust and can crack more easily in the summer. Mulching helps with moisture conservation and reduces soil evaporation. It also improves soil structure and, depending on what you're adding, increases biological life and nutrients.

It's also an easier way to reduce weeds, rather than hand pulling. Mulches reduced the time needed for weeding by 75%. You need to add a layer at least 7.5cm thick to adequately control weeds.