
PLUCKLEY WITH EGERTON GARDENING SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER – AUGUST 2019

The Committee have been very busy organising lots of lovely events for our members this summer and we hope you have enjoyed them. Please come along and support us at the rest of this year's activities. If you have any ideas for future events or would like to help out then please let us know.

Forthcoming Events

August always brings a different feel to our gardens; the warmer weather encouraging late summer plants to show their best. We have our annual Wine and Wander evening in Sue Steward's inspiring one acre garden at Jennings (Charing Road, Pluckley TN27 0Q) on Thursday 8th August from 6pm – 8pm and just before the bank holiday weekend we have a day trip to Sandwich to visit The Salutation and Sweetbriars Gardens.

The well-known Lutyens designed Salutation Garden should be a riot of colour and Sweetbriars is the nearby exotic jungly garden of the Salutation's Head Gardener. The garden is based round a hotel and in their own words "The Salutation is a cluster of wonderful things in the heart of Sandwich. A luxury boutique hotel, fine-dining restaurant, sumptuous gardens, top-notch café, plant nursery and stylish shop all sit within the 3.7 acre site, surrounded by high flint walls." It is an all day trip and pickup is at 9.30am from The Street, Pluckley.



Our Autumn Show will be held in Pluckley Village Hall on Saturday 7th September. If previous years are anything to go by we can expect wonderful displays of fruit and vegetables and lots and lots of dahlias as well as displays of roses, sunflowers and beautiful grasses and home made produce. The full list of classes is in the Annual Schedule and available both to view and as a pdf to download on our website www.pegsoc.org. We hope lots of you feel inspired to enter this year and look forward to seeing you there.

We hold our AGM on Tuesday 22nd October at 7.30pm. Here you can renew your annual membership, enter the Craft Competition, have a go at the quiz and enjoy a fish and chip supper with fellow members. The theme of the competition is nature in all its glory and entries can be photography, paintings, embroidery, mosaics, patchwork, pottery etc. Members choose the winner on the evening. All entries welcome. PS If you can't make the AGM, you can still renew your membership by downloading a form at www.pegsoc.org and sending it with a cheque for £7.50 to Rebecca Southall at the address on the form or by contacting any member of the Committee who will be sure to help.

We round off the year with a fun general knowledge quiz evening on Saturday 2nd November in Egerton Millennium Hall courtesy of Elaine and Cedric Narborough.

Aminopyralid Contamination is Back

Has anyone noticed bad germination rates this year, or distorted leaves on their tomatoes, potatoes, peas or beans? Maybe your dahlias, lupins or poppies are dying or distorted? It could be that you have inadvertently used compost or manure contaminated with herbicides Aminopyralid or Clopyralid. These weedkillers, produced by Dow were banned a few years ago but have recently been re-licensed (though with stronger usage guidelines.) The effects are again being felt by unsuspecting gardeners and commercial growers. Rebecca Southall, our membership secretary, reports on her experiences this growing season.

The active ingredient aminopyralid is responsible for most of the damage and is widely used in agricultural herbicides to kill broadleaved weeds including thistles on grassland. Clopyralid is found in certain lawn weedkillers and has a similar effect.

The contamination can arise if an animal eats the grass in or the hay from a sprayed field then the herbicide will pass through that animal without breaking down. The resulting manure contains residues of the herbicide sufficient to damage susceptible crops. The degradation rate of the chemicals in the manure can be slow and dependent on temperature, quantity of chemical present and once in the soil, on the amount of moisture and organic material present. Affected beds should however be fine by the following year.

Compost can be contaminated when it is made with grass and leaves that have been sprayed or when contaminated manure is added to the compost heap. A short composting period can make it more likely.

Products with aminopyralid must now be labelled stating that the product should only be used on grazing or amenity grassland and only for cattle or sheep grazing - not horses, that manure produced must be kept on the farm and not used for mulching or composting. Aminopyralid is not available for amateur use and can only be sold to someone with correct pesticide training.

However it seems affected hay is still being bought by unsuspecting animal owners who are not told that any manure produced should not be passed on to gardeners.

As a gardener, it is worth asking exactly where your manure comes from and if the animals were fed from grass, hay or silage that was treated with weedkillers.



It's not just manure from stables that has been affected this year as I've bought composted farmyard manure from a local garden centre which caused my plants to distort and begin to die. I contacted the garden centre and I was very lucky as they took my complaint seriously. They came to my garden and took pictures and within 2 hours of the visit had offered me a full refund for plants lost, for the 30 bags of manure I'd bought and also sent two men round to clear my vegetable garden and take all the contaminated manure away.

According to the media the contamination has also been noted in bags of multi-purpose compost, grow bags and compost from council green manure schemes.

