

NEWTON-LE-WILLOWS GARDENERS' ASSOCIATION

SPRING NEWSLETTER 2011

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Chairman's Letter January 2011

A Happy New Gardening Year to you all.

2010 was a good year for the Association as we exceeded our membership totals for the past few years and as I write this it stands at 600 members. We have managed to complete the guttering on the outside of the hut this summer and our next project is to complete the raised beds on the plot at the side of the hut.

The 2010 Flower and Vegetable Show was a great success, with record entries and lots of people visiting the show. We have always been made very welcome at St.Aelreds' and will be very sad to leave there, but we will look forward to 2011 when the new venue will be Penkford Special School in Newton le Willows. Start your preparations for your entries now to ensure that we have a successful show. I look forward to seeing you all at the hut, the monthly meetings at Newton Sports Club and the annual show at Penkford School.

Regards

Tony Addison
Chairman

GARLIC A brief history. Garlic thought to have originated in the Kirghiz Desert in Central Asia, has been cultivated in Mediterranean countries since the earliest times. Together with radishes, peas, onions and cucumbers, it was the staple diet of the workers who built the pyramids, some of whom valued it so highly that they carved it's likeness on the Great Pyramid at Giza.

The Romans introduced garlic to Britain, but by the time the Anglo-Saxons arrived, its culinary use seems to have been largely forgotten, though it was still highly regarded as a cure for constipation. Medieval housewives included it in their vegetable stews and potages, but it was not until the advent of Continental holidays that the British again began to use it in their cooking. The French have always considered garlic to be indispensable, even using its juice as a disinfectant on wounds in the First World War.

When growing garlic, choose a sunny site in which to plant it. It requires a cold spell to grow well so, in November divide the bulbs into cloves and plant about 6in apart in drills, 2in deep, cover the nose with a thin layer of soil and forget them unless the weather is very dry, then water sparingly. Pick off the flowers as soon as they appear, this will ensure that nourishment is not diverted away from the bulb.

Harvest the bulbs in late summer, when the leaves have turned yellow and dry. Dig up the plants and leave them in the sun to dry off the surface moisture, then put them under cover until the bulbs have dried.

Growing garlic between other plants will help to ward off pests and diseases, especially on roses.

DIVISION OF PLANTS

Most plants should be divided in the autumn, but a few such as Aster, Delphinium, Helenium and Kniphopia are best left until the spring. When dividing a plant into smaller ones you should take the opportunity to enrich the soil while the ground is clear. Fork in well rotted organic material with a little bone meal before replanting. When dividing an old plant, keep only the strongest, vigorous young shoots from the outer edge of the clump and reject the old, woody centre, which is past its best. If possible, use only the divisions that have good strong root systems, as the weaker ones may take a long time to establish and may never produce a good display. Do not pull up a whole plant if you want to separate only one or two fragments for replanting elsewhere. Remove the soil on one side of the plant and using a garden fork, loosen the stems and roots as far down into the soil as possible. Use a knife to remove the piece you require then replace the soil firmly round the remaining roots.

“WE COME FROM THE EARTH, WE RETURN TO THE EARTH, AND IN BETWEEN WE GARDEN.”

THE LANGUAGE OF FLOWERS

<u>FLOWER</u>	<u>MEANING</u>	<u>FLOWER</u>	<u>MEANING</u>
Amaryllis	Pride	Aster	A first step
Begonia	Ethereal love	Buddleia	Refinement
Calendula	Tenacity	Candytuft	Peace
Chrysanthemum	Truth	Clematis	Pure in mood
Daffodil	Chivalry	Forget-me-not	Fidelity
Gladiolus	Strength of character	Honeysuckle	Sweet disposition
Hyacinth	Play	Iris	Message
Lavender	Chastity	Lilac	First love
Lily of the valley	Purity	Magnolia	Dignity
Marigold	Happiness	Primrose	Sadness
Rose	Love	Sunflower	Haughtiness

The natural history museum provides a fabulous service on its website www.nhm.ac.uk which invites you to enter your postcode to find the plants best suited to where you live.

Cabbage root fly will happily destroy your crop if you let it, but you can deter these pests without resort to beastly chemicals by adding some chopped rhubarb leaves to the hole before planting. If a cabbage does fall victim to the root fly, leave it in the ground, otherwise the pests will simply move on to the next plant.

The March wind roars, like a lion in the sky. And makes us shiver, as he passes by. When the winds are soft, and the days are warm and clear. Just like a gentle lamb, then Spring is here.

