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February 2nd: Dealing with Dahlias

By Jackie Collings

Despite the bitterly cold evening, a large number of members braved the February chill to listen to Rob Sherriff's talk on "How to Grow Dahlias."

Rob and his wife Denise moved from Worcestershire three years ago - together with more than 1,000 dahlias - and spent some time preparing their two acres of clay ready for the tubers. Rob is a perfectionist and has won numerous prizes over the years for his blooms, so spends hours propagating, staking, disbudding and checking for a variety of pests that attack dahlias - especially his nemesis the earwig! It is time well spent as the resulting blooms are superb, as we saw from the excellent photos Denise showed us. They now sell the dahlias as cut flowers and, because the demand grows all the time, they are now converting a barn from which to sell them.

I had to confess to leaving my tubers in the ground, just covering with a mulch, but I don't need to worry any more, as if they don't survive I can buy expertly nurtured plants from Honey Tye Flowers. I'm sure the Committee is already making plans for BDGC to visit Leavenheath and see the blooms in all their glory.

Jackie



Above: During Rob and Denise slide show, the loudest oohs and aahs were elicited by the 'collarette' varieties.

March 2nd: Andrew Bly Talks Lilies

By Bill Baldry

Andrew Bly, Technical Manager for G.A.Verdegaal, has been in lilies all his working life having cultivated (!) an interest as a young lad. His passion for these flowers showed in his talk.

Lilies are native around the world and so are the enthusiasts - both amateur and professional - who spend time hybridising bulbs from one of the nine divisions with those from another; for example trying to achieve new colours or a different habit.

The early pioneers were in the North West of the USA but now commercial lily production is very much Dutch controlled with thousands of acres producing billions of bulbs for sale around the world.

Andrew showed some slides comparing original varieties with their newer counterparts and also shared a glimpse into the future with double-flowered, pollen free, long lasting varieties under development.

Hearing about the commercial side made the talk particularly interesting but also highly relevant as Andrew ended by giving some expert tips for growing lilies for the Club's Show in July. Did you know that you can get pelleted insecticide to put in the ground to combat the dreaded lily beetle?

Bill



Right: Andrew Bly urges Club members to consider the lilies of the field.

Photo: Bill Baldry

March 23rd: Garden Design with Hilary Thomas

By George Bethell

This talk was originally planned for January but had to be cancelled when the Village Hall's heating system refused to cooperate. Fortunately Hilary Thomas was able to reschedule and many members came along for the Club's second meeting in March!

Hilary is a former Head of the School of Garden Design at Capel Manor College and her experience as a lecturer showed as she raced us through 'Garden Design 101'. She started by reminding us of the importance of Form and Texture when planning a garden or border and suggested that whilst Colour is important it generally plays a subservient role. She illustrated this and other key principles through a series of slides showing successful plant combinations.

Clearly not a great fan of bedding plants, Hilary did suggest a number of plants worth considering when planning a border. These included newer forms of *Sedum* including 'Matrona' and 'Red Cauli', *Tellima grandiflora*, *Perovskia* (Russian sage) and, if you want to go for the full Piet Oudolf look, the wonderful grass *Calamagrostis x acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster'.



Above: Hilary Thomas (right) endures the post-talk interrogation.

Hilary warned us that buying single plants on impulse can undermine the design principles of 'unity, simplicity, and harmony', but I fear she failed to fully convince the many irredeemable 'plantaholics' in her audience!

George

Just Two Months To Go! A message from the 2015 Show Committee

We hope you are all well into planning your entries for the BDGC Annual Show to be held on Saturday 4th July.

We have a challenge for you! Have another look through the schedule and enter one or more classes that you have never entered before. If you've never exhibited a vegetable, exhibit a vegetable. If you've never arranged flowers, enter a flower arrangement. If you've never displayed your baking skills to the world, enter one of the classes in the cookery section. You get the message.

