



Plant Heritage

**Surrey Group
Newsletter
Autumn 2020**

Chairman's Welcome

Dear All,

Welcome to our autumn 2020 Newsletter. Rather than write about the difficulties and cancellations in the year, I would like to tell you about all our successes and the amazing activities that did take place. At our meetings in autumn 2019 and early 2020, we managed to raise record-breaking amounts from our ever popular and expanding plant sales, raffles and refreshments. In addition, we were able to help maintain both the Heather collections and *Epimedium* collection at RHS Wisley. The group even managed to squeeze in an enjoyable and well-attended visit to see the Plant Heritage National Plant Collections held at RBG Kew.

Our meetings and talks will continue through this year and into 2021 either online, via Zoom, or back in Cobham when we are able to safely meet.

Our *Flower of the Meeting Competition* went online and attracted entries from regulars and those completely new to the competition. Horticultural personalities from across the country kindly offered to judge



the competitions. In addition, a new digital mini-Newsletter was born, delivered by email or viewed, along with all the competition entries on our new national website.

Among the year's highlights, I was amazed by the success of the three 'Kerbside' Plant Stalls set out by Wendy Bentall, Claire Davitt and myself. Gillian Spencer's online 'Treasure Trove of *Galanthus*' was also a runaway success. In addition, a series of popular and over-subscribed Propagation Workshops was run by Wendy, ably assisted by Virginia Lloyd-Owen.

In the most challenging of circumstances, The Surrey Group has managed to achieve

a fund raising total exceeding all expectations and that total is still rising. By the beginning of August nearly £9,000 had been raised just by the lockdown projects alone, with almost £6,000 raised by Wendy from her stall and workshops.

As we prepare for our first Zoom talk in September and the inaugural meeting of the *Surrey Dispersed Collection Project*, my personal thanks go out to everyone who has made this year so special. From those involved directly and indirectly with the plant stalls and workshops, to those growing and distributing plants for them. My thanks to the judges and entrants in our *Plant of The Month Competition* for submitting wonderful pictures of flowers and plants for us all to enjoy. Not forgetting all those involved in our Group and at Central Office who work busily behind the scenes. Also, a big 'Thank You' to every Surrey member of Plant Heritage, for your continued support of our conservation endeavours both locally and nationally.

Finally, I must thank my husband David for once again editing this year's Newsletter and also all the contributors for writing amazing articles illustrated with brilliant

photos. I'm sure you'll enjoy reading it as much as we enjoyed putting it together.

I hope we will be able to meet again soon, but until then, Wishing you all Happy Growing,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David". The signature is stylized with long, sweeping lines, particularly a large 'D' and a long horizontal stroke at the bottom.

From the Editor...

I still have a few ready-to-hang posters of the Flower Rainbow collage left. They are £30 each including a £10 donation to The Surrey Group. If you would like one, please contact me at lavenderday@btinternet.com.



A Surrey Group Year in Photos



Selling Seeds at RHS Wisley October '19



Propagation Workshop at Wendy's October '19



Waiting to view the Maxillaria at RBG Kew October '19



Epimedium thinning at RHS Wisley January 2020



Viewing the National Collection of Galanthus at RHS Wisley February 2020



Viewing the National Collection of Galanthus at RHS Wisley February 2020



Wendy's Kerbside Plant Sale



Propagation Workshop at Wendy's July '20



Claire's Kerbside Plant Sale



David's Kerbside Plant Sale

Wonderful Wisteria

Surrey Group member **Stacey Baird** finds joy in the show-stopping Plant Heritage National Plant Collection at Pyrford Court



I fell for *Wisteria* in a big way in spring 2000 upon strolling around a corner at this immense private house to see over 200m of flowers along a v-shaped pergola, along walls and standards. When I stood beneath them I'm sure the sight and scent healed my very soul. I'd spent a long 6 years prior to this in various office jobs after scraping through a business degree, so volunteering to prune these beauties for Plant Heritage was the best decision I'd made in a long time. During the January of that year the Wisteria Co-ordinator Marian Badger led a small, supreme pruning team, plus novice me, down the

stunning pergolas. Alongside these were planted the Surrey Group's standard *Wisterias*, also requiring regular pruning. That spring, the summer house at the centre was shrouded in 1m long racemes of the utmost delicate grace belonging to *Wisteria floribunda* f. *multijuga* and I have been in love with this plant ever since.

