

The Gold Club

August 2015



CASTLE | BRISMORE | POUNDBURY

Dates for your diary

Free Talks

Tuesdays @

Brimsmore Gardens

Wednesdays @

Poundbury Gardens

Thursdays @

Castle Gardens

1/2/3 September

Companion planting

with Mike Burks

8/9/10 September

Adam creates a

woodland garden

15/16/17 September

Fran does low

maintenance

gardening

22/23/24 September

Brian's autumn

lawncare

29/30/1 Sept/October

Malcolm on roses

www.thegardeneronline.co.uk/events



A note from Fran

Dear all,

Well summer is almost at an end and I'm sure, like me, you are considering your autumn/winter planting. This is Castle Garden's shop manager, Brian's, favourite time of year. He gets very excited when the range of spring flowering bulbs come in. Having spent a lot of time choosing varieties and putting in his reserve months ago he never fails to walk around Castle Gardens with a grin on his face and whistling his "happy tune". I'm sure that Andrew at Brimsmore Gardens and Jon at Poundbury Gardens do the same.

Louise and the bedding crew have been busy organising the plants for winter hanging baskets etc. Although summer baskets are probably still blooming, now is the time to plant up next seasons' baskets and as the last newsletter suggested your second set of baskets will fill out nicely if planted now. I know that Alison always adds some Narcissus Tete a Tete to the top of the basket and also some crocus bulbs which can be kept for the following autumn baskets or planted in the garden.

The stock lists are available to help you choose your roses, trees, fruit trees and soft fruit for the coming season. All can be found on our website. It makes planning your garden much easier if you know what is readily available and allows you to research varieties.

At home we are assisting mother who recently had a knee replacement which, along with both replaced hips, means she is less able to carry out her autumn gardening – much to her chagrin! Having looked into it, I have spent a few pounds on tools and gardening aids which will save me having either to scoop her up after a fall or do her garden as well as my own. So here are a few things we have organised to help her.

I bought a pair of Felco 160S secateurs which are light and easy to use. You can also get Felco's with a swivel handle for those with more restricted hand movement.

We sell 18" long handled trowels, forks, 3 prong cultivators and hoes. I opted for a Kent & Stowe 5ft long handled trowel which only cost £15.00!! and a Burgon & Ball 18" long handled fork. This means she can do the digging of the holes and I'll pop the spring flowering bulbs in, on my hands and knees, of course.

Tom Chambers make a very suitable wooden potting bench so that once I've lifted the pots etc onto the bench she will be able to plant them up herself.

I bought a particularly pretty tool caddy so that she won't need to wander about too much (see picture)

Two HiLos for her winter baskets. These allow you to drop a basket down to a level where you can water easily. I did suggest a state of the art irrigation system from Hozelock but she seemed to think this was more for my benefit than hers when I said you could easily replace the need for watering cans and hoses with one!! Cheek!!

I did consider buying a Kneeler as Town & Country do a good strong metal framed one with a cushioned seat for £26.50 but received "the look" and then realised my faux pas! But turned upside down it's a good seat. Maybe wait till spring for this one.

Reading this I have just realised that if I saved the list in this note for the next newsletter I could have written it to the tune of "Twelve Days of Christmas".....Two HiLo's and a kneeler from Town & Country!!

Fran

Fran Powell, **The Gold Club:** 01935 817747 thegoldclub@thegardensgroup.co.uk

Newsflash!

**As part of the Yeovil Literary Festival
Chris Beardshaw will be at Brimsmore Gardens
on Thurs 29th October**

Light refreshments @ 6pm for a 7pm start

Tickets: £10 per person

YCAA members, Footlights, Waterstone's Card Holders and The Gardens

Group Gold Club Members: £8.50 per person

Tickets can be purchased from The Octagon Theatre or from Brimsmore Gardens, Castle Gardens and Poundbury Gardens.

Some events coming up.....

Late Summer Ladies Night

@ The Engine Room, Poundbury Gardens

Pampering, canapes & glasses of the
fizzy stuff!

Saturday 29th August

7pm-10pm

Call 01305 257251 for more details or to
book your tickets

CHRISTMAS

The opening dates for our
displays are:-

Poundbury - Thurs 1st October
Brimsmore - Thurs 8th October
Castle - Fri 16th October
All @ 7.30pm

The Gardens Group are sponsoring
A night with Sir Alan Titchmarsh

in aid of ABF The Soldiers' Charity.

At The Crown Hotel, Blandford, DT11 7AJ

On Thursday 19th November at 6.15pm

Tickets are £20 per person

Available from TIC's in Blandford, Sherborne and Dorchester

Or call 01392 492 650

The Gardener's Stock Pot

It is now that time of year where we are busy harvesting our fruit and homegrown produce. Over that last two years we have sold xxxxx apple trees so I was wondering what happens to all the apples we pick. Jams, chutneys, jellies, cakes and even alcoholic beverages. Liz, our cake baker extraordinaire at Castle Gardens, bakes the Dorset Apple Cakes for sale in the restaurants at Poundbury Gardens and Castle Gardens - she bakes at least 10 per week!! Although she won't let me have her actual recipe, she has given one of her favourites for me to share with you.

