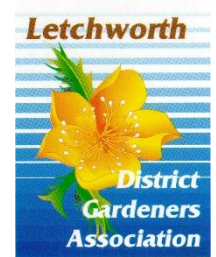


GLEANINGS FROM THE COMPOST HEAP

LATE SUMMER 2024

LITE



A LOOK BACK AT SUMMER

Bob Flowerdew



Over 130 members and guests joined us for the Bob Flowerdew event in June. Although the theme of his talk was 'No Work Gardening', it could also be characterised as pragmatic and sensible gardening. An example of this was when he asked "What is the nutritional value of a row of cabbages?" Answer: "None, unless you eat them." The suggestion being, don't waste time planting crops you don't like or won't eat and concentrate on those that you will. This was just one of the little gems we gleaned from Bob's talk as it meandered from one topic to the next without seeming to be on any prescribed path. In fact, much like his idea of a perfect afternoon's gardening: keep it fun and it will never feel like 'Work'.



The charity raffle and commission from Bob's book sales raised £350 in aid of Garden House Hospice Care. LDGA matched this from the evening's surplus and presented it to Claire Lunnon of GHHC at our garden party on 18th July.

Letchworth Open Gardens

Several of our members took part in Letchworth Open Gardens on 30th June. It was a very well attended afternoon which raised around £15,000 for Garden House Hospice Care and the British Red Cross.



Well done to all those involved. Open Gardens will be back again in 2026.

Summer Show

Thank you to Show Sec. Paul Heydon and everyone who helped to prepare for and stage the Summer Show on 13th July.



Exhibits and exhibitor numbers were down on an exceptional 2023 but quality was as good as ever. There were plenty of visitors in the afternoon creating a nice atmosphere.

A LOOK AHEAD TO AUTUMN

Wednesday 4th September at 10am

Coffee Morning at Tapps Tea Rooms, Wallington Road, Baldock, SG7 6RS.

Saturday 14th September at 2pm

LDGA Autumn Show at Free Church Hall, Leys Avenue, Letchworth, SG6 1NX.

This is one of our main events of the year and now is the time to get your entries booked in. New classes for 2024 include: a jar of jelly made from any of your late season fruits & a Christmas tree decoration in the Handicrafts section.



Instead of the art & craft demonstrations that we have had for the last couple of Autumn Shows, this year we welcome drinks judge Kevin Martin with a selection of his home-made wines and liqueurs for us to try.



If you're not exhibiting come along for a look round, there will be a plant & produce sale, refreshments with home-made cakes & the aforementioned wine tastings. If you would like to submit an entry or get more information about the show, please contact Paul on 01438 727422 or email shows@ldga.org.uk.

Thursday 19th September at 7:30pm

'In the Garden with William Morris' a talk by Fiona Rose at Letchworth Golf Club, Letchworth Lane, Letchworth, SG6 3NQ.

Find out about Morris's impact on the evolution of the English garden and how flora from his own gardens inspired his now famous flower-based designs.

Saturday 21st September 9am - 6pm

Coach Outing to RHS Hyde Hall.

Highlights of the visit include the Sky Meadow, the Queen Mother's Garden, and the Herbaceous Border with its dahlias and chrysanthemums.



You may also like to visit the Gardeners Rest Restaurant or the Clover Café.

Members £21.50 each; non-members £23.50 each. Please contact Jane on 01462 635745, email outings@ldga.org.uk or come to see us at the Trading Store.

Wednesday 2nd October at 10am

Coffee Morning at Tapps Tea Rooms.

Thursday 17th October at 7:30pm

'Living and Growing on a 3-acre Smallholding' with Helen Reynolds at Letchworth Golf Club.

Wednesday 6th November at 10am

Coffee Morning at Tapps Tea Rooms.

Thursday 21st November at 12:30pm

Members' lunch followed by a talk – 'New, Rare, and Unusual Perennials' with Tim Fuller at Letchworth Golf Club.

Menu and pricing details available soon.

Wednesday 6th December at 10am

Coffee Morning at Tapps Tea Rooms.

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The cost of our regular Thursday evening meetings at Letchworth Golf Club is £4 for members and £5 for non-members which includes refreshments.