Annual Flower and Vegetable Show 2010

Well what an event, our final show at St. Aelreds beat all expectations with over 90 exhibitors, the most I have ever known as Show Secretary. The new mystery Dahlia class – Badgers Twinkle was a huge success and the special prize of a stainless steel fork and spade was won by Mike Briers our Vice Chairman, congratulations to him and all those that took part. We plan to repeat the 'Mystery Class' next year with Pelargonium, further details will follow, so check out the details at the hut, or on our website.

The show next year will be held on 10th September 2011 at Penkford School. The venue is slightly smaller so we have to make a few changes to the classes. The novice classes in each category have been removed, but replaced with the following:

- A flower, novice, an entry could include a Dahlia, Chrysanthemum, Rose or Gladioli.
- Pot Plant novice - any pot plant either in bloom or foliage.

There will be one class for a Fuchsia or Pelargonium.

Topics for the following classes are:

- Floral Art – Fireworks
- Photography – Sport, Rocks, People
- Art - My Garden Shed
- Cookery - Tea loaf and Muffins, recipes for these are currently being tested and tried and will appear in the 2011 show schedule.

So plenty of time to practice !!

I hope the new classes will be successful and that you will continue to support the show in its new venue.

Finally I would like to thank all the St. Aelreds School staff for their assistance with the show over the years and wish them good luck with the move to their new premises.

Ursula Harrison
Show Secretary

As a reminder, the A.G.M is to be held at Newton Cricket Club on 27th January 2011. Everyone is welcome to come along and it is your chance to tell us what you think of the service we provide, and also to give any ideas that you may have on how we can improve. Of course you can also join the committee if you like, just put your name forward.

A quick and easy recipe for a chocolate treat

250g/9oz assorted biscuits, roughly chopped, 250g/9oz nuts or a mix of nuts and dried fruit, 300g/11oz milk or plain chocolate, chopped, 100g/4oz butter, chopped, 140g/5oz golden syrup

- 1) Butter and line a 20cm square tin with non-stick baking parchment. In a large bowl, combine the biscuits and nuts, halving any larger nuts. Melt the chocolate, butter and golden syrup in a bowl set over a pan of simmering water, stirring occasionally until smooth and glossy, then pour this over the biscuit and nut mixture.
- 2) Tip the mixture into the tin, then flatten lightly – it doesn't need to be completely smooth. Chill for at least 2 hours or overnight before cutting into squares. **Great with coffee.**

Good to use up all those Xmas biscuits, chocolate and nuts. Cuts into 20 squares.

To clean hands here are some useful tips:- 1) Cut an unripe tomato in half and rub the juice into your fingers before washing them, will remove stubborn green stains. 2) Mix a teaspoon of sugar with the lather from your soap. 3) Rub your hands with the cut end of a stick of rhubarb.

Our two trips next year are:- Saturday 4th June 2011 Holker Hall Flower festival. This trip was so popular in 2010 and lots of people asked for another visit, we thought we would try it again.

In September on Saturday 17th we will be travelling to Harrogate for the Autumn Flower show.

HAMPTON COURT FLOWER SHOW

Do you fancy joining us for a 2 day break to see the Hampton Court Flower Show on Thursday 7th & Friday 8th of July?

We will travel in a luxury coach to our hotel in London. "The Ramada London Heathrow" where we will have dinner. The following morning, after breakfast we will continue on to the Hampton Court Flower Show, which will be an all day event. We will leave Hampton Court at about 4pm for our journey back to Newton.

The cost is £119. 00 per person sharing a double room and £149.00 for a single occupancy.

We will need a £10 deposit and the payment in full by the middle of June.

TALKS & DEMONSTRATIONS at the Cricket Club on Crow Lane

Always Thursdays

27th January AGM
24th February Craig Hughes – All About Bees.
31st March Ken Whittaker – Friend or Foe ?
28th April Phil Dunnett – Climbers.
26th May Bill Blackledge – Hanging baskets & containers.
30th June Peter Foley – Alpine & Rock Garden Plants.
27th October John Steedman – All About Bulbs.

HUT OPENINGS:

Saturdays 8th January – 29th October 10.30 – 12.00
Sundays 9th January – 30th October 10.30 – 12.00
Wednesdays 6th April – 22nd June 7.00 – 8.00

AN 8 YEAR OLDS EXPLANATION OF GOD One of God's main jobs is making people. He makes them to replace the ones that die, so there will be enough people to take care of things on earth. He doesn't make grownups, just babies. I think because they are smaller and easier to make. That way he doesn't have to take up his valuable time teaching them to talk and walk. He can just leave that to mothers and fathers.'

