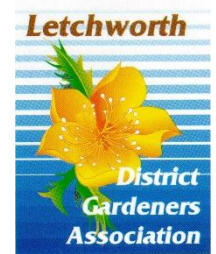


GLEANINGS FROM THE COMPOST HEAP

WINTER 2018



WELCOME to the **COMPOST HEAP**. In this edition we have news about our plans for 2019 and we give you the chance to win **£15** worth of vouchers to spend at the Trading Store. See page 7 for details. Before that, member Harold Smith reminisces about his early gardening experiences.

HOW I STARTED GARDENING

“...with my grandfather, as many of us did. My grandparents lived a couple of streets away from us in north London in the late 1940s, early ‘50s so we were often round there, and it was expected that I would help out. Granddad was very stout, he looked like the drawings of Mr Pickwick, so I did the planting out and other things, like doing the lawn edges, that needed bending.”

“I don’t remember about winter bedding, but summer bedding was Edwardian, if not Victorian, in style.



The front garden had a star-shaped central bed – which meant a lot of awkward grass trimming into the points – and was planted with white alyssum, blue lobelia, geraniums (Pelargoniums), and love-lies-bleeding (Amaranthus) as dot plants. The annuals were all raised from seed and the geraniums from over-wintered cuttings, all grown in the lean-to greenhouse. The geraniums included a single red and a double pink called Queen of Denmark.”



“The greenhouse was used for tomatoes in the summer and also had a sour-tasting grape that he was very proud of. In the winter it housed chrysanthemums, again propagated from cuttings; yellow and pink Rayonnants (the ones with shaggy petals) and big incurves. They spent the summer outside in big pots, and I expect my father moved them in, come autumn.”

“He made his own compost from garden loam, leafmould from the bottom of the garden where an oak tree shed its leaves, and silver sand. I was sent to buy 4lb at a time from the hardware shop at the Cambridge roundabout. “You won’t get much as it weighs heavy” – not scientific but true. This was across a busy dual carriageway and the equally busy North Circular, at junior school age. I would probably get his pipe tobacco (1oz each of St Julien and Erinmore) and my grandmother’s cigarettes (Churchman No. 1) on the way back.”

“Fertiliser was Growmore and homemade liquid manure from a disgusting old tin tub behind the shed, with horse manure from the street in one end held back by chicken wire. This had to be replenished regularly – by guess who! Pest control was done with Derris or soap solution from big brass syringes, which always leaked or the valves clogged up so that as much went on us, as on the plants.”



“My grandparents died in the early 50’s by which time we had our own garden and I was allowed a plot. From this early beginning I still believe that real gardening is more than buying plants to put in, but raising your own from seeds and cuttings.”

PRODUCE SHOWS

Here is some news about this year’s ‘Chilli Challenge’ - member John Humphries has been investigating:

“You may have been wondering what variety of chilli pepper we grew in the annual competition. At the Autumn Show it was announced that this year’s variety was Scotch Bonnet, which of course is quite hot, around 300 000 Scovill units.”

“The mature fruits [on my plant] are quite attractive but clearly not Scotch Bonnet, so I decided to find out what had been grown. After some exchange of emails with Kings Seeds, they admitted that their supplier had mixed up the order and delivered the wrong seed. They promptly

withdrew the stock but it was too late for the packets already sold.”



“This year’s chillies were in fact Friars Hat, also known as Bishops Crown, a variety that has little or no heat and can be used as a sweet pepper. So no hot spicy dishes this year! Try again in 2019.”

This year at the Summer Show we are introducing a new award called ‘People’s Choice’, where visitors to the show will be able to vote for their favourite exhibit in the flower classes 1 to 16.

The show dates and photography themes for 2019 are as follows:

Summer Show: Sat 13th July

- Shadows
- A humorous photo
- The colour red

Autumn Show: Sat 14th September

- A car
- Memories of spring
- Roof tops



If you would like more information about our shows, please contact Paul on 01438 727422 or email shows@ldga.org.uk

MEETINGS AND OUTINGS

Taking in to account the popularity of the things that she organises along with feedback from members, Myra has put together a programme for 2019 that has slightly more emphasis on the social side than in previous years. Here's what's coming soon, for the full year's programme see your new Trading List or visit our website www.ldga.org.uk

Coming Soon

Wednesday 2nd January at 10:00am

Today and every first Wednesday of the month - Coffee Morning at Tapps Garden Centre.