Bar food is available before the meeting starts but orders must be in by 6:30pm. If you're not having supper, you can still come along for the talk as usual.

TRADING STORE

After a flying start, store sales have experienced a bit of a down-turn recently and with just a couple of months to go before the end of the season it will be difficult to match the figures of last year.

Nonetheless we have been busy ordering the autumn sown bulbs. Available from early September, we will have:

- Onions sets
 - Yellow Winter
 - Autumn Champion
 - Senshyupriced at £1.20/200g and £2.50/500g.
- Red Sun shallots priced at £1.40/200g and £2.95/500g.
- White garlic priced at £1.00 per bulb.
- Tête-à-tête miniature daffodils priced at £1.95/pack of 5.



In addition to this we will have Aquadulce broad bean seeds for autumn sowing at £2.10/pack.

We have also been looking at seed potatoes for next year. We ran out of some varieties quite quickly this year, so we've upped the order for 2025. Unfortunately, a few of our old favourites, (Arran Pilot, Pink Fir Apple and International Kidney) will not be available. However, we will have some different varieties:

- First early - Red Duke of York - a heritage potato variety dating back to 1942
- Second early - Estima – which produces large oval tubers great for baking
- Main crop - Carolus - a new variety with dual blight resistance
- Main crop - Kerrs Pink – best simply boiled in their pink skins. Ireland's favourite potato.

WE NEED YOUR HELP

For us to be able to continue to open and operate the store in the way that you have become accustomed we must start to think ahead.

While we have been fortunate over the years to have individuals willing to give the time and effort needed to run the store, it is more than can be expected from any one or even two volunteers.

It is for this reason that we appeal to you, the members of the Association, for your help. We need more people to join our friendly and sociable Trading Store team. Not just the front of house store helpers and till operators that you meet when visiting but also behind the scenes people.

Special skills are not necessary, just your enthusiasm, full training will be given. There are a wide range tasks to suit every interest:

- identifying new stock & suppliers
- ordering & pricing
- shelf & product labelling
- receiving deliveries
- managing the stock file
- programming the till
- organising rotas
- session managers
- till operators
- store helpers
- store upkeep

We must do this now so those with the knowledge can pass it on.

If you would like to get involved come and speak to us at the Trading Store.

HESSIAN SACKS

If you would like to store your tatties in hessian sacks this year, we have a few available at the Trading Store.



RECIPE - BEETROOT BROWNIES

Ingredients

150g unsalted butter, cut into cubes

150g dark chocolate
(about 70%
cocoa solids),
broken into
small pieces



2 large eggs

150g caster sugar

90g self-raising flour

225g beetroot, boiled until tender,
cooled, peeled and grated

Method

Preheat the oven to 180°C / 350°F / Gas 4.
Grease and line a 20cm (8") tray bake tin.

Put the butter and chocolate in a heatproof bowl and place in the oven for a few minutes until the chocolate and butter start to melt. Stir, and then put back into the oven until melted completely. If you like small choc chips in your brownie, take it out a little earlier.

Whisk the eggs and sugar together in a large bowl until combined, then beat in the melted chocolate and butter until smooth.

Sift the flour over the chocolate mixture, and then gently fold in with a large spoon.

Fold in the grated beetroot - be careful not to over-mix or it will make the brownies tough.

Pour the mixture into the prepared tin and smooth out the top. Bake for 20-25 minutes. When the brownies are done, a knife inserted in the centre should come out with a few moist crumbs clinging to it. Don't be tempted to overcook them or they will be dry.

Remove the tin from the oven and leave on a wire rack to cool before cutting into squares. Serve with crème fraiche.

WEATHER WATCH

Overall May was the warmest on record in the UK but I don't recall anything too exceptional in this area. What was unusual though was the appearance of Northern Lights around the 10th. And I missed them! Also unusual was a hail storm on the 10th June.

Cool and damp conditions continued until things eventually changed around mid-July. There was no repeat of the heatwave of 2022 though, just a couple of heat spikes around 31st July and 12th August when temperatures exceeded 30°C.

Very little rain fell until 23rd August when we had the aftermath of storm Lilian, the 12th named storm of the season, a new record since naming began in 2015.

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

Promoting horticulture since 1906

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