The Surrey Group set up the first



National Plant Collection of *Wisteria* in the 1980s, with 25 cultivars in the Garden of Peper Harow School. The collection had to be moved in the mid-1990s in seemingly disastrous circumstances - the school had burnt down, the site was to be sold and the *Wisterias* had succumbed to disease. The then-owners of Pyrford Court were willing hosts for the new collection and the Surrey Group duly relocated using a few plants propagated with usable graft material and plants obtained from a now-closed Godstone nursery. Existing specimens on the house and pergola provided the perfect backdrop, including plants imported from Japan during the early 1900s. With the goal of looking at synonyms and naming of *W.floribunda*, *W.brachybotrys*, *W.sinensis* and their hybrids, they

collected over 40 new plants from across the UK, largely growing them as standards for ease of maintenance and to show they didn't have to be large climbers. DNA research techniques are now being employed to establish parentage of some of the older specimens, especially the hybrids. The whole collection grows surprisingly well considering its location on a sandy ridge in a partial frost pocket.

There are now a few gardeners onsite to carry out pruning, essential at least once a year since *Wisteria* flower on spurs formed once its enormous potential for many metres of stem growth is hindered. During lockdown, I managed to visit and found the plants along the pergola flowering as best they



Wisteria floribunda 'Nana Richins Purple'



Wisteria floribunda f. *alba* 'Shiro-Noda'



Above; The Pergola in 2006 and below; as it looks in 2020 after last winter's major prune.



could after the major regenerative prune in the winter of 2019. To maintain a floriferous plant, a variety of factors are involved, not least pruning but also nutrient availability and level of rainfall/irrigation.

A tsunami of personal commitments over at least the last 7 years has meant I couldn't be involved with the collection as much as I wanted to, now I can just about take over as Wisteria Co-ordinator from Marian,

liaising with the Head Gardener regarding any upkeep issues, running tours, record keeping and liaising with other collection holders for research. I can't thank you enough Marian, for your guidance and keeping in touch all these years. Having read Marian's extensive notes and revisiting mine, I can now more realistically aspire to become half as knowledgeable as she is.

Email me on wisteria1920@gmail.com to book a visit, learn their history and view their magnificence and rejuvenation. Over the coming years we will continue to research their true nomenclature and habit, so we can all encourage the nurture of these

truly classy plants in every sunny spot.

References;

Wisteria at Pyrford Court, Ron Smith (NCCPG literature),
Wisteria at Pyrford Court, Marian Badger (Tour Notes),
The Great Wisteria Collection at Pyrford Court, James Compton (*The Plant Review*, June 2016),
Wisteria, The Complete Guide, Chris Lane and James Compton (RHS 2019).

All photos: Stacey Baird



Wisteria brachbotrys 'Showa-beni'

Growing up with Herbs and Herbal Medicine

Surrey Group member **Margaret Mallowan's** childhood gave her a natural affinity with plants and knowledge of their healing potential



Calendula officinalis (Pot Marigold)

Growing up vegetarian in a busy 1950s family home never felt unusual for me and my brothers. We'd take a packed lunch to primary school so continued eating the food we considered 'normal'.

Only when we moved and changed schools and had to have school lunch did my 'normal' suddenly feel odd. I would try to leave most of the school lunch squashed under a neatly placed knife and fork on my plate. I was soon rumbled and made to stay until I cleared my plate. As you can imagine, this was completely distressing.

My mother sent in note after note about what I did not eat or like. It was tough being so regimented when from an early age, I'd had such a free and easy upbringing. At home, we'd receive gentle tuition about what was good and what was bad for us and what to pick to use to heal us. This went way beyond using dockleaves to soothe the sting of a nettle.

