

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 recouped 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 or come along to a meeting. For more information about us, please see our website www.mhs.mayfieldfiveashes.org.uk. We would love you to come and share in the joy of gardening.

Everyone is Welcome to Our Society Events

Friday 16th February 2018, 7.30pm - 'Plants For Early Spring'. Talk and sale of plants by the extremely knowledgeable and entertaining Stephen Moore from Rapkyns Nursery, in the Scout and Guide Hall, Mayfield, TN20 6PJ. Coffee, tea and biscuits served from 7.30pm until 8pm. Admission- members free, guests £2. Rapkyns Nursery (www.rapkynsnursery.co.uk) is a fantastic cottage garden nursery in Street End Lane, Broad Oak and specialises in perennials, shrubs, climbers and grasses which are all grown on site. The Nursery is open to visitors from the beginning of March to the end of October from 10am to 5pm on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.

Wednesday 25th April 2018 - Afternoon Minibus Visit to the Fantastic Tulip Festival at Pashley Manor Gardens, Ticehurst. Departure 1.45pm from outside the Middle House, High Street, Mayfield. Cost £14 per person for minibus and entry. For the 23rd year Pashley Manor, in partnership with Bloms Bulbs, will be planting 30,000 tulips of a hundred varieties for this spectacular Tulip Festival. Bloms are winners of 65 Chelsea Gold Medals and will be putting on a wonderful display of 2000 cut tulips in a specially erected marquee. The Gardens offer a sumptuous blend of romantic landscaping, imaginative planting, fine old trees, fountains, springs and large ponds surrounded by beautiful countryside to which the Tulip Festival brings an additional spectacle. The Bluebell Walk is often also in flower at this time. The café will be open for refreshments at additional cost which, weather permitting, can be eaten on the terrace. Please book at our February meeting or by emailing mayfieldhorticulturalsociety@gmail.com.

Inspiration For Flower Arrangers – The National Association of Flower Arrangement Societies (www.nafas.org.uk) run a network of Flower Clubs and always welcome new members. At many guest admission is offered for around £5. Horam and Heathfield Flower Club meets on the second Thursday of the Month at 7.30pm in the Community Centre, Sheepsetting Lane, Heathfield, TN21 0XG. On the 8th February 2018 they are having a flower arranging demonstration and guest admission is £5 (booking NOT required).

Rosemary Bayliss

mayfieldhorticulturalsociety@gmail.com

There has been some publicity recently about water companies using “dowsing” or water diving to find pipes and water sources. The critics seem to be pouring scorn on the method and appear to be making fun of those who use it rather than more high-tech ways. Going on what I have seen and heard, I believe it does work. An uncle of mine in Gloucestershire certainly had the gift and found pipes and springs for himself and others. One of my brothers can do it but, to my annoyance, I cannot. One farmer I worked for in shire suffered from terrible pain in a hand which he had injured with a sickle while cutting down horseradish in a paddock. He heard of a dowser nearby who, he was told, might be able to help him. The man asked to see the bedroom and after a few minutes work with his rods suggested moving the bed to a new position because the forces from underground streams were in the wrong direction. There was immediate but not total relief from the pain. The same man had researched most of the mediaeval churches in Wiltshire and found that virtually all of them were built at the junction of two underground watercourses. This work was backed up by others.

Mumbo-jumbo, it's all in the mind I hear you say. Maybe? But is it mumbo-jumbo that raises billions of tons of water many feet, twice a day in every ocean in the world? We know that the moon affects the tides so why can we be certain that divining is “false news”.

I mentioned horseradish, which led to one of my most spectacular horticultural failures, many years ago. As part of a drive for self-sufficiency and economy I decided to grow my own. I obtained some young roots, I can't remember where from. Horseradish has a reputation of being rampant but after two years mine had shrunk. I eventually lifted a few roots which were not much thicker than baler twine. Several finger nails later I had grated a few teaspoons of coarse, grey material which made a small pot of inedible sauce. I had learned the lesson which I would comment to all politicians. That not all financial economies produce a return.

Don't be in too much of a hurry to tidy up your garden for the winter. Dead heads left on plants in frosty weather can look very attractive and may provide some food for the birds. As the leaves have fallen I have been doing some clearing and cutting back so as not to leave it all to later and I have been taken aback by the amount of ivy that has insinuated its way in and around the stems and roots of shrubs and trees. I always have some but this year it is threatening to take over. Other people seem to be suffering the same problem. Ivy is not, as some think, a parasite but left uncontrolled can strangle and weaken its host. I am not anti-ivy altogether as it can provide good wildlife cover and food for bees. If you can ease your fingers under the runners and pull gently you will get a lot of them out. One of those little hand cultivators with 3 or 4 small tines is useful for hooking out some of the tougher bits. Watch out for regrowth in the spring and repeat the process, or, if you are prepared to use chemicals carefully paint the ivy leaves with a solution of Roundup with some washing-up liquid or paraffin to make it stick to the shiny leaves.

When you do finally cut back your herbaceous plants do label any which you want to divide or which may not be easily found in the spring. A bit late for this year but as an alternative you can photograph the borders when in flower.

John Logan