

# Mayfield Horticultural Society

## Society News

**New Members Welcome!** It is not too late to join us this year. Membership runs until March 2018 and costs £5. If you are thinking of buying plants and horticultural products, the cost of membership can quickly be re-couped by showing your membership card at Millbrook Garden Centre (10% discount on some purchases), Heathfield Ironmongers (10% on horticultural products) and Thorpe Garden Centre, Horham (10% discount on weekdays, excluding special offers and multibuys). In addition, all evening talks are free to members (£2 per person to non-members). If you wish to join please e-mail Diane Kirkness at [mayfieldhorticulturalsociety@gmail.com](mailto:mayfieldhorticulturalsociety@gmail.com) or come along to a meeting. For more information about us please see our website [www.mhs.mayfieldfiveashes.org.uk](http://www.mhs.mayfieldfiveashes.org.uk). We would love you to come and share in the joy of gardening.

### **Forthcoming Events – Everyone Welcome.**

**Friday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2017, 7.30pm for 8pm- 'Gardening On The Extreme'**. Talk by Graham Blunt of Plantbase, Cousley Wood in the Memorial Hall, Mayfield. This 3 acre nursery aims to grow every plant on site and as many plants as possible are grown outside all year round with the aim of breeding robustness and hardiness into them. This is truly amazing as they grow plants from South Africa, South America, New Zealand and Australia. Graham will be passing on his fantastic knowledge of growing plants from jungle, desert and temperate regions, I was not even aware of this nursery until this talk was arranged but they have won medals at the Chelsea Flower Show and supply everyone from Tom Hart Dyke of Lullingstone Castle fame to The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. A video of the wonderful plants at the nursery can be viewed on their website [www.plantbase.co.uk](http://www.plantbase.co.uk). Come and be warmed by the exotic on a dark and chilly Autumn evening!

**Friday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2017, 7.30pm - 'Self Seeders – Love Them Or Hate Them?'**. Talk by Gillian Regan in the Memoria Hall, Mayfield

**Rosemary Bayliss**

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I am writing this while sitting in the garden on the 6<sup>th</sup> September and I am amazed at how green the whole scene is compared with what it looks like by this time in most years when we expect a baked, brown picture with dust devils swirling about, particularly where any field work is going on. Years ago such a season as this could have been a disaster with damp or unharvested crops and lack of winter fodder for animals. It may have had its plus side but the so-called romance of old fashioned farming was men old before their time through carrying two hundredweight sacks or walking 15 miles a day behind a plough with dock leaves in their boots to ease the blisters. And for those who decry modern hedge cutting methods, try cutting a blackthorn hedge for a day, in the wet, using a slasher and swap. If you are lucky you will only be severely sore, if unlucky you may have a thorn in your eye which risks your sight, which was not an uncommon accident.

Contrary to popular opinion disastrous weather has often occurred in the past. In East Anglia in 1879 much of the wheat and hay was carried away by floods. This followed continuous wet and cold from 1875-1878. Early 1880 huge numbers of sheep died from rot – it is estimated that over 5 million perished in 1885 – 1887. 1892 and 1893 extreme droughts were experienced. Land agents found farms hard to let. So let's not whinge too loudly about a few wet weeks – we will get over it but please do not puddle about in your garden when it is sodden. Damaged soil can take years to recover. I know I go on a bit about soil damage but it is very important.

If you are planning to plant any tulips this autumn now is the time to start thinking about it. There are numerous types and varieties of tulips covering a wide range of flowering times, flower size, stem length and colour. So there is a lot to think about, when you have decided what you want, look in a catalogue or the selection in a Garden Centre. Personally I much prefer the smaller species such as Kaufmaniana which flower early on short stems. They are a bit prone to slug damage as they emerge. I always associate the big, waxy types with municipal parks. Just to show that I am not a complete snob I have bought some bulbs of T. Purple Flag to mix with some purple alliums. Most experts say plant 6" deep but is that 6" to the bottom of the hole or to the top of the bulb? I would go for at least 6" to the top of the bulb; more in the case of large bulbs or light soil. Unfortunately this will not protect against grave robbing by squirrels and badgers. I once planted three dozen tulips and finished with three. If you have this problem, some wire netting preferably laid an inch or two below the surface will protect your bulbs but if that is too difficult just peg it down on the surface and remove it for weeding, until the shoots emerge. The other main problem with tulips is the disease "tulip fire". It can be made less likely by later planting: not always so easy when ground conditions are getting worse but I would try to wait until at least mid-November. All tulips prefer a well-drained, sunny position. The best results come from planting fresh every year. If you leave them in situ you may get slightly inferior blooms.

A couple of weeks ago, we visited Pashley Manor gardens which we had not been to since we became less mobile, to check its accessibility. There are parking bays for the disabled near the entrance and a rather grand new toilet block near the tea area with good disabled facilities and approach ramps. We managed to see most of the garden using sticks but I think much of it would be wheel-chair accessible. Some of the steps would be difficult but that is the nature of a garden on a sloping site. Their dahlias, which are one of their specialities, were superb and the tall roses at the back of some of the beds demonstrated the value of rose hips for autumn colour.

**John Logan**