Boarding school was another eye opener when I was dubbed the 'witch doctor's child' by one of my friends who lived in Africa. She would often help herself to my father's home-made chilblain ointment though. Thankfully, modern central heating has made chilblains a painful, itchy memory.

We would often walk round the garden with our mother as she gathered herbs for ailments, food preparation or tisanes. So as I grew, I was bewildered that other people didn't share our knowledge of plants and herbs and their beneficial effects. Likewise, I found it strange that people knew little of the

dangers of certain plants. Although used in herbal medicine for heart problems, we were taught that *Digitalis* could be poisonous and we were never to touch the *Datura*.

A child's natural curiosity turned my attention towards my father's dispensary which was largely out of bounds to us as children. But as we grew into adulthood, it became somewhere we could go for *Passiflora* to help with a headache, *Calendula officinalis* to magically heal a cut or wound quickly or Horehound and *Hyssop* for our occasional coughs.

We also learned to make simple salves and potions for our own use, gathering plants from the



Plantago lanceolata & *P. major*



Geranium robertianum (Herb Robert)

garden and grinding them with a pestle and mortar.

Today my garden is still full of all the herbs and plants I need for poultices, tisanes, and to help heal ailments. I gather them and dry them for use as and when required. This summer, I've picked and dried *Achillea* for a calming tea for when you are *het-up* and *Calendula officinalis* flowers to make a useful tea for various ailments. (I used to give it to my husband for his cancer last year.) The fresh petals can also be added to salads. *Calendula* and Herb Robert (*Geranium robertianum*) are both anti-cancer and help boost the immune system.

Lime blossom makes a wonderfully delicate tea and I have Mint and Bay hung up drying, for all sorts of uses.

Dandelion roots and leaves are high in nutrients and as well as being versatile ingredients for natural remedies, the young leaves have a bitter, earthy taste and can be used in salads and steamed or boiled as greens. The roots when dried and ground make a substitute for coffee or can be added raw to herbal teas. Research has shown Dandelion may also help in cancer treatment. Like all yellow and orange veg, it is rich in antioxidants, reduces cholesterol, can improve eyesight and supports liver health by helping filtration.

We are lucky enough to have a home on the Spice Isle Grenada and my garden there is full of peppercorns, soursop, and all

the wonderful herbs which grow in that part of the world. I can pick a plant for any ailment I may have. For example, Fat Thyme is good for coughs, lung congestion and asthma and Callaloo makes an easily digestible soup for when you have a fever or stomach upset.

I always visit *Laura's Herb and Spice Garden* in Grenada to marvel at the amazing variety of herbs and spices which we commonly use back home. Cinnamon grows there and the gentle breezes carry the sweet scent of sun-warmed cocoa pods.

Having grown up on the Hay diet (embracing alkaline foods and

Achillea



not mixing starches and proteins in the same meal), I find all the proclamations of the latest new *superfoods* amusing. They're usually what I've been eating all my life. It is, however, really pleasing to see people embrace the 'new' wisdom about the benefits of healthy eating, herbs and a vegetarian or vegan diet.

If there's been anything positive about the lockdown, it is that people may be thinking more about what they eat and even thinking about growing their own.



Above: *Urtica dioica* (Stinging Nettle)

Below: *Geranium robertianum* (Herb robert)



All photos: **Margaret Mallowan**

RHS Awards

On behalf of the Surrey Group, **Wendy Bentall** presented two awards at the RHS Graduation Ceremony last year.



David Mitchell, a student at RHS Hyde Hall accepting First Prize



Alex Law, a student at RHS Wisley accepting Second Prize

Did you know that The Surrey Group sponsor two RHS student awards each year?

The awards are given to the two Horticultural Students who obtained the highest average marks in the Plant Identification tests on the Diploma in Horticultural Practice courses.

Until Graduation Day, the recipients are unaware that they each receive a prize of £50 in vouchers and one year's membership of Plant Heritage paid for by the Surrey Group.

