

The Grapevine

Newsletter of the Finchley Horticultural Society



Autumn 2018

Autumn Reflections

The summer season was very eventful. Fortunately, there was no hosepipe ban in spite of having no rain and blazing hot weather. We were open again for the National Garden Scheme on Monday 27th August. Thanks to Judy Woollett for organising the day and to everyone who helped make this event a great success. The site looked lovely and the weather, although overcast, remained virtually rain free. The recorder ensemble led by Jennie Ableman provided the entertainment and the repertoire and size of the group have increased since last year. The music carried beyond the main gate without the aid of microphones and I had many enthusiastic comments on their behalf. We sold homemade cakes, jams and honey, freshly picked produce and beautiful plants. People appreciated either walking round unaccompanied or going on a more formal garden tour. We donated £700 to the NGS charities and retained about £600 for the FHS to maintain our 3 sites.



Our members enjoyed 2 other events. The garden visit on 8th September to RHS Wisley was organised by June Brookes. This coincided with the Flower Show and a sculpture trail in the gardens.

We also held Summer Barbeque at Gordon Road on 29th July, also organised by June, which was very well attended and a good time was had by all. Thanks to everyone who came and the "chefs" who cooked the food perfectly. It was all delicious.



Events this autumn include the Bonfire Party on 4th November and the Christmas Social on 16th December, dates to be added to your diaries. We want everyone to feel they can join in and both of these events are free. Come and meet other members in a social environment. I wish everyone a good autumn season whether you are tidying your plot or garden or just enjoying looking through the seed catalogues and dreaming.

All the very best, Claudine Fear (Chairman)



Christmas Social
Sunday 16th December
11.00am until 1.00pm
The Piggery Tea Hut
Gordon Road Allotments
Mince Pies, Mulled Wine
and Soft Drinks
All FHS members
and their families welcome

Black Pots or Taupe?

Half a billion plastic pots and bedding trays are bought by gardeners in the UK every year. None of them can be recycled because their black colour means that recycling centres, using infrared light, cannot identify them and so they go into landfill sites. We, as gardeners, need to be more proactive in asking for alternatives to black pots, if we are to reduce the amount of single use plastic we consume.

Black plastic is used because it is known to produce healthy plants as light does not penetrate the plastic and affect the roots. They are also easy to manufacture.

Interestingly, black pots are made from recycled plastic, often from the motor industry, and manufacturers can recycle this plastic themselves, but the problem is getting the plant pots back to the manufacturer. Some garden centres, but not many, offer collection points. This of course has cost implications for the garden centres.

Recently, ten of the biggest horticultural growers met with five large plastics manufacturers to discuss how to make plant pots more recyclable. The growers chose a neutral shade of taupe and the plastics manufacturers are experimenting with the production of these pots. These pots will be identifiable in recycling centres as will the type of plastic they are made from. An example of the new look pots is shown below.



Steve Reed, Production Director of the Container Division at Wyevale Nurseries, holding a new taupe pot and one of its current black pots. They will be supplying their promotion ranges planted in the new recyclable taupe pots to garden centres up and down the country in 2019.

Nurseries are now conducting research to see whether they can grow healthy plants in these taupe pots, which will depend on how opaque they are.

Other solutions are biogradable pots made from materials such as coir, wood chips, rice husks, miscanthus or seaweed. These are becoming more popular especially with organic gardeners. There are two types: ones that last a few months and can be planted in the soil where they break down and more rigid ones made from plant materials which last about three years. These pots are more expensive and will dry out more quickly than plastic pots.

Plants for sale at Gordon Road

Autumn is a good time to plant perennials while the soil is damp and still warm enough for plants to get their roots into the ground. All our plants are available for sale on Sunday mornings. Meet Christine or Catherine to discuss what you might choose.

Black Compost

We have been informed by London Waste that this will no longer be delivered to allotment sites. The final delivery was on 11th October. Eric has tried to find other sources of recycled waste but so far without success. Soft green vegetative material should all be composted on your own plot and should not be burned on the bonfire.

'Have Your Say' 22nd July

- At the suggestion of John Kirby, the meeting agreed to rename itself, a 'Community Meeting'. John was keen to champion a sense of community, engagement and democracy on the allotment and within the Society. Refreshments could be available.
- Communal Tasks include keeping the Piggery and Green Room tearooms clean, cleaning the toilet, painting huts and regular mowing. Volunteers for jobs are currently requested by e-mail and a suggestion was made that jobs are also written on the Trading Hut whiteboard
- Help, such as barrowing, for elderly or less able members was suggested
- The compost toilet at Gordon Road needs to be serviced more effectively. It was pumped out on 24th July. As it seems unlikely that anyone will volunteer to service and maintain it, the meeting agreed that it will need to be pumped out annually at a cost of roughly £500.

