

The Gold Club

August 2016



CASTLE | BRIMSMORE | POUNDBURY



Dates for your diary

Free Talks 2.30pm

Tuesdays @

Brimsmore Gardens

Wednesdays @

Poundbury Gardens

Thursdays @

Castle Gardens

30/31/1 August/Sept

Rejuvenating aging borders

6/7/8 September

Between the roses

13/14/15 September

Butterflies & wild flowers

20/21/22 September

Autumn bulb planting

www.thegardeneronline.co.uk/events

A note from Fran

Well summer took a little time to arrive but when it did, after much “harrumphing” by us about the lack of it, it taught us a valuable lesson I think. Be careful what you wish for! We had one day where the temperature didn’t get below 32°C throughout opening hours! But to look on the bright side it certainly stopped the grass from growing! I find it much nicer to water the plants than mow the lawn when it’s hot.

There have been more changes to the pest and disease products available in the last year which is going to cause those of us with nasty fungal infections to rethink our remedial practices. We all know the saying that prevention is better than cure and this is going to have to be our new mantra. You will find plenty of help and advice on our website under the Gardening Tips section. My favourite is planting chives with your roses to help reduce problems with Blackspot. Not only does the spiky structure of chives, when planted at the edge of borders, create a different look, they are hardy, easy to grow in pots and chive flowers are very pretty and as edible as the leaves. There are many more ways to use companion plants to help with pest and disease problems and aesthetically improve your garden. To my way of thinking the change to more cultural remedies and natural controls can only be a good thing. The “golden age of pesticides”, as it was dubbed, in the 1950’s is a long gone era as we have realised the detrimental effects of their use.

Just as a matter of interest the first recorded use of an insecticide is 4500 years ago when the Sumerians used Sulphur compounds to control insects and mites!! AND natural pyrethrins, available to you now at a very reasonable price, have been in use as an insecticide for over 2000 years! I’ve been at that “Google” again – can you tell! So there you go the old ways sometimes really are the best ways!!

This has made me very nostalgic about the way my father grew three large veg plots in our garden as a child. I am one of nine children and my parents obviously had very hungry mouths to feed which meant growing your own fruit and veg was a necessity and not merely a pleasurable pastime and there was definitely no supermarket as back up for crop failure. He always grew more than needed, not for the crop size issues but because he was well aware that we “scrumped” quite a lot – I had a particular penchant for mud-crusting carrots. Pickling, storing, freezing and making jams and chutneys are something I think most of the new generation have missed out on and I have to admit I haven’t done any with my children. I should probably address this post haste.

I recently had the pleasure of presenting the prizes at Iwerne Minsters’ Flower & Produce Show. I was amazed at the standard of produce. Every exhibit, from flower arrangements and vegetables to cakes and needlepoint was truly stunning. What a talented lot! I managed to snap some photos and would love it if any of you would like to send photos of your shows.

There are two important things I need to inform you of – the first is that the phone number for The Gold Club is no longer in use (01936 817747) therefore, if you leave a message on this I will not get it. Please use the Castle Gardens number to reach me. It is 01935 814633.

Secondly, I have changed the format of the corporate open days. I can appreciate that previously it has been a bit of a free for all and you may have queued for a long time so I am implementing an appointment system, or as I like to put it “slots”. “Just ring me to book your slot at your chosen centre and hopefully all will be calmer and just as enjoyable. I have also moved them to October to avoid the need for many of you to rush to get the vouchers and compost order forms distributed before your winter break. All the details are on the attached page.

Fran

Fran Powell, The Gold Club

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Newsflash!

2016 Forum Follow-up

As promised, we will be holding a follow-up meeting to discuss the experiences of running a garden show this year, having enjoyed a lot of positive discussion and inspiration in the spring.

Please join us on Thursday 15th September 7-8:30pm

Tea and coffee will be available from 6:30pm

Additional information has been sent out to our mailing list of attendees from earlier in the year. If you have missed your copy please let us know! You will find all of the notes from the spring forum still available <http://thegardeneronline.co.uk/general-information/flower-show-forum-articles>

Gardeners

Question Time

Wednesday 7th September at
7pm

£12.50 to include a glass of
wine and refreshments

A charity event to be held at
Castle Gardens

Some events coming up.....

Music in the Butterfly House

Dance to 60's, 70's and 80's music in aid of

Fortuneswell Cancer Trust

Tickets £10 to include supper

7:30pm Saturday 10th September

at Castle Gardens

Grand CHRISTMAS DISPLAY

Opening Ceremonies

Poundbury Gardens—Tues 4th Oct

Brimsmore Gardens—Tues 11th Oct

Castle Gardens—Wed 19th Oct

All at 7.30pm

Join us for a tippie of cheer!

Tapestry Lawn

A quick thank you to everybody who helped us grow 'turves' for our tapestry lawn. It is already adapting to a little light walking on and we hope it will soon be able handle the everyday wear and tear of foot traffic in our restaurant garden.

Lots of interest has been generated and a number of customers are already planning their own versions for 2017!



The Gardener's Stock Pot

This article has been written by Adam who has a nursery background and gives some very welcome insights into plant propagation techniques.

The art of plant reproduction has nature showing us the way

Within this column we are taking a look one long-established method of plant reproduction which is used widely within wholesale hardy plant production across the world and yet can still be achieved in our own garden environments.

Raising new plants from semi-ripe cuttings normally takes place during mid to late summer when the plant is still in active growth but the material we want to use has begun to firm its lowest point. This method of propagation covers vast range of both evergreen, deciduous shrubs and climbing plants.

Preparation

When taking cuttings always ensure you have the following stages prepared beforehand.

