



HENLEAZE GARDEN CLUB

WWW.HENLEAZEGARDENCLUB.CO.UK



No 63A

NEWSLETTER

July 2020

Hello Members! Welcome to Garden Club! The Organising Team was at last able to get together at a real meeting for the first time in nearly three months – in the garden, of course! Unfortunately, we needed jackets, hats and umbrellas, but we are hardy perennials! Forward planning is a bit of a challenge – we are continuing to review on a monthly basis eagerly watching the guidelines as to when it will be legal and safe to hold a viable Club meeting. In the meantime, to keep in touch with horticultural topics, here is a bonus edition of the Newsletter including our Prize Competition. **Please enter!** The Editor will take a short break in August and your next Newsletter will be the scheduled version in September when we hope to announce the Club's Programme for 2021. We are already thinking about 2022! We will, of course, e-mail any important news.

PLANTS SOLD

Many thanks to the 20 or so Members who responded to last month's e-mail and telephoned to buy plants. Extra bonus points for collecting during the huge downpours! Virtually every plant was sold and £236 has been added to Club funds.

Plastics in the Garden

Plastic is a wonderfully useful material but the problems arise when it is discarded. The best thing you can do to help the environment is to re-use, re-use, re-use. One example is the ubiquitous plastic plant label. Most people use indelible markers on these labels but unless you are going to label the same plants every year, you might be tempted to throw them away and buy new each year but if you use pencil, you can rub/wash the label and re-use. Often when you buy tomatoes or soft fruit, the produce comes in a plastic container with holes in the base. These make wonderful 'pots' for seeds or cuttings as they are usually deeper than the traditional seed tray. They can also be washed and used time and time again. You can be 'green' in several senses of the word.

Pat Dury

ANTS IN YOUR PLANTS ?

Have you noticed what a bad year it is for blackfly which is, of course, farmed by ants. I found a dahlia stem crawling in ants covering a thick black column of aphids protecting them from their natural predators. I don't mind squishing the blackfly with my fingers, but I'm still itching from the ants!



Dactylorhiza foliosa (Madeiran Orchid)

This is an easy to grow purple sensation. It's a hardy tuberous perennial, with long lasting flowers and increases year on year. I purchased one for our garden about 10 years ago and it has increased to more than 80 plants in that time. Although initially expensive to buy it rewards you tenfold over the years. The clumps get bigger and the flower heads grow taller each year. It's a plant that is happy in shade but tolerates partial sun too. The clumps need dividing every 2 to 3 years, as they multiply so readily, and your gardening friends will be thrilled to receive such an exotic looking plant. Definitely a plant to look out for.

Myrah Panes

On Weeds.

Why is it that, no matter how vigilantly one weeds, weeds still thrive in our gardens? With lockdown, I have been far more diligent about weeding, but I think there are as many in my garden now as there have been after the more lackadaisical regimes of previous years. Upon closer investigation I begin to understand why.

A single plant of chickweed (*Stellaria media*) can produce up to 1,300 seeds, if left to its own devices. Buried seed can remain viable for up to 25 years. It is clearly unwise, therefore, to let this plant flower and madness to let it develop seeds. Apparently, a table fork is the best implement for rooting it out. I also discovered that the weed I have been calling chickweed all my life is, in fact, petty spurge (*Euphorbia peplus*)!

I am frustrated by herb bennet/wood avens (*Geum urbanum*) because the rosette of leaves it forms prior to flowering look exactly the same as those of the garden varieties of geum that perform so well in the perennial border. It is tempting to wait and see if a named variety has self-seeded. It never has and the insignificant yellow flower of the weed is easy to overlook until too late. It can regenerate from seed or rhizomes so needs removing promptly and probably more thoroughly than I had realised.

Enchanter's nightshade (*Circaea lutetiana*), which loves woodlands and shade, is a perennial that spreads by stolons (runners) and is hard to remove completely in a single attempt. Ditto wood sorrel (*Oxalis corniculata*), the brown-leaved, yellow-flowered variety. Advice to mulch heavily with leaf litter so that the roots will establish nearer the surface and thus be easier to dig out is sound but is a long-term approach so at odds with the fistful of weeds that I hoik out as I wander the garden with a mug of tea, no specialist tool to hand and probably leaving enough plant material below ground to support robust re-growth.