What is rather irksome is that the ceremony takes place at the end of August so it's impossible

to publish details of the current year's awards in this Newsletter. So please forgive us for being a year behind in congratulating David Mitchell and Alex Law (pictured above).

I know we wish them all the best and hope they have had a successful and enjoyable year since graduation.

David and Alex were kind enough to write to us to thank us for these awards and I think it is only correct that I pass on their gratitude to the whole Surrey Group.

© RHS/Richard Dawson (Photos)

News from the Surrey National Collections 2020

National Plant Collections Coordinator and Surrey Group member
Anne Clifford reports on an extraordinary year

This has been a difficult year for visiting and keeping track of National Collections (NCs) in Surrey with almost the whole of 2020 so far spent in isolation or with very limited contact with other people.

However, it has been mostly a year of good news and development with our collections.

Early in 2020, full approval was given by the Plant Conservation Committee (PCC) to our Chairman, David Ford's wonderful collection of *Chaenomeles*. Many readers will have had the opportunity to see these beautiful plants which are thriving in spite of very difficult weather conditions.



Chaenomeles 'Mango Storm'

Beth Otway's two NCs of *Aerangis* and *Angraecum* were also given full approval by the PCC. Beth has had a very busy lockdown propagating plants for Kew and undertaking the tricky task of pollinating many of her orchids. She has published a compost trial on her website www.pumpkinbeth.com and is carrying out two further compost trials and trialling small edibles for growing in shade.

The easing of lockdown has enabled me to visit Wisley a number of times to look at existing National Collections and discuss new proposals with the curator and garden managers, at a respectable social distance. Wisley is fast approaching the record for the most collections in one garden which is an added incentive to develop new collections.

The *Astilbe x arendsii* and heather collections (see next page) have looked wonderful this summer.



Astilbe x arendsii at RHS Wisley



Heather collections at RHS Wisley

Two full applications submitted by garden manager Peter Jones were approved for *Metasequoia*

and *Liriodendron*. The *Metasequoia* look equally attractive in winter and summer ,



Metasequoia glyptostroboides



Metasequoia glyptostroboides 'Golden Dawn'.

Wisley holds some of the first species plantings of *Metasequoia glyptostroboides* in the country with plants grown from seed collected on the 1948 expedition to Szechuan and Hupeh Province, Shui-sa-pa valley. The *Liriodendron* collection contains several large specimens and Champion Trees, with recent additions of rarer cultivars in the last three years.



Above: *Cornus kousa* at RHS Wisley



Above and right: *Lagerstroemia* at RHS Wisley

Garden Manager Emma Allen has had two initial proposals accepted for NCs of *Cornus Kousa* and *Lagerstroemia* and advice given by the PCC on how the collections can be developed. *Lagerstroemia* have

recently been planted in the mixed borders at Wisley and early autumn is a good time to see them flowering in the trials field too.



All photos: **Anne Clifford** (except *Chaenomeles*: **David Ford**)

Visiting Kew

Surrey Group Member and Plant Fairs Coordinator, **Gillian Spencer** joined a trip to the Royal Botanic Garden to see some of the National Plant Collections they hold.



The Palm House at Royal Botanic Gardens (RBG) Kew

The Surrey Group trip to Kew Gardens, moved from the hottest day in 2019, was rescheduled for one of those golden autumn days: a bit of a chill first thing but warming to deliver the clearest air and the bluest of skies. Greg Redwood, Head of Glasshouses and Training, met us and explained the rationale behind the National Plant Collections held at Kew. As a rule they do the genera which most other places wouldn't have the space or facilities for: *Amorphophallus*;

Encephalartos; *Heliconia*; *Iris*, *Musa*; *Tulipa* spp. They also now look after the late Michael McIlmurray's Collection of *Maxillaria*.

Michael was given the Brickell Award for Excellence in 2017 recognising the depth and quality of his work with the genus. As well as the plants, Michael's meticulous drawings, photographs, detailed records of measurements, descriptions and herbarium specimens were gifted to Kew.



