



October 2024

# Newsletter

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Dear Members,

Welcome to our October newsletter.

The cold, stormy weather of the last couple of weeks has certainly heralded the end of summer and as we approach the end of British Summer Time on 27th October our thoughts are turning to our autumn tasks and perhaps to our plans for our gardens in 2025.

Our September speaker, Catriona Fenton from Garden Organic, gave us a lot to think of in terms of saving the seeds from our own gardens at this time of year and shared with us some beautiful heritage varieties that the heritage seed library has been key in preserving. These could make great additions to our fruit and veg plots in 2025, and to encourage us to give some a try she brought us some free seeds which was a lovely touch.

We had an article on seed saving in our October 2023 Newsletter – so why not have a look at that for a few tips. The method for saving tomato seeds is similar to the one Catriona shared with us. If you can't find the newsletter at home it will be on our website.

In this Newsletter we have an article on Bulb Planting which was requested by a few members. This should help you get the most out of the "Sailboat" daffodils which are this year's selection for our annual daffodil competition. There is still time to get them planted and be in with a chance to win a prize in the competition at our Annual Dinner in March. We do have few bags left, so if you haven't got yours yet then we will have them on sale at our next meeting – just £1.50 a bag.

Our next meeting is on 31<sup>st</sup> October when we will be welcoming Nigel Hope, Head Gardener from Hopes Garden Plants to talk to us about "A year in John's Garden". John's garden is based at Ashwood Nurseries and is a wonderful eight-acre private garden created by nursery owner and Chelsea Gold medallist John Massey. It is regarded as one of the finest private gardens in the UK, and I know that those of our members who have been able to visit the garden have been amazed this piece of paradise that John has established in Shropshire.

It will be lovely to experience this on a dark October night – looking forward to seeing you there.

Ann

## Bulb Planting

Autumn is the perfect time to plant bulbs that will bloom in the spring.

Here's a quick guide to help you successfully plant and care for bulbs like tulips, daffodils, crocuses, and hyacinths:

### 1. Choose healthy bulbs

- Choose firm, large bulbs – these will be free of disease, have the best supply of nutrients and give you the best flowers

### 2. Timing

- Plant your bulbs from late September to November, before the ground freezes
- The ideal temperature for planting bulbs is when soil temperatures fall to around 10-15°C
- The later you plant them, the later they will flower, so consider this if you want a staggered display

### 3. Location and Soil

- Most bulbs prefer a sunny spot, though some can tolerate partial shade, so check your varieties
- Bulbs thrive in well-drained soil. If your soil is heavy clay, add compost or sand to improve the drainage

### 4. How to Plant

- Plant bulbs at a depth that's 2-3 times the height of the bulb
- Space bulbs about 3-6 inches apart depending on size
- Place bulbs pointy side up (roots down) in the hole/container

### 5. Planting in Containers

- If you lack garden space, bulbs do grow well in containers, make sure to use a well-draining potting mix
- Ensure there's enough room to plant at the appropriate depth for the bulbs you have chosen
- Consider using layers of bulbs (larger bulbs deeper, smaller ones closer to the surface) for continuous blooms

### 6. Watering and Mulching

- Water bulbs after planting to help settle the soil and start root development
- Apply a layer of mulch (2-3 inches) to keep the soil moist and insulated over winter, especially in colder areas

### 7. Fertilizing

- Bulbs store their own nutrients, though adding bone meal or a slow-release bulb fertilizer in the planting hole can provide a boost
- Fertilize again in the spring when shoots start to appear

### 8. Protection from Pests

- Squirrels and mice may dig up bulbs. To prevent this, cover the planting area with wire mesh (like chicken wire) until the ground freezes and keeps them away naturally

### 9. After Bloom Care

- Once flowers have bloomed, deadