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Charlton & Blackheath
Amateur Horticultural Society
Founded 1950

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NEWSLETTER September 2022

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

It seems that we have suddenly tipped into Autumn and what could be more appropriate than our Autumn Show, our members' opportunity to display their flowers, fruit and vegetables! This year the show will be held on Monday 26th September at 7.30pm. We welcome back Joe Woodcock, who will be compering the event and selecting the best from each class. Joe is becoming a popular fixture at our events and we are very grateful for the time he gives us.

The grass in my garden has been a perfect example of one of Pat's tips last month, 'Don't waste water on your lawn, it will survive once the rains come'. I gave the grass no water at all over the dry period (in fact it is much neglected!). By the end of August it was thoroughly yellow. One bonus has been that no mowing has been required this summer! The first steady rain started to green it up and now, following successive bouts of rain it has thoroughly revived. As Joe recommended at Gardeners' Question Time, in times of drought, focus your watering on special plants that you want to survive.

September Plant of the Month: *Mandevilla laxa* (Chilean jasmine) from Anna.

I've been a bit spoilt. Margaret T gave me a young vine about three years ago, which she had, amazingly, grown from seed. Not remembering what it was called, I duly planted it on the south-facing fence at the base of *Trachelospermum asiaticum* for protection. And, this autumn, for the very first time, the vine has started flowering - white, tubular, fragrant flowers - and I'm proud to say that I have two clusters. I first saw *Mandevilla laxa* (originally from South America) flowering in a friend's (and plantswoman's) garden in Battersea during a heatwave in July 2020 and looking splendid at the top of her high wall. It gave me hope. The photograph below is of Margaret T's *Mandevilla*, showing several handsome, white clusters. Early this evening I detected a wonderful fragrance from my flowers for the first time, which I had not noticed before. This is another vine classed as not hardy in England, but can be grown in a sheltered, sunny position in the south in mild winters, using other evergreens as shelter. My climber, (with distinctively pink leaf stems) has romped away (can grow 6 metres) and as everything (including clematis) are all tangled up together. I might just pluck up courage and prune back in late winter/early spring as the flowers are on this year's growth. I might even try taking cuttings. Beware, like *Euphorbia*, the sap of *Mandevilla* can cause a skin irritation. For your interest, I am always spotting the pink, orange and red-flowering *Mandevilla* vines (labelled *Dipladenia*) for sale in garden centres and supermarkets. These have small, shiny, evergreen leaves but the trumpet flower shape is the same. My shop-bought plant, with pink flowers, bloomed throughout last winter and it is still sitting in its pot (obviously loves it dry) underneath the *Trachelospermum* and flowering once again. This means they could be grown on a sheltered, sunny, balcony or patio, so that their flowers could be admired from indoors during the winter months.



Gardening notes

- The botanist Timothy Walker can be seen presenting a BBC4 series called *Botany: A Blooming History*. Fascinating. (We have him booked for a talk next year - watch this space!)
- **Queens Orchard** Open Day, Greenwich Park, Sunday 25 September 11am -2pm. Organically grown produce for sale, cash only.
- **Gardens Trust** has a series of talks on the *19th Century Garden* running from 15 September until 20 October. Tickets: £5 for an individual talk, £24 for the series of six. Check The Gardens Trust website for details.
- For those of you interested in flower arranging, **The Garden Museum** continues with its focus on Constance Villiers-Stuart and a series of talks. 20 September has a talk, *From the Garden to the Vase*, (fully booked for in-person attendance, but available online).
- Now open is the garden space which Adam Frost has designed for **University Hospital Lewisham** as part of the RHS Healing Garden programme.
- Sunday October 16th: **Horn Fair** at Charlton House. As usual, we have booked a stall to sell plants - we were very successful last year and it would be nice to repeat this. As before, proceeds go to the Society's speaker programme, the Greenwich & Bexley Community Hospice and the Walled Gardens at Charlton House.

Out and about - a visit to Rose Cottage, from Pat

Early on a Saturday morning we set off for Rose Cottage nursery at Epping Green in Essex for their Dahlia Open Day. When we got there and as we were one of the first visitors, Anne Barnard agreed to show us around the nursery.

Outside the back of the nursery building are four colour themed raised beds showing off some of the unusual and stunning varieties that the Barnards have, although not all of these are available for sale in the nursery. There are a mix of double and single varieties in every shade of magenta and red and apricot and white, some really tall too. This is very much a working nursery split into three different areas one being the main show beds, with a further garden to the left of the building of mixed dahlias and perennials and a few shrubs and to the right are the actual plants for sale all making a wonderful display and splash of colour. A huge barn already contains a magnificent selection of tulips and many other bulbs imported from The Netherlands ready for sale. The Barnards this year have had a tough summer keeping everything watered, but the excellent condition of the plants is testimony to their efforts. Anne chooses a lot of her varieties in Holland and adds to their collection every year.