Maxillaria callichroma

Michael worked with Kew horticulturist Bala Kompalli on the transfer and one of his colleagues, Dr Terry Want still comes in three times a week to tend the plants as a Kew volunteer.

Bala told us that the plants are doing well; they've been repotted twice since their move and they are sending seeds from hand pollinated plants to the Kew Seed Bank. Terry explained that because of the different, coarser potting medium now used, the plants are watered more regularly. Michael didn't feed his plants; relying on the natural impurities and solutes in the rain water he used. Kew mist feed the plants once a week with different regimes in summer and winter

The provenance of the plants is recognised in the accession system used: each plant has its unique number followed by MCILL, and the pots of some specimens still contain Michael's original labels.

The *Amorphophallus* Collection showcases plants at every stage; dormant, young shoots, mature plants and seed heads.



Bala Kompalli with *Maxillaria* 'Michael McIlmurray'



Amorphophallus titanum

The trunks of the huge specimens of *A. titanum* are covered with intricate patterns, supposed to make them look more like trees, so that large animals will avoid them and not knock them over. Kew tend to avoid allowing the plants to be pollinated as the parent plant will often die after producing seed, but they swap pollen with Edinburgh Botanic Garden.

The famous Kew Palm House, built between 1844 and 1848 houses the Collections of

Heliconia and *Musa* and is due for restoration next year. The beds are only 1 metre deep, so the plants will be removed and the soil replenished before replanting fewer stems per taxon. There are 20 *Musa* cultivars at Kew including *M.* 'Ice cream' which has a vanilla flavour and *M.* 'St Helena'. *M.* 'Cavendish' is the cultivar used for most of our bananas but it is now being attacked by a fungus which wiped out *M.* 'Gros Michel'.

Researchers are trying to find disease resistant cultivars. Confirmation, if we needed it, of the importance of National Plant Collections.

Another Grand Day Out – thank you to Wendy for organising.

All photos: **Gillian Spencer**



Musa

More Maxillaria...

Shortly after The Surrey Group visit, Horticulturalist **Bala Kompalli** shared her beautiful photos of some of the Collection at Kew



M.desvauxiana



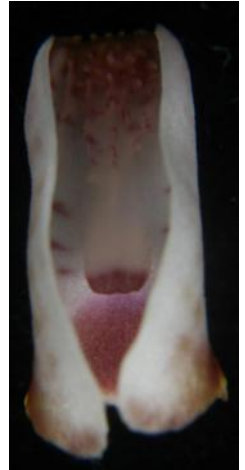
M.scalariformis



M.grandis



M.discolor lip



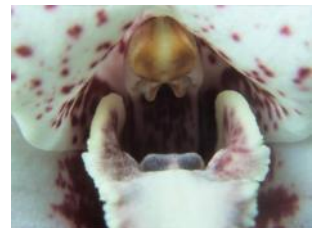
M.scalariformis lip



M.virabilis



M.picta



M.grandis lip

Flowers of the Months

The Lockdown forced us to do things differently - Instead of bringing a single bloom to Cobham, members submitted photos for an online version of our 'Flower of the Meeting' competition.



Above: **Gillian Spencer's** *Iris cv Cayeux* won First Prize in May.

Below: **Claire Davitt** scooped First Prize in July with her *Lobelia tupa*.



Above: This stunning *Angraecum arachnites* secured First Prize for **Beth Otway** in June.

Below: **Claire Davitt** won First Prize again in August with her *Dahlia* 'Tamburo'.



Meanwhile, on The Surrey Group's Facebook page, Newsletter Editor David England continues to post photos from the garden as 'A Flower a Day' (...keeps the Covid away)



It has been such an unusual year for us all and a tough year for many organisations, clubs and societies which depend on active public engagement to raise money. Friends of RBG Kew will remember their appeal for funds earlier in 2020 and the stark warning; They were facing a financial crisis which may lead to them closing their gates. Fortunately, Plant Heritage isn't navigating such tricky financial waters. The Surrey Group in particular has remained as active as possible.

