



AFFILIATED TO
ROYAL HORTICULTURAL
SOCIETY

CHILTERN EDGE HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY



Chair: Nigel Crush
Membership Secretary: Janet Evans
Society email cehs561@gmail.com
Society website cehs.co.uk

From the Chair -February 2024

The schedule for the Spring Show goes out this month, please look at it and see what you can enter to help continue to make the show a success. If you have any plants you could donate for the plant stall at the show these would be much appreciated. Hope you can join us for the afternoon talk on 13th February (see below).

TALKS

Tuesday 13th February at 14.30. "The Trowels and Tribulations of taking on a Historic Garden!" by Maggie Tran.

After enjoying a cake and a cup of tea to bolster society funds you will be treated to a talk by Maggie Tran, originally a Fine Arts graduate who retrained in horticulture at RHS Wisley, on her experiences as Head Gardener at the historic Bramdean, a mainly Georgian estate on a chalk down near Petersfield in Hampshire. There she and the new owners have worked to blend history with good modern practice to restore a "garden" which includes: a 1-acre kitchen garden divided into sub plots now using "no-dig" techniques, an arboretum, ornamental & walled gardens, some wild areas, not to mention a beech tree believed to be 300 years old!

With just a couple of permanent staff and a few volunteers Maggie maintains the whole garden and aims to maintain colour and have plants of interest throughout the year. They also have a glasshouse containing over 120 different cultivars of Nerines and an equally large collection of pelargoniums!

Come and learn how it is done!

Tuesday 12th March at 19.30. "Growing Perennials and Woody Plants for Cutting" by Rachel Siegfried.

Avid readers of the Membership Card will have spotted that, when it went to press, we had just received notification that our scheduled speaker had unavoidably had to cancel.

Fortunately Rachel Siegfried who runs Green and Gorgeous, a cut flower farm near Wallingford, is able to step into the breach! Last visiting us in April 2018 Rachel has since written a book on the best perennials and woody plants for producing cut flowers. Her talk on this occasion will focus on these plants.

"Zoom" Talk Report: Tuesday 9th January "Delightful, De-Lovely, Deranged!" by Nancy Stevens.

Speaking to us on a cold winter's night from a comfortable study in a prosperous suburb of Glasgow, Nancy entertained a significant audience of IT proficient CEHS

members with stories of a cornucopia of weird and wonderful plants that bring joy and, sometimes, terror across the world!

Beginning with the world's largest flowering plant: a single Chinese wisteria planted in California in 1894 which now covers an acre, produces a million flowers each spring, "ate" a house and is now estimated to weigh 250 tons; Nancy moved on to the fragrant: roses in a Bulgarian valley the petals of which are harvested in summer mornings to produce rose oil. 3,5 tons of petals being required to produce a litre of the precious oil!

She also showed us Japanese gardens, each devoted to multiple cultivars of a single plant species - the water loving Japanese Iris, Spider Lilies and Hydrangeas - producing dramatic, highly popular but often short-lived displays.

Japanese plants in the wrong place can however also be a nightmare! Kudzu - Japanese Arrowroot - was introduced into the USA in the 30s to stabilise dust bowls and provide cheap "fertiliser" by fixing nitrogen (like peas and beans). Initially successful however, because it can grow a foot a day, this menace having no natural enemies in the States and loving mild winters, has morphed into the "plant which ate the South", can smother whole buildings and power lines and now costs \$2000 an acre to control! The floating water hyacinth can be a similar uncontrollable nuisance when it gets into the wrong waterway!

Plants can however also charm and bide their time! In the Atacama desert of Chile years can go by without rain or plant growth. Then occasionally as little as $\frac{1}{2}$ " of rain will trigger a "super-bloom" with up to

200 different species germinating from long dormant seeds, growing, flowering and setting new seeds in a stunningly beautiful few days! Somewhat similar events occur more-or-less annually in dry areas of South Africa so are rather easier to witness!

A fun and thought provoking winter's evening!

John Windass

SPRING SHOW PHOTO COMPETITION

TOPICS

1. Open
2. Patterns
3. Winter colour
4. Single spring flower.

WARNING: LAST MONTH TO RENEW YOUR SUBSCRIPTION BEFORE IT IS CANCELLED!!

Membership renewals were due on or before the 1 January 2024. Subscriptions remain unchanged for a further year.

Once again we are requesting that, wherever possible, newsletters and Show Schedules are received by email. Please remember to add your email address to the renewal form if you wish to receive newsletters this way. Please indicate on the Membership Form if you wish to receive a paper copy of the Schedules. Of course, we will continue to hand deliver to those of you who are unable or do not wish to receive information in this way. However, members living outside Sonning Common, Gallowstree Common, Kidmore End or Peppard who receive their newsletters by post will need to pay postage.

If requested on the Membership Form Show Schedules for both shows will be delivered or posted free of charge.

Please complete the renewal form and return together with cash or cheque (payable to CEHS) to Janet Evans.

RHS Gardening February

Spring is in sight!

This month there are signs of the approaching spring, with bulbs appearing and wildlife waking up as light levels and temperatures increase. There's plenty to do indoors this month to prepare for the season ahead. Outdoors, as the garden comes to life again, it's time to prune shrubs and climbers, such as Wisteria as well as evergreen hedges.

Top gardening jobs this month

1 Prepare vegetable seed beds, and sow some vegetables under cover

2 Chit potato tubers

It is important with earlies, and a good idea with maincrops, to 'chit' seed potatoes before planting. This means allowing them to start sprouting shoots.

3 Protect blossom on apricots, nectarines and peaches

4 Net fruit and vegetable crops to keep the birds off

5 Prune winter-flowering shrubs that have finished flowering

6 Divide bulbs such as snowdrops, and plant those that need planting 'in the green'

7 Prune Wisteria

8 Prune hardy evergreen hedges and renovate overgrown deciduous hedges

9 Prune conservatory climbers such as bougainvillea

10 Cut back deciduous grasses left uncut over the winter, remove dead grass from evergreen grasses

Letters/emails/articles

We welcome your comments/articles/letters these can be sent to CEHS at cehs561@gmail.com for inclusion in the next newsletter.



CHILTERN EDGE HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY



Annual subscription: £8.00 per member (children free). Newsletter postage: £7.00 /year

Name/s Please state Mr, Mrs, Ms or other _____

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I would like to receive my newsletters by:

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Show schedules will be emailed, postage for this is free.

I enclose my subscription of £_____ and postage (if applicable) £_____ Donation £ _____

TOTAL £_____ Cash/Cheque Cheques payable to CEHS

Please return completed form together with cash or cheque to: - Janet Evans, 26 Green Lane, Sonning Common, RG4 9NA (These can also be handed in at the AGM)

GDPR

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Signed _____