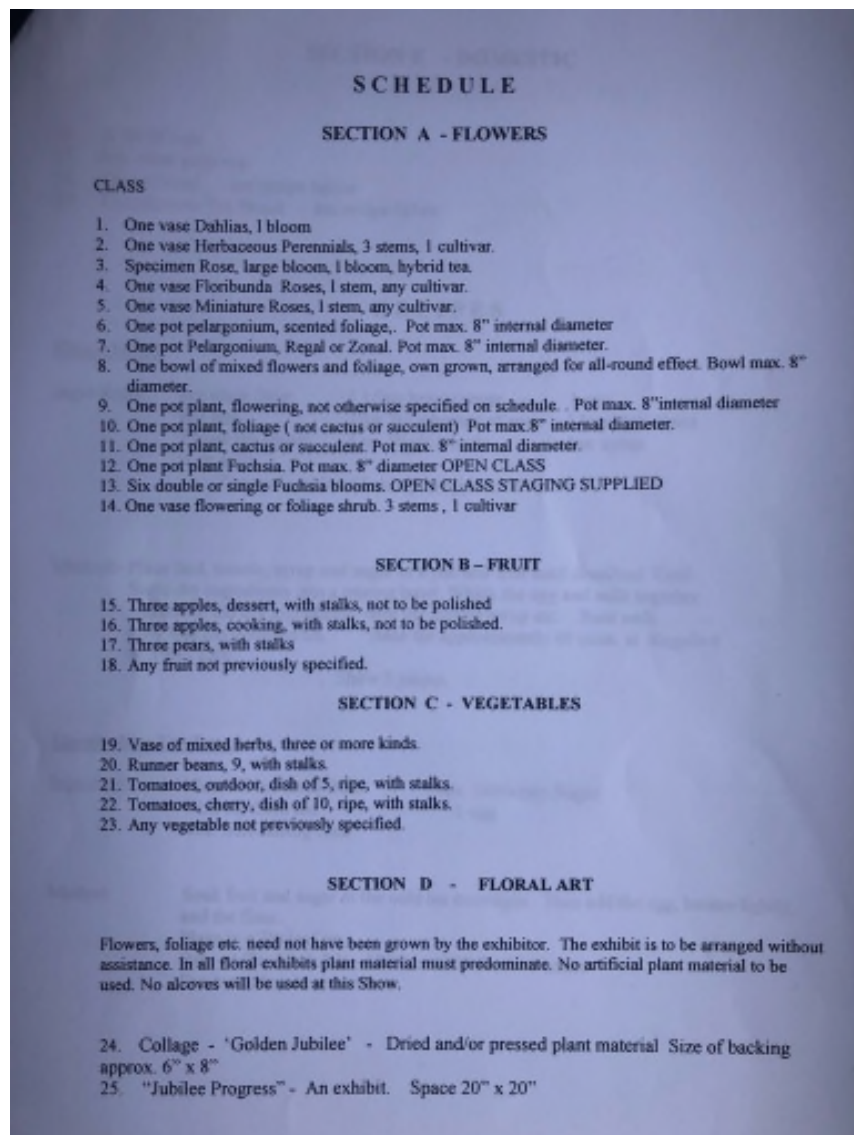
I have very restricted space left this year so only came away with *Apricot Delight* which is beautiful and Vija bought Dahlia *Caitlin's Joy*. I loved Dahlia *Franz Kafka* and *Osirium* too, so do look on their website and see what's available. They have plenty of perennials too. We also came home with a good selection of spring bulbs so our visit was well worthwhile.

Pat's 10 jobs for September:

At least with cooler weather and much needed rain we can continue to do a few things in the garden and veg patch.

1. Remember to deadhead dahlias and penstemons right down to where new shoots will emerge to keep those blooms coming and give them a feed too, especially dahlias.
2. Watch out for powdery mildew which seems very prevalent this summer after the dry weather. Cut down plants showing signs of it, water the roots well but don't add to the compost bin and next year maybe try and improve air circulation. I have a phlox which has it particularly badly, so will try splitting it to give it more space. Phlox White Admiral is listed by the RHS and has proven particularly resistant to mildew this year in many gardens.
3. Divide perennials when finished flowering such as geranium, phlox and hemerocallis and pot up some bits for our stall at the Horn Fair in October.
4. Camellia and rhododendron buds are forming now for next spring so it's important to keep them well watered to avoid the buds dropping off or not forming at all.
5. Start planting spring flowering bulbs now, but leave tulips until October or November.
6. Keep feeding container grown plants with tomato fertiliser to keep them growing.
7. If tomatoes aren't ripening you can always place them on a sunny windowsill with a ripe one and they'll be ready in a couple of days. Continue to feed tomato plants and remember to pinch off the side shoots.
8. Keep picking beans to keep them coming, if you let them seed, they'll stop producing...you can always give them away to your neighbours or freeze some too.
9. Net brassicas now as pigeons are on the rampage and, on our allotment, sweetcorn has become the latest delicacy for squirrels and it's very difficult to keep them protected. One plot holder has built a metal tower and covered it in two layers of netting.
10. Net ponds as soon as leaves are starting to fall, as this will quickly clog up and pollute them.

Object of the month



Classes for the Autumn Show in 1965. The second page continued with 'Section E: Domestic' and included recipes for gingerbread and Lincolnshire Tea Bread. Those were the days!

Happy gardening all!
Contact us on: cabahshortisoc@gmail.com