Enchanter's nightshade

Hoe, hoe, hoe is the less back-breaking route to weeding. Do it often and it does help, even with perennial weeds - eventually. One with a long handle and a small, sharp head is the ideal in a crowded border.

Proprietary weedkillers are, of course, available. For weeds nestling amidst prize plants, I read that a good technique is to put on rubber glove and then put an old, woollen glove over it. Soak the woollen glove with weedkiller (your hand protected by the rubber glove) and then scrunch the leaves of the weed with it. I have not tried it, but I can see it might work.

Finally, you will be aware of the saying that a weed is simply a plant in the wrong place. I reflected upon this as I realized that the "weed" I probably remove most of all in my garden is love-in-a-mist (*Nigella damascena*). I love it, but it self-seeds everywhere, even in the grass, and needs a firm hand.

Clearly, weeds and weeding will never go away. They are part and parcel of gardening. I suppose the ideal is achieve a balance, which will be different for each of us, between never-ending hard work and a "tomorrow will do" approach to their control. If we aim for control rather than eradication, then success is achievable.

Good luck!



Creeping Wood sorrel

Sue Knight

From winter waterlogging to an earth cracking spring/early summer

What to plant?

What a year it has been and I'm not referring to the lockdown – according to the Met Office, February was the wettest on record, following the fifth wettest winter, April was the sunniest, May the driest and at the time of writing, I'm betting June and July are in competition for the windiest! Spring generally was the sunniest on record across England with 695 hours of sunshine to cheer us up. But on our Henleaze clay, what best can we plant to cope with these conditions and make us smile? Here are some suggestions from a few of our previous speakers.

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Nick Wray, Curator of University of Bristol Botanic Gardens and Gardeners' Question Time panellist in March this year, recommends Roses as they love winter wet clay soil and, as they have a deep tap root, can cope with drought. He also likes <i>Erysimum</i> 'Bowles Mauve', the perennial wallflower, which is very good for pollinators, <i>Stipa gigantea</i>, the robust evergreen grass known as golden oats, which provides winter stems and seed pods. But a real favourite of his is the long late spring/early summer flowering <i>Lunaria rediviva</i>, perennial honesty, (pictured) which has beautiful scented lilac-white panicles which Nick describes in his own garden as "a treat after dark".</p> |  |
|  | <p>Last November's speaker, Neil Ross, recommends:</p> <p>"Purple loostrife, <i>Lythrum salicaria</i> (left) – it can cope with being flooded for weeks once established and copes remarkably well with dry summers for a normally waterside plant. It has a tall stately presence - flowers for ages through July - August – doesn't need staking - has great seed heads over winter and it's Native! Just watch out because it seeds about madly in wet places. there are double and dwarf varieties as well as a pink version. For smaller gardens go for the closely related but more gentle <i>Lythrum virgatum</i> 'Dropmore Purple'"</p> |
| <p>Alan Down, another of our GQT panellists, suggests the following:</p> <p><i>Geranium Rozanne</i> <i>Ajuga reptans</i> 'Black Scallop' - bugle Any <i>Hemerocallis</i> – the day lily <i>Hydrangea</i> 'Annabelle' (right) – this gorgeous specimen was a cutting taken from Diane Harrison's plant <i>Deschampsia cespitosa</i> - this is tufted hair grass or hassock grass which prefers neutral to acid soil</p> |  |

My choice is the passion flower (*Passiflora caerulea*). I grew three plants from seed a few years ago and now they trail over an arbour situated in one of the most poorly drained areas of our garden where the hose will not reach in summer and, so far, they have come back smiling each year!

ENTER OUR PRIZE COMPETITION

Can you identify these West Country gardens which have all been visited by Garden Club?

A



B



C



D



Submit your answer by e-mail to c.a.radford@btinternet.com or if you do not use e-mail please telephone 0117 9628914

The first two Members to submit 4 correct answers will each receive a garden voucher. In the event of no completely correct answer by 31 July, the nearest two answers will win. The prizes will be delivered to the winners. The Chairman's decision shall be final and binding! Answers next time.

GOOD LUCK!

Hope to see you soon

Chris Radford