Local Horticultural/Gardening Clubs all face similar difficulties organising activities in such uncertain times. Clubs and societies all depend on the support of the public and on each other. The idea of a community of clubs and societies coming together led to founding of The Surrey Horticultural Federation (SHF) in 1976. Originally closely linked to Merrist Wood College, the SHF has been serving the interests of like-minded horticultural clubs for nearly 45 years. Currently the SHF represents around 100 organisations across Surrey and

neighbouring counties, including The Surrey Group of Plant Heritage.

The SHF organises annual talks, garden visits, an AGM and a Quiz. (Our team won third place last November.) Moreover, the SHF co-ordinates a wonderful website which includes all the talks and meetings arranged by its member societies.

The SHF also helps coordinate and share information about lecturers and speakers who have appeared in Surrey. Indeed, some of our speakers have been contacted via the SHF. So, thank you to all who work so hard, running the website, organising events and helping horticultural societies find speakers for their meetings.

If you would like to know more about the SHF or of horticultural events taking place locally or across the county then do spare a moment to view their website:-

<https://surreyhorticulturalfederation.org>

David Ford

Photographic Competition 2020

“Where did YOU come from?”

The late, great (and incredibly mischievous) Christopher Lloyd of Great Dixter once admitted to furtively scattering red poppy seeds in the famous White Garden at Sissinghurst.

Whether it's a red flower in a white border or something entirely different, we've all had those moments when an unexpected visitor (animal, vegetable or mineral) turns up in our gardens.

The theme for this year's Photographic Competition is “Where did **YOU** come from?”.

The Competition is open to all members of the Surrey Group.

Members can submit only one photograph each.

Prints must be no larger than A4.

Digital enhancement is permitted; we are Plant Heritage, not purists!

If we can meet in Cobham for the AGM in February 2021, Entries will be displayed and judged by members. If, however, the AGM has to be a Zoomed affair, online viewing and judging will be organised.

The winner will receive a £15 Garden Gift Token and get to hold the *Rachel Thomson Crystal Bowl* for the year.

Entries may be reproduced in Surrey Group Newsletters.

Some of last year's entries on the theme of ‘*The Enchanted Garden*’ are reproduced below and opposite. 2019's winning photograph features on the front cover of this Newsletter.

Good Luck!





Looking back...



Plant Fair (or is it Ice Cream Fair?) RHS Wisley 4 September 2004



Visit to Polesden Lacey 24 July 2004



Surrey Group members studying *Narcissi*, 17 April 2004



Visit to Mount Stewart as part of the NCCPG Annual General Meeting and Conference, Belfast, 1996

Dates for your Diary 2020

Thursday 8 October

Surrey Group Talk via Zoom

James Miller - 'Creating a New National Collection at Wisley'

Formerly of RHS Wisley, Propagator **James Miller** is now based at Gibraltar Botanic Gardens. James will introduce the National Plant Collections held by RHS Wisley and describe the process of creating the *Astilbe* collection. The collection comprises of 23 cultivars bred by George Arends and was a new collection in 2019.

Thursday 12 November

Surrey Talk via Zoom

Timothy Walker - 'Paradise Lost And Restored: 400 Years Of Garden Design In Oxfordshire'

Timothy Walker, Lecturer, botanist, gardener, presenter, author and ex *Horti Praefectus* and Director of Oxford Botanic Garden. The history of English garden design can be told in different ways, but rarely can it be told "through the lens" of one garden. The Oxford Botanic Garden celebrates its 400th Anniversary in 2021 and bears

all the hallmarks of 17th century garden design.

This talk looks at how the art of gardening has changed, or perhaps has not, in four centuries in Oxfordshire and how the Oxford Botanic Garden now reflects garden design at the beginning of the 21st century.

Zoom Meetings

In light of the current global situation when it is not possible for us to meet in Cobham, talks and meetings will take place via Zoom.

An invitation will be sent out to all Surrey Group Members for whom we hold an email address a few days before the talk. Zoom Talks are free to all Plant Heritage members. If you are not a member but would like to join us for the talk, we suggest a donation of £4 to the Surrey Group.

