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Charlton & Blackheath
Amateur Horticultural Society
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NEWSLETTER October 2022

Grow Friends, Grow Fit ... Grow a Garden!

As our gardens have now truly moved into their autumn colours, this month we welcome Peter Skeggs-Gooch, from 12-time Chelsea Gold medal-winning growers Thorncroft Clematis coming to talk to us about their plants. Peter is unable to bring any clematis for sale at the meeting, but will have free copies of their mail order catalogue for everyone who would like a copy. He will also bring a printed slide list for everyone as well, so there is no need to try writing down names as he talks!

October Plant of the Month: Zinnia, from Anna.

From a packet of seed bought from my local supermarket back in May, I have managed to produce a colourful display of Zinnias, in glorious colours, from July onwards for the third or fourth year running on my allotment. These photos have just been taken so I'm hoping my Zinnias will keep on flowering until the frosts arrive sometime in November. Over the summer the flowers have ranged in colour from yellow, orange, red, pink and peach. Zinnias are an annual and are part of the aster family, originating from grassland regions of SW United States, Mexico and down to South America.



My packet of seed was sown directly into the soil in June in 2-3 rows and this year I refrained from thinning out the seedlings. They absolutely love full sun and a rich, but well drained, soil. They are, however, prone to several diseases and in my case root rot, where the leaves turn yellow and wilt. There is no alternative but to remove these individual plants and I have lost about 10-12 over the growing season. However, a packet of seed provides a large number of seedlings and most develop into sturdy, branched specimens 3 foot in height, which do not require staking so that the removed plants are not missed.

Although drought tolerant, I find they really 'perk up' after a heavy downfall and I have had to religiously water them during the heatwaves whilst watering the vegetables, being careful not to splash the stems. If you have a strip of ground which is very sunny, add compost or manure next spring and start sowing. I hope you will be pleasantly surprised.



Gardening notes

- **Copton Ash** are opening their garden as part of the NGS on 30 October. We have them booked for a talk in 2023, so especially worth a visit!
- Check **The Gardens Trust** website for details of a range of interesting talks, which are always good value. For those interested in the links between fiction and gardens on 26 November: **Verdure is the most Perfect Refreshment' - Jane Austen & the English Landscape Garden** with Dr. Laura Mayer. Justly famous for her sharp social satire, Austen was also highly attuned to the shifting sensibilities surrounding landscape gardening. Laura will look at the Bath connection to Austen, whilst exploring Gilpin's theories on the Gothic/ Picturesque, the fashion for garden visiting and the connections between *Mansfield Park* & Humphry Repton.
- **The Garden Museum** is running a series of events to coincide with *Lucien Freud. Plant Portraits* exhibition, from 14 October until 5 March.
- Now open is the garden space which Adam Frost has designed for **University Hospital Lewisham** as part of the RHS Healing Garden programme.
- At **Nymans** the ruined Great Hall has been beautifully reimagined as a garden, reflecting the theatrical legacy of its creator Oliver Messel. Guided tours are available. Check the website for details.

Out and about with Anna.

Two days after our coach trip to the beautiful gardens at Pashley Manor on 14 September, friends and I drove to Great Dixter to visit another world-famous garden. The Sunken Garden and the Long Border were looking fabulous, as always, and several hours were spent exploring.



The gardens were so good - in the middle of September - that one could imagine it's previous custodian, Christopher Lloyd, weaving his magic over his beloved garden. Of course he still does, as the The Great Dixter Charitable Trust and his loyal staff follow his principles, ensuring his magical eye prevails over this wonderful place. The garden is on my list for a group visit next year, during the summer months - a wonderful experience not to be missed.



Pat's 10 jobs for October:

1. Start to sow early sweet peas on a warm sunny windowsill or order now if you don't have any. I sow 5 or 6 to a 3inch pot. If you have root trainers all the better, as their roots resent disturbance.
2. Last chance to collect seeds before they all disperse from annuals like nigella, honesty and nicotiana and grasses and perennials so you can grow them where you want them. Dry off on a sunny windowsill before separating the seeds from the chaff and store in a cool dry place in envelopes in a sealed container. Don't forget to date them too.
3. Continue planting spring bulbs such as narcissi and hyacinths and tulips towards the end of the month.
4. Pot on summer cuttings into 3inch pots of a good draining compost and keep in a sheltered spot or cold frame if you have one.
5. Prune back roses such as shrub and floribundas by about a third to prevent windrock, but leaving the main pruning until late winter and give them a mulch with compost or leaf mould to preserve moisture.
6. Cut back some herbaceous perennials that are really untidy but leave good seedheads for wildlife and winter interest on plants like grasses and eryngiums etc.
7. Time to plant garlic cloves in the vegetable garden, so order now if you don't have any and then plant 6 inches apart just below the surface in good free draining soil in a sunny spot.
8. Order your winter hardy broad beans now for sowing at the end of the month or in November. They really struggle if planted any later and then are best left until spring.

9. Take hardwood cuttings from currants and gooseberries inserting as many as you can into a slit trench. It's an excellent and easy way to propagate for free and I have never bought a blackcurrant!

10. If you have the space, leave the flowers and berries on mature ivy for insects and birds to enjoy during the winter. The ivy at the back of my garden is covered in ivy bees feeding on the nectar.

Object of the month

Essex GT To Unveil Blue Plaque at the Beth Chatto Garden

This year Essex Gardens Trust sponsored four blue plaques celebrating and honouring the lives and achievements of four significant Essex-based women gardeners as part of the Essex Women's Commemoration Project. The final unveiling on 15 October will remember both Beth Chatto and her friend and mentor, Pamela Underwood, at the Beth Chatto Gardens.

Happy gardening all!

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