We also need lots of entries for the new '**Ken Abel Pelargonium Class**' so that we can tell Ken what a success this class has been! You need to submit a single pelargonium in a pot no bigger than 8". Don't worry, you don't have to reach Ken's prizewinning standards!

Finally, calling all **Grannies & Granddads, Aunts & Uncles** - remember to encourage your young relatives, wherever they live, to enter the junior classes.

The deadline for entries is Thursday 2nd July to one of the four addresses on the schedule (Anthea, Bill, Paul or Denis) or by email to anthej@btinternet.com or caroline@wicking.me

If you are willing to help on the day or have any questions please let Anthea or Caroline know at emails above or phone 01449 675161 or 01449 770980.

All info also on the website: www.battisfordgardeningclub.org

Anthea

PS - Details of a 'Mini Show' for later fruit and veg are given in the 'Coming Events' section on the back page.

PRE-FETE FUNDRAISING EVENTS

Barn Dance on Saturday 30th May 7.30pm and *American Band Night* Friday 3rd July 7.30pm.

Details and tickets from Paul/Ruth Hansord 01449 677015

Please support these events if possible as they pay for our Show marquee.



You 'may' or 'may' not know the answers...

1: Brian May was a member of the super group Queen. Who played drums?

- A Roger Taylor
- B Keith Moon
- C Charlie Watts

2: 'Ne'er cast a clout till May be out' - but what is a 'clout' in this old proverb?

- A a piece of coal
- B a fisherman's fly
- C an article of clothing

3: Which English football club plays its home games at 'The Hawthorns'?

- A Derby County
- B Sheffield Wednesday
- C West Bromwich Albion

4: In 'Yes Minister', Nigel Hawthorne played Sir Humphrey - but what was his surname?

- A Appleton
- B Appleby
- C Applegate

5: In which genus is the common hawthorn?

- A *Crataegus*
- B *Euonymus*
- C *Prunus*

6: Who wrote "Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May"?

- A John Keats
- B William Shakespeare
- C Elizabeth Barrett Browning

(Answers at foot of back page.)

April 13th: Visit to 'Woodwards'

By Sheila Hilton

On Monday 13th April a large group of about 35 Club members set off for Coddenham for a return visit to the beautiful garden at Woodward's, a delightful house almost submerged in the delights of the garden which surround it.

We were welcomed by a marching line of wheelbarrows overflowing with daffodils and leading us through the gateway to the most wonderful barrage of colour provided by tubs, pots and baskets of every hue of polyanthus.

As we made our way down the gently sloping paths we enjoyed wave after wave of daffodils - tall bold ones, pale scented ones, tiny tête-à-tête, some sharing their beds with little dog violets, others with Euphorbia and Doronicum. There were arching trees sheltering tastefully draped ladies, who hid away in leafy alcoves, and winding paths which weave in and out around colourful flower beds.

The garden sweeps down through pools of daffodils, and flowering trees - just coming into bloom - to a strategically placed garden seat where you can fully appreciate the beauty of the surroundings.

Daffodils also provide a golden boundary back up to the top of the garden where a shelter had been provided with table and chairs and most welcome cups of tea and wonderful home made cakes.

What a heavenly evening!

Sheila



Photos of the Club's visit to 'Woodwards' by [Michael Warren](#) who is also the subject of our 'A Gardener's Question Time' feature on the back page.

Coming Events

Monday 18th May: Trip to Walled Garden, MEAL

A trip to see the recently restored Walled Garden at Abbots Hall, Museum of East Anglian Life, Stowmarket. Meet there for 7.00 pm. Cost = £6. Please note that this is the third Monday of the month.

Monday 1st June: Speaker Alan Seager

The much anticipated talk on "Bees", as requested by members, will be delivered by Alan Seager, Chairman of the Suffolk Beekeepers' Association. 7:30 Battsford Community Centre.

Monday 15th June: Visit to the Collings' Garden

An opportunity to see the garden of members Jackie and Stuart Collings. 6:30 pm Woodstock, Park Rd, Combs, IP14 2JS.