Tools - If possible keep your propagation tools separate from your general gardening tools to avoid contamination and ensure they are clean, sharp and sterilized.

Pots/Trays - Semi-ripe cuttings are generally rooted into module trays which are widely available and ideal for encouraging seedlings and cuttings to develop a strong root system before been potted on to the next growing stage. In some cases if the plant is easily rooted they can be directly planted into larger plastic or terracotta pots.

Compost - A suitable growing medium is vital for success in plant propagation. Compost mixes such as a seed and cutting growing media are used as they have been specially formulated for this use. They are able to provide a consistent and stable environment in which cuttings thrive. Having a balance of good moisture retention and free drainage means that the cuttings have optimum access to water. Sufficient aeration supplies oxygen for the root system and reduces root diseases, prevents low nutrient levels and ensures correct PH levels to suit the plants been propagated.

Selecting your cutting material

The best material is approximately 3/4inches (2cm) from the growing tip and above. This is where the majority of the plants growth hormone and energy is concentrated. It is integral for the success of the cuttings that you ensure your cutting material is not in flower and is free of any pest or disease.

Taking a semi-ripe cutting

Using sharp, clean secateurs remove the cutting from the main plant cutting just above a leaf node.

Remove side shoots from the stem before removing the soft growing tip (not all plants benefit from having the growing tip removed but most will). Strip the leaves in a downwards fashion leaving two or four pairs of leaves at the top depending on the leaf size and length of cutting material.

Leaving between 1.5" and 2" (4-5cm) of stem, make a clean cut across a leaf node following a straight or downward facing diagonal line—this will aid the rooting process by ensuring concentration of growth hormones in the correct place. The use of a rooting hormone at this stage depends on the quality and vigour of the cutting material, and the difficulty in propagating particular plants, for example Daphne is particularly difficult to propagate so definitely worth applying with a little hormonal encouragement.

Environment

Once the plant material has been potted it is important to provide environmental support to enable the regenerative process to take place. Providing a balance of environmental elements will aid the development of the cuttings.

As the cuttings are lacking a root system providing humidity prevents moisture loss. We will be relying on the leaves to absorb the moisture once the cut stems callus over and a new root system emerges.

Monitoring the air quality with the growing environment allowing oxygen for respiration and carbon dioxide for photosynthesis relies on keeping the a temperature and light levels balanced depending on the natural characteristics of the plant. There will be different requirements for many plants.

To be able to create optimum growing conditions needed in home situation in single pots or producing small batch quantities, the use of the tenting method, using a transparent bag over a wire support, works well as do windowsill and heated propagators. Many production nurseries will invest heavily in specialized propagation units to enable them to create the best supportive growing environment on a large

Don't forget - more gardening advice on our website www.TheGardenerOnline.co.uk

Tales from the Potting Shed

As I write the Olympics has just finished and the para Olympics are just about to start. What an Olympics! I remember so many times when we struggled to win very much at all so to be second in the medals table is astonishing. I suspect that other nations may well fight back by the time we get to Japan.

We have just returned from the Edinburgh Fringe Festival which has been a regular summer trip for the last few years. Those who have been will know what an amazing event it is. When we get back we are often asked whether we have seen everything which underestimates somewhat the scale of the event. We saw, perhaps, 20 shows and yet there are 5200 this year at the Fringe alone not counting the festival which is on at the same time! So it would take perhaps 3 years to see everything! As ever we saw some wonderful performances and some not so good. We were joined by Louise's school friends and William and Sophie's university mates for various parts of the trip and so had a wide range of tastes to satisfy.

Edinburgh is a great city and is very good for food with lots of independent food and coffee shops. We spotted one we hadn't come across before which we really liked and got chatting with the owner who checked first that we weren't asking questions in order to set up in opposition. We told him about our existing favourite café in Edinburgh (Earthies which has an excellent organic farm shop too) only for him to tell us that this was his business too! He was a garden designer by training and so we had much to discuss.

I also discovered that we had jobs to do in Edinburgh and the reason we had driven up was that Louise was hunting for Christmas props in various vintage, antique, reclamation and Charity shops. To tell you what we brought back would be to give away some of the themes but suffice to say the van was full!

We arrived back to find that the centres are stocked up for autumn with fruit and ornamental trees overflowing the plant areas. The first autumn bedding along with bulbs and also the autumn lawn treatments are also in stock again. It's a very exciting time of the year in the garden centre and in the garden too with so much reaching its finest hour.

Before we left Louise, Sophie and I were blackberry and plum picking with Polly the dog in tow who enjoys such adventures. The plums were particularly good and I offered one to Malcolm and Brian to taste only to find that they had both been scrumping beforehand! Sophie made jam with the plums which was very good.

We also have been picking from the tomato trials that Louise and Sophie carry out each year. Again for taste Sungold is top of the list but we are also enjoying the size and shape of some of the beefsteak varieties.

I also need to mention that this morning I have noticed a number of staff looking glittery which means that Christmas stock is starting to arrive to be sorted and priced up. Don't worry though you won't get to see anything for a good few weeks yet!

Our summer of open air theatre went down very well with good numbers to each of Illyria's shows. The weather was especially kind to us and at the Gold Club Summer Party rain in the afternoon cleared to a very peasant evening enjoyed by all judging by the feedback. It's Illyria's 25th birthday next year which coincides with our birthdays at Brimsmore and Castle. We think that we are a weather dependant business but imagine running an open air theatre in the UK for that length instead! I was going to say "hats off to them" but actually it may be better to say "Macintoshes on" instead!

I'd better go as there are a number of building projects that I need to catch up on including a re-organisation of the till area at Castle, improvements to the planteria at Brimsmore and also the Queen Mother statue which at last is being erected at Poundbury!

Mike