Please contact us at surreyph@gmail.com for an invitation and information.

Dates for you Diary 2021

Thursday 11 February

By Zoom or physical meeting in Cobham, to be advised.

Surrey Group AGM Meeting and Quiz

Our AGM, prize giving and fun quiz. Full details nearer the time depending on whether we are able to meet in Cobham or conduct this event via Zoom.

Thursday 11 March

Surrey Group Talk via Zoom or physical meeting in Cobham, to be advised.

Cherrill Sands – ‘The Remarkable Miss Jekyll’

Gertrude Jekyll is known primarily today as a garden designer and plantswoman, though she was also a talented artist and photographer. As a key figure in the Arts & Crafts Movement, Miss Jekyll also created designs for embroidery, jewellery, ceramics and wallpaper. This talk explores her designs, planting plans, some surviving gardens and her working partnership with Edwin Lutyens.

Thursday 8 April

Surrey Group Talk via Zoom or physical meeting in Cobham, to be advised.

John Negus - ‘Shrubs of Distinction’

John Negus, Horticulturalist, Broadcaster, Journalist, Author and Nature Lover. John says of his work giving horticultural talks, 'We are blessed with a plethora of gardening clubs who are looking for speakers. Indisputably, it's good to be with like-minded individuals.' John will talk about all those shrubs which we should be considering for our gardens.

Sunday 2 May

Plant Fair at Denbies Wine Estate, Dorking RH5 6AA

Specialist nurseries plus our own plant stand. If you could possibly help, either to provide plants, to help set up, break down or help run the stand please contact surreyph@gmail.com.

Sales to the public from 10:00 to 14:00

Dates for your Diary 2021

Sunday 22 August

Plant Fair at Denbies Wine Estate, Dorking RH5 6AA

Specialist nurseries plus our own plant stand. If you could possibly help, either to provide plants, to help set up, break down or help run the stand please contact surreyph@gmail.com.

Sales to the public from 10:00 to 14:00

Thursday 9 September

Surrey Group Talk

Neil G Miller – ‘The Secrets of Hever Castle Gardens’

(Postponed from Nov 2020)

Hever Castle Head Gardener **Neil Miller** began his career as an insurance broker before following his passion for plants. He loves to share his enthusiasm and knowledge with others and will talk to us about the award winning gardens at Hever Castle and a ‘good piece on roses’.

A lively and engaging speaker, Neil has previously delivered a talk at one of our National AGMs.

Thursday 14 October

Surrey Group Talk

Geoff Hawkins – ‘Thirty Acres to Thirty Square Yards’

(Postponed from April 2020)

Seven years ago, **Geoff Hawkins** retired from his role as Head Gardener at Mill Court, a private estate near Alton. How did he cope with the very difficult job of downsizing, and what lessons can he impart?

Thursday 11 November

Surrey Group Talk via Zoom or physical meeting in Cobham, to be advised.

Matthew Biggs – ‘The Wonder of Plants’

Matthew Biggs, gardener, author and broadcaster is probably best known for his appearances on BBC R4's Gardeners' Question Time. In this lecture, he will explore the complex survival mechanisms of plants and marvel at their survival in extreme climates and how they integrate with other wonders of the natural world.

There's much more to the botanical world than meets the eye. Welcome to the wonderful world of plants!

Surrey Group Talks

Please see the notice regarding our Talks on page 28.

When we can return to St Andrew's Church Hall, all Talks will start at 19:30 with doors opening at 19:00.

All Talks include a Plant Sale, a Raffle plus our *Flower of the Meeting* Competition. Refreshments are provided at a nominal cost.

A suggested donation of £4 for non-members is requested at the door. All meetings are free to members and everyone is welcome.

Venue: St Andrew's Church Hall, Churchgate House, Downside Bridge Road, Cobham KT11 3EJ.

For full details of all events please refer to the Surrey Group Events page of the Plant Heritage website.

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Verbena macdougalii 'Lavender Spires' Photo: David England