Thursday 17th January at 7:00pm

Super Social Supper £6pp

This will be the 3rd edition of Myra's popular social evening but instead of sausages this year she will be doing chilli-con-carne followed by tiramisu. As ever, special dietary requirements can be accommodated - just let her know.

Sunday 27th January at 9:00am

Trading Store opens for the season.

We start the year with our 'Potato Day' when there will be 10% discount on all seed potatoes and free leek and potato soup to warm you up (while stocks last).

Thursday 21st February at 7:30pm

AGM followed by 'Tips for Best Results', a short talk by our show photography judge Terri Evans

Thursday 21st March at 12:15pm

Lunch with speaker £11pp

After lunch at Letchworth Golf Club, James Smallwood, prize winning auricular grower, gives tips on cultivation.

Something else that is new for 2019 is our Thursday meeting venue. Following a review of our needs we have decided that from April onwards we will hold all our Thursday meetings at The Cloisters, Barrington Road, Letchworth. This offers more flexibility, better rooms and more parking. Refreshments will still be laid on but we will no longer have a raffle at the regular meetings. Although room hire is no more expensive here, we are taking the opportunity to increase the meeting entry fee to £3 for members and £4 for non-members. This will help cover the ever-increasing cost of speakers.

For more information or to book meals, please contact Myra, our Meetings Organiser on 01462 674696 or email meetings@ldga.org.uk

Outings

Myra has planned 4 outings so far:

Saturday 18th May

A local visit using our own cars

Friday 7th June

Stamford and Swines Meadow Garden Centre, Market Deeping

Thursday 1st August

Hyde Hall Flower Show

Thursday 15th August

Beth Chatto Gardens



More information nearer the time.

LOQUAT

Loquat, an evergreen shrub or tree also known as Japanese Medlar or Nispero is native to China. It can also be found in Japan and all around SE Asia as well as S Europe and America. They can be seen in our more Northern climes but rarely flower or bear fruit due to our colder temperatures. This year was different though, as member Wendy Gross reports.

“I’ve had my tree for over 10 years and this is the first time it has flowered. I’d be interested to know if anyone else in the area had one in flower.” Please email editor@ldga.org.uk if you did.



Loquat is unusual in that it flowers in autumn. Its fruits develop slowly, being ripe, conditions permitting, by early summer. The fruits are oval or pear-shaped with smooth yellowy orange skin. Their flavour is said to be a combination of peach, citrus and mango. The high pectin level in the fruit makes them ideal for making jam or jelly.



You can buy Loquat trees from specialist nurseries or you can try growing your own; apparently if you can get hold of the fresh fruit the seeds inside are very easy to germinate.

COMMITTEE NEWS

Firstly we welcome Carol Russell to the committee; she has taken on the role of Treasurer after John Droy had to stand down due to ill health. Kay Walker has taken on Schools Liaison as this fits in nicely with the work she has been doing with the children on the Seedlings Plot. As ever, we need more help with running the Association, in particular we are looking for a Publicity Assistant to help promote and publicise the association and General Committee Members to help with all our activities. If you or anyone you know would like to have a go at these roles please email secretary@ldga.org.uk with your nominations by end of Wednesday 13th February 2019.

Our AGM takes place on 21st February; as part of the evening's business we will be proposing an amendment to the association's rules as follows:-

4.4 Members whose application for membership has been accepted after 31st August will be required to pay the full subscription but such subscription shall be valid up to 31st December of the following year.

Amend to say –

4.4 New members whose application for membership has been accepted after 31st August will be required to pay 50% of the full subscription. This will cover September to December of that year following which the full subscription will apply.

4.6 Any member, excluding those Members included in paragraph 4.1.1 above, whose subscription is in arrears by more than six months (to allow for extraordinary circumstances) shall be deemed to have resigned from the Association.