Saturday 4th July: The Annual Show

The Club's Annual Show will once again be a major attraction at the Combs Village Fete. *Exhibit, visit or both!*

Oaks Meadow, Fenn's Farm, Bildeston, Combs. Show opens at 2:00pm with setting up 10:30-12:15.

See page 2 for a message from the Show Committee.

Monday 6th July: Speaker Matthew Tanton-Brown

Another opportunity to hear from Matthew Tanton-Brown (formerly 'Place for Plants' now at 'The Walled Garden', Benhall near Saxmundham). On this occasion Matthew will be talking on 'Plants for autumn and winter'. 7:30 pm Battsford Community Centre.

Sunday 16th August: Club BBQ from 3:00 pm

An annual favourite, this year the Club BBQ will be at The Neathouse, Moats Tye - courtesy of Jo and Ian Pepper.

BDGC members go free - 'plus ones' £3. If you're planning to be at the BBQ please let Daphne, Caroline or Jo know as we will need an idea as to likely numbers.

Your Newsletter Needs You



This will be my penultimate edition of the newsletter as I shall be stepping down after the August issue. I have enjoyed my time as Editor immensely, but I'm sure the time has come for a new direction and a new 'voice'.

If you would like to join the new editorial team please let Bill or Anthea know. If you want to know what's involved in producing a newsletter, drop me an e-mail and I'll try to elucidate.

George (bethell.george@gmail.com)

Monday 7th September: Speaker Janet Buist

Janet Buist runs Pennycross Plants in Colne (near Huntingdon) and is widely recognised as a 'Salvia guru'. She will, unsurprisingly, talk to us about 'Salvias' - a huge genera which include culinary and decorative sages.

7:30 Battsford Community Centre.

Monday 5th October: Annual General Meeting

Formal business will be preceded by a talk by Judith and Steve Thompson about their smallholding on the edge of Stowmarket and their charitable activities. The AGM will also include a 'Mini Show' for later fruit and veg. including classes for Apples, Pears, Runner Beans, French Beans, Marrows, Cabbages, and the Biggest Marrow! More details in the August newsletter.

A Gardener's Question Time #3: Gardener and Photographer of all things botanical - Michael Warren

Q1: *What is your favourite plant to grow and why?*

"Clematis, the 'Queen of Climbers' (quote by Jim Fisk of Westleton). It is possible to have clematis flowering every month of the year, they are hardy (most) and growing vertical take up little room, there's always room for another. The British Clematis Society (BCS) & International Clematis Society (ICS) have excellent meetings and tours & the members are the friendliest of any society."

Q2: *What plants would you like to grow but which, in the past, have defeated you?*

"Celeriac! It has always defeated me - annoying to see such large roots for sale when mine are tiny (but organic!)"

Q3: *Of all the gardens you have visited in your various 'professional' capacities, which one made the most lasting impression? Why?*

"Favourite Garden? I am often asked this! They change each decade. My choices are influenced by my photography instincts & demands: 1970's Bressingham Gardens; 1980's Beth Chatto Gardens; 1990's Red Gables, Evesham (Derek & Rowlett Cook); 2000 John's Garden at Ashwood Nurseries; and throughout these decades: Harlow Carr Gardens, Harrogate, (now an RHS garden); The Savill Garden, Windsor; Hilliers Arboretum; and good old RHS Wisley! Abroad, in my early days, the Parc de la Source at Olivet, Orleans, France, later favourites Mainau, Lake Constance & Helga and Norbert Ricks garden, N of Hamburg, Germany."

Q4: *You photograph gardens and plants, any thoughts of retiring?*

"NO, I enjoy it too much - the travel, the new plant introductions, and the exciting technological improvements in cameras and lenses which keep me poor!"

Thanks Michael for your great answers. I'm somewhat surprised that BDGC is not at the top of your list of friendly societies but perhaps some of us are just too envious of your glamorous lifestyle? Ed.

Brain Teasels Answers

1: A
2: C
3: C
4: B
5: A
6: B