It's been a year of extremes

The long, hot, dry summer followed a long, cold, wet winter and these extremes have taken a toll on our gardens and allotments. Kim Stoddart, gardening journalist and editor of The Organic Way magazine, believes we need to rethink how we garden. She has some suggestions about how we can begin to repair the damage and help our gardens and allotments become more resilient.

Regular use of your own **compost** is great way to improve the structure of the soil and so make it more able to cope with sudden high rainfall. It can also be used as a mulch in hot weather, helping to keep the moisture in the ground. Compost should contain a half and half mix of green waste - grass cuttings, fruit and vegetable waste and plant trimmings - with brown - newspaper, card, leaves and twigs. There is advice about composting on the FHS website under Gardening Matters: <http://www.finchleyhorticulturalsociety.org.uk/our-society/>. Eric recommends that you don't compost potatoes or tomatoes as they self seed.

Kim also suggests **planting more perennials** as their deeper root system allows them to access moisture more successfully and so survive more extreme conditions. Rhubarb, kale, jerusalem artichokes and lavender all fit the bill.

No digging, clearing or weeding is Kim's policy. She believes that the plant roots help to hold together the soil and its goodness. Allow flowers and crops to rot down naturally and this will help to protect your soil.

Attracting wildlife, mixing up your planting by putting produce alongside flowers and herbs and letting plants, such as the foxglove, self seed are further ideas she has for protecting your soil.



Newsletter

If you received a paper copy of this newsletter and are now able to receive it by e-mail, please inform Christine Williams, chrysw@hotmail.co.uk. This saves us time and money.

Discounts on Suttons' Seeds

Suttons' Seeds catalogues have arrived. Catherine Schmitt has left copies in the Green Room at Gordon Road and at Nethercourt Avenue. As in previous years, FHS members earn a discount of 50% on seeds and 15% on all other items. You will pay a carriage charge of £1.99 for packets of seeds and £4.99 for heavier items, such as garden equipment. Your order will be delivered direct to your address and if you include your email or mobile phone number you will be notified of delivery if your package weighs more than 2kg. You can order by post, phone or online, www.suttons.co.uk, quoting our unique offer code. Ask Catherine for the unique FHS code. Wishing you good gardening in 2019. Catherine Schmitt 020 8346 4359 catherineschmitt20@gmail.com

King's Seed Catalogues

The Kings Seed books are on the table in the Green Room. Order forms together with a cheque (made out to Finchley Horticultural Society) should be given to June Brookes by midday on 21st October.

Please don't forget the £1 for individual packing.

Bonfire Party

Sunday 4th November 4pm-6pm
Gordon Road Allotments

Try Tony's famous pumpkin soup

No fireworks at this event

All FHS members and their families
are welcome

RSVP to June Brookes
Allotment Secretary

This issue of the Grapevine has been generously sponsored by Winkworth Estate Agents.

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For all Finchley gardeners and for plot holders at Gordon Road, Nethercourt Avenue and Brent Way

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Member of the Barnet Federation of Allotment and Horticultural Societies

Affiliated to the
Royal Horticultural Society



Next Grapevine January 2019

Events Diary

Trading Hut at Gordon Road is now closed and will open again in March 2019. It will be open on the morning of the Christmas Social, 16th December.

Monday 15th October 2018

8.00pm

Barnet Allotment Federation Prize Giving - a social event which includes a harvest buffet and seed swap. Bring along a small contribution and any spare, interesting seeds. The Pavilion, Rathbone Allotments, Ryalls Court, Oakleigh Road North, N20 0RY



26th - 28th October 2018

RHS London Urban Garden Show

Friday 26th 5pm - 10pm

£5 members/non-members

Saturday 27th 11am - 8pm

Sunday 28th 11am - 6pm

Members £5 and public £8 in advance or £9 on the day

Lindley Hall, London SW1P 2QW

Lawrence Hall, London SW1P 2QD



7th November 2018

National Garden Scheme Annual Lecture

A Nation of Gardeners: Private Pleasure, Social Opportunity Tickets £25

6pm - 8.30pm

Speaker:- The Lord Heseltine, CH

Royal Geographical Society, 1 Kensington

Gore, London SW7 2AR www.ngs.org.uk

Sunday 4th November 2018

Bonfire Night Social free

Gordon Road Allotments

4.00pm - 6.00pm

Refreshments available - see the advert

FHS members and their families welcome



Sunday 16th December 2018

Christmas Social free

Gordon Road Allotments

11.00am - 1.00pm

Refreshments available - see the advert

FHS members and their families welcome



To book tickets to RHS shows, visit rhs.org.uk/shows or call 0844 338 7539