Amend to say –

4.6 Any member, excluding those Members included in paragraph 4.1.1 above, whose subscription is in arrears by more than three months shall be deemed to have resigned from the Association and will be required to pay the full subscription should they later decide to re-join unless it is after 31st August when sub-clause 4.4 will apply.

We will also be recommending an increase to the membership subscription from £5 to £6 at the start of 2020. This would be the first increase for at least 10 years and is necessary to help offset the ever-rising costs of running the association.

RECIPE - BUBBLE AND SQUEAK

No matter how big one's appetite, there are always going to be some leftovers at Christmas time. Traditionally made with the shallow-fried leftover potatoes and greens from a roast dinner, bubble and squeak is an ideal way to use them up. Here's how.

Ingredients

25g butter

1 small onion, finely chopped

450g leftover potato, mashed

Equivalent volume of leftover 'greens' i.e. sprouts, cabbage or kale, shredded

Salt and pepper to taste



Method

In a non-stick frying pan melt the butter and allow it to get nice and hot. Make sure it doesn't brown. Add the finely chopped onion and fry gently for about 5 minutes or so until soft and translucent.

To the pan add the mashed potato and the chopped up greens. Season as required. Fry for at least 10 minutes turning continuously in the melted butter, ensuring the potato and vegetables are thoroughly reheated. You are aiming to brown, but not burn the outside edges of the vegetables. Continue stirring, occasionally pressing the mixture into the pan.

Finally, when the mixture is heated right through, give the vegetables one long final press onto the base of the pan and leave to cook for 1 minute. Flip over and repeat.

Serve for breakfast or brunch with a fried or poached egg and bacon or ham.



You can add some cheese or an egg with the vegetables to give a softer texture.

You can also use other leftovers from the roast such as carrots, parsnips or leeks. If you have no leftovers, why not cook the veg especially.

TRADING STORE – ROUND UP

John Brookbanks' first year as Trading Secretary is now complete. Provisional figures show that despite a slow start mainly due to the weather, this year was better than last. Some of the new lines including Strulch and farm yard manure that he has introduced have proved very popular.



John has been shopping around at various wholesalers and has spent approx. £450 less than last year on restocking. This should help to keep any price rises to a minimum. Some items new to the Trading List next year include:

Butterfly Net, Soft, 2m wide, /m	£1.40
Propagator Lid, Standard Size	£2.00
Rootainers, 32 cell, 12cm deep	£6.95



Plus, as there is now a class for them at the Autumn Show, Aster seeds have been added to the Kings range.

We are constantly looking for new products at competitive prices and welcome all your suggestions.

The card reader has been well used since we started using it towards the end of last year. Over a third of all takings have gone through it. We will however, be introducing a minimum spend of £5 when

we re-open in January.

More refurbishments are planned for next year. Estimates have been obtained for repairs to the exterior of the store. When these repairs have been carried out, we will probably have to prepare the exterior walls, seal them and then paint.

Don't forget, although we deliver your Trading List to your door, you will still need to renew your membership before you can take advantage of our great prices. See below for details.

Finally, thank you to all the members who have come along and supported the Trading Store this year. Thanks also to every member of the helpers team for giving their time, without them we couldn't manage. If you would like to be a volunteer helper, have a word with John up at the store or email trading@ldga.org.uk

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

It's that time of year when membership renewals are due. It's still only £5 per household, so please re-join and take advantage of all the benefits that LDGA has to offer; the savings that can be made at our Trading Store alone make it worth doing. It couldn't be easier: fill out the orange renewal form that we deliver to your door and return it to us with your £5. Do this by post or in person at coffee mornings, monthly meetings or at the Trading Store when it reopens. If you prefer electronic transfer, please contact Jo Schurch on 01462 674195 or email membership@ldga.org.uk for details.

DID YOU KNOW?