If you think you may have contaminated compost/manure then there is a test you can do. Plant three broad bean seeds in a pot of soil and three more in a pot of 50% soil and 50% compost/manure (that you think is contaminated) In three weeks the bean will come through distorted if they are in contaminated soil. Let your supplier know and also get in touch with Dow who make the weedkillers as they are very interested in finding out how many people have been affected this year.

Our Lovely Summer Events (so far...)

A trip out to the Orangery Mystole – Tuesday 21st May



A warm spring day saw us enjoying a wander round the 1 ½ acre garden of Anne Prasse and Rex Stickland guided by her knowledgeable gardener. Tucked away down quiet single track lanes above the A28 the garden sits around the converted Orangery and within the old walled garden of the original estate. It looked very pretty in the sunshine. One of the highlights of the garden was an ancient wisteria trained along the outside of the old wall and the views over the Downs from the terrace were magnificent. The garden was punctuated throughout with sculptures of all shapes and sizes. We finished the afternoon with tea and cakes sitting in the sun on the terrace.

Balmoral Cottage Benenden – Wednesday 12 June



Heavy rain didn't stop a good sized group of members from taking a Wealden Wheels minibus and various cars to explore the renowned gardens of Charlotte Molesworthy. Her garden, down a track behind Benenden Church, shows off her creative skills with topiary. Box and yew have been crafted into all sorts of shapes and have created a unique backbone to the garden. Her hands on approach and obvious love of gardening have helped create a very personal garden full of wonderful plants and interesting spaces. We divided into 2 groups and whilst one group gathered around the wood burner to have tea and cake the others were led by Charlotte around the garden taking in the art barn and each of the "rooms" within the garden. Was it better to start dry and end wet or start wet and dry off by the fire? I'm not sure but the garden was worth the soaking.

Pimms Evening at Surrenden House – Saturday 22nd June



Judith Oakes' immaculate garden behind her home in what was part of the original Surrenden Estate looked wonderful on a warm summer's evening. Members enjoyed their Pimms and got the opportunity to explore the extensive grounds. The planting around the house is soft and flowing whilst formal allees of hornbeam lead you down to the shell grotto, embellished by her late husband. The lily pond and the arboretum gave plenty for members to enjoy.

Hampton Court Flower Show – Thursday 4th July

Our trip to The Hampton Court Flower Show didn't quite get off to the start we had hoped. Sadly our coach broke down in the second lane of the M25 near Reigate. It took about 2 hours to get us going again on a replacement bus but we made it in the end. The show was very busy and the heat quite intense but that didn't stop us from whiling away the hours wandering the stalls, enjoying the show gardens, shopping in the marquees and eating ice creams. The Palace Gardens on the walk to and from the show were a delight and the perfume from the lime trees we passed under brought a touch of Provence to the proceedings.



A few places to visit:

NGS garden to visit – Tram Hatch Sunday 11th August

Other Events:

Great Comp Summer Show

Saturday 10th & Sunday 11th August

Plant Hunters Weekend Lullingstone Castle

Saturday 24th & Sunday 25th August

Late Summer Plant Fair at The Walled Nursery,
Hawkhurst Sunday 25th August

Great Dixter Autumn Plant Fair

Saturday 5th & Sunday 6th October

Challock Chilli and Craft fair Victoriana Nursery Gardens

Saturday 5th & Sunday 6th October

And a few other lovely localish gardens to visit:

Godinton House – the gardens are looking fabulous and their annual sculpture exhibition is on now until the 18th August with sculptures on show throughout the gardens.

Chilham Castle Gardens - open every Tuesday from the beginning of June until the end of September from 10am until 4pm. During August, the gardens will open on a Thursday with a kid's nature trail available on both days.

Doddington Place Gardens - open Wednesdays, Sundays and bank holidays.

Goodnestone Park Gardens – especially the beautiful walled garden. Open Tuesday – Friday & Sundays

Belmont House Gardens – the kitchen garden is wonderful.

Mount Ephraim – near Faversham

Sue's Late Summer Gardening Tips

Last autumn for the first time I sowed a section of my veg patch with green manure seeds, waited for about 3 months and then dug it in. I was astounded by the results, every plant in that patch came up healthier and bigger. I shall now seed every bare patch this autumn. I bought the seeds from a garden centre and followed advice on the packet.

Now is the time to take cuttings of perennials like penstemon, fuchsias, geraniums and salvias. Salvias are so easy you can root them in water on the window sill.

Once lavender has gone over, stop it becoming leggy by giving it a good hair cut with shears, leaving just a third of this year's growth. This allows it to leaf up a bit before the frosts.

PEGS Website

Just a reminder that our website can be found at www.pegsoc.org. You can now look up information about events, download booking forms and see the latest news from the society.