APPLE, RAISIN & CIDER TEABREAD

Ingredients

8oz Self-raising flour

1/4 teaspoon salt

1 level teaspoon mixed spice

3oz soft brown sugar

3oz raisins soaked in 2 tablespoons of cider

1 medium cooking apple, peeled, cored & finely chopped

2 medium eggs

Glaze

2oz soft brown sugar

2 tablespoons cider

Set the oven to 350°F / 180°C / Gas mk 4. Grease a 2lb loaf tin.

Place the flour, salt & spice into a bowl. Rub the butter into the dry ingredients until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs. Stir in the sugar, apple and cider soaked raisin mix. Add the eggs and mix well. Put the mixture into the loaf tin and bake for approximately 1 hour until golden brown (see top tip). Turn out onto a wire rack.

Boil the glaze ingredients together for 3-4 minutes and brush over the warm loaf.

Serve sliced (doorstep slices are good!!) and spread with lashings of butter.

Top Tip - Poke a skewer into the cooked loaf - if it comes out clean it's done!

This and more recipes can be found on our website thegardeneronline.co.uk/gardening-tips/from-plot-to-plate-recipes

Why not send in your favourite autumn recipe so that we can share it on our website. A prize will go to the winning recipe - I have volunteered to judge this competition!!! You never know, you may find your recipe being served in our restaurants.

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

Tales from the Potting Shed

We have had a very busy summer. As I write our friends from Illyria have arrived to set up for our last performance of the summer from their repertoire. Tonight it's a bit of Shakespeare with "The Taming of the Shrew". Those who joined us at the Gold Club summer party will have enjoyed, I hope, "Iolanthe". It's a Gilbert and Sullivan but a story that I didn't know and it is also without any well-known songs but hugely enjoyable and very funny. I'm looking forward to this evening especially as tickets sales prior to the event are in excess of 100 and although the weather isn't balmy sunshine it looks like it could be dry!

We also hosted the 2015 Dorset Wildlife Trust Wildlife Gardening Awards last week. The speaker was Dr David Aplin who was born and bred in Dorchester but then has travelled the world spending lots of time in various Botanic Gardens. His talk on the interaction of animals, bacteria, fungi, and virus with plants was fascinating. More than 90 people attended and the awards went to gardens from the full breadth and width of the county. This is the sixth year that we have sponsored the competition and hosted the awards and the standards and commitment to wildlife gardening has increased significantly in that time. I really enjoy going around judging as there is always something to be learnt.

In our own garden we were delighted to find a Pyramid Orchid appear for the first time. I have no idea where it has come from but it was a real milestone for our wildflower lawn. The annual meadows in the front car park at Castle Gardens are also looking in great form. We have used a number of different mixes but the richest of these has over 100 species of annual flowers loved by insects including bees and butterflies. We are just starting on a round of improvements at Brimsmore. A section of the glasshouse is being renovated and will have a new roof and floor with upgraded, lighting too. We are also working on the entrance in September. The field opposite the centre used to have a very useful tall hedge but the developers have laid it meaning that, for now, the wind whistles across and straight through our front door!

At Poundbury the Queen Mother Square continues to develop and is going to be quite dramatic. The artists' impressions that we have been shown over the years are now starting to come to life. The centrepiece will be a statue of The Queen Mother which, we are told, is due to be unveiled at some stage in the Spring. Louise and I have been to a number of shows in the area in recent weeks presenting prizes. It is really interesting seeing the range and quality that you all produce in both the vegetable and the flower classes. This is especially impressive when bearing in mind the odd weather – it's been windy for weeks on end and then the temperature fluctuations – from 37 C to 1 C in the same month -doesn't make for easy gardening conditions.

I also love the baking and jam making. I said to the winner of the jam prize at one show as I was presenting the cup that I would have loved to have a taste of the strawberry jam. My hint worked as the pot with just one spoonful missing from the top was presented to us as we left! It has featured in recent breakfasts and was a worthy winner!

The centres have also been winning awards at our recent Garden Centre Association meetings. Amongst these was a fourth consecutive award of merit for Tony and his team in the houseplant department at Castle Gardens!

We always have to work a few weeks ahead of the season and this morning autumn bulbs started to arrive in the centres. We also are gearing up with Autumn lawn treatments and the autumn bedding is growing on nicely in the nursery. I don't want to wish the summer away but Malcolm is also just unloading the first of the new season's trees!

We are also just about to start our autumn series of talks... so maybe I'll just head out and see if I can catch the last bit of summer!

Mike