God made rainy days so gardeners could get the housework done. Or in my case, the Compost Heap

WORD SEARCH

B M E U T A U Q E M I L O K O A
 Y P K T O A A J A C K F R U I T
 E P E U A A A A A H A O R R I A
 T I U R F N O G A R D P R A F M
 I U A A S A A A N T N A I R A A
 U T E E I I K R E Y T U A E I N
 R I A A E C M A G U F J A G I G
 F H V U A H P M A E N A T A R O
 N R G E Q T C Y O A M G Y I T T
 O A A F C M A Y I N Y O T P A A
 I M K U M G U R L A M C P U R R
 S B M I U T U K V I R S Q G V M
 S U U E D D R A R F R O O P O P
 A T A A U M U E U A L S R J I T
 P A A N Q G H A Y A P A P N H A
 N N P L I C N H A R A N T Q R Y

- CHERIMOYA ▪ KUMQUAT ▪ PAPAYA
- DRAGONFRUIT ▪ LIMEQUAT ▪ PASSIONFRUIT
- DURIAN ▪ LOQUAT ▪ PERSIMMON
- GUAVA ▪ LYCHEE ▪ POMEGRANATE
- JACKFRUIT ▪ MANGO ▪ RAMBUTAN

Find these exotic fruits hidden in the grid.

WATTS IT ALL ABOUT?

Thanks to member Geoff Watts for this snippet from the gardening press.

When you run out of vacuum cleaner deodoriser just pop a sprig of rosemary or similar aromatic herb from the garden into the dust bag. It leaves the house smelling lovely and fresh.

LEAF MOULD - A FOOTNOTE

It's been a good leaf collecting season for me, despite an early scare when contractors came to clear up leaves much earlier than normal. Fortunately there were plenty left on the trees. I even had two people along the road thank me for clearing their grass verges; they also offered me leaves that they had already cleared up. I accepted of course!

COMPETITION TIME

How well do you know your varieties?



£15 worth of Trading Store vouchers could be yours if you can identify which fruit or vegetables have these varieties

- 1 *Bedford Fillbasket* _____
- 2 *Christmas Drumhead* _____
- 3 *Ulster Chieftain* _____
- 4 *Scarlet Emperor* _____
- 5 *Chantenay Red Core* _____
- 6 *Burpless Tasty Green* _____
- 7 *Hurst Green Shaft* _____
- 8 *Turks Turban* _____
- 9 *Mortgage Lifter* _____
- 10 *Worcester Pearmain* _____
- 11 *Williams* _____
- 12 *Webbs Wonderful* _____
- 13 *Musselburgh* _____
- 14 *Bhut Jolokia* _____
- 15 *Tender & True* _____

See reverse for details of how to enter

WEATHER WATCH

Let's look back at what the weather was like this autumn. Mid-September saw the first two named storms of the season; these gave way to a settled spell with chilly nights for the rest of the month. Mid-October was again stormy and wet, particularly in the west. November was largely unsettled. In the Letchworth area, compared to the 1981-2010 average, we had 25-35% more sunshine, 0.5 to 1°C higher mean temperatures but only 70-90% of the rainfall that would normally be expected.



Competition rules and how to enter

To enter this free competition simply cut out this form, answer the questions on the other side and add your name and membership no. below. Hand it in to us at the Super Social Supper, the February coffee morning or the Trading Store when it reopens. Or, why not include it with your membership renewal?

Open to current members only and only one entry per membership please.

All entries must be received by 12:30pm on Sunday 17th February.

The winner will be the entry with the most correct answers. In the event of a tie, lots will be drawn at the AGM on 21st February to determine who receives the Trading Store vouchers.

The winner will be notified directly.

The organisers of this competition are not eligible to enter. All decisions made by LDGA are final and no correspondence will be entered into.

Name _____

Membership number _____

AND FINALLY...

The committee would like to thank our Trading Store helpers, delivery 'posties' and everyone who has helped out at meetings, shows and other events during 2018. We would also like to thank all our members for their support during the year; we wish you a Merry Christmas and look forward to seeing you again in 2019.

Contact us

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We are always eager to hear from our readers & Association members. Please write to: editor@ldga.org.uk

For all LDGA information, including events, store opening times and much more, visit: www.ldga.org.uk

Affiliated to the:

BFS, NDS, NSPS, NVS, RHS

Promoting horticulture since 1906