



Dawlish Garden Society

Newsletter Winter 2025



Happy New Year

Winter Programme

January 24th, 10.00-12.00

Coffee Social with early spring plants and houseplants for sale, along with seeds.

February 21st, 10.00

Bring a Friend for Free Month

Bring a friend along with you to the meeting for a taster session, and there will not be an entry fee for them this month.

A Dream of Winter with Julian Sutton

Julian Sutton runs Desirable Plants in Totnes – which specialises in different and unusual herbaceous perennials. His talk will celebrate plants which flower in the strange stop-start season before winter has ended and spring has really begun.

March 26th,

Spring Flower Show and AGM

Please note that the doors open at 6.45 for exhibits to be put out, the AGM begins at 7.15

Photo competition is 'Autumn Colour', the show schedule will be available at the February meeting and on line.

Membership for 2026

Annual Garden Society Membership of £10, is due from January 1st, you can pay this at the meetings in cash or by cheque. Alternatively you can send it to us by cheque or cash, or you can pay by BACS. If you would like the society's bank details please email Suzanne at suzanne@dawlish-gardensociety.uk

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

Outings in 2026

Toby's Garden Festival at Powderham Castle—May 1st and 2nd, the society is purchasing tickets for this event. As you will know from previous year, as a garden society purchasing the tickets we receive a good discount on the public price. When we have ticket prices we will update you and start taking bookings.

Stonelands Gardens—We had hoped to visit Stonelands in spring 2026. However, Saul Walker the head gardener is moving to a new role, we wish him well, he has been a good friend to the society. Instead we are looking to go to Lukesland at Ivybridge for their spring display; this will be by train .

Coach Trip—Jenny is finalising details of a society trip in July, we will send out details as soon as things are finalised.

Spring Plant Sale and The Malvern Show

We are holding the Spring Plant Sale a week later than usual on Saturday May 16th, so that members can visit the RHS Show at Malvern, between May 7th-9th.

The society is not arranging a specific trip, however Majestic Travel have trips going—see below

2 nights stay at Britannia Bromsgrove Hotel, £229.99 per person; includes entry to the Show.

Friday, 8 May 2026, from Newton Abbot, 7.45am pick up (whereabouts not yet confirmed)

Thursday, Friday and Saturday, 7, 8 & 9 May (3 separate coach trips) 8.30am pick up from Exeter Services. also a pick up at Honiton Road park and ride.

Return sometime in the afternoon on third day.

Please contact Majestic directly if you are interested in going



Figs

Back in the first half of the 20th century figs were grown widely across the area, as Rupert Hart-Davis reminisces in his book on Figs in 1954. He writes of seeing figs grown in many of the gardens and the fruiterers were all selling them at a good price, so much so that he could buy as many as he wanted and take them down to the beach and enter the happy state of being fig-sated.

Figs are easy to grow, as they are undemanding and hardy, they grow best in pots up against a south or east facing wall. They can be grown in the ground, however they need their roots restricted by lining the hole with paving slabs or rubble.

The best soil is loamy, well drained and fertile, fig trees need watering frequently in the first year, until their root systems are established, after this they are drought tolerant and only need watering in hot, dry weather.

Once the fruits have appeared feed weekly with a liquid fertilizer, and they will benefit from an annual mulch of well rotted compost.

Winters in Dawlish are generally mild, however if we do get a particularly cold snap then some protection with fleece or similar is advisable, especially for young trees.

You should prune twice a year, removing weak and dead branches in winter and trimming them lightly into shape in the summer. You should avoid pruning them in the spring as they will 'bleed' sap and weaken the tree.

Figs are harvested in late summer towards autumn. They are ready when the fruit is soft and the neck of the fruit starts to wilt and hang down. Figs bruise easily so handle as little as possible. Once picked figs do not ripen any further, it is good to leave some of the stem on the fruit when you pick them as this makes them last longer.

Varieties—Brown Turkey is good for beginners and Little Miss Figgy is good for small spaces as it just grows 1.2m x1.2m.

Look out for the Spring Plant Sale, there are always locally grown fig trees for sale.

Figs are a good fruit to enter into the Summer Show with. The judges are looking for large fully ripe fruits of good colour with bloom and stalks intact, a slight split does not mark them down as it's to be expected in ripe fruit.

Helping out and Joining In

The society has a committee of 10 members, with five key roles, Chair, Treasure, Secretary, Summer Show Secretary and Programme Organiser. Currently the committee and officers are very happy to continue with their roles, however it is not a young committee and they feel it would be healthy to have some younger members of the society to start shadowing roles. We are looking for individuals who would take up assistance roles, for the key roles of Treasurer and Show Secretary in the first instance. This does not mean joining the committee, but being involved at key events. Please contact our Chair, June or talk to any committee member at the January meeting to discuss opportunities.

The committee have produced role descriptions for the officers and a general one for the committee, which will be available to read at the January Meeting and at the AGM.

St Greagory's Flower Festival

Back in September the society took part in the church's flower festival with a lovely arrangement by one of our committee member Sally Gidney. Sally is already planning for the 2026 display.



Christmas Tree Festival

Our society's tree was placed second in the people's vote this year which was lovely for us. A 'big thank you' to all members who have made the decorations for us.

Remembrance Sunday

This year we laid a wreath at the war memorial by St Gregory's Church in remembrance for all those from the society who were lost in both World Wars, and for all those effected since then by the loss of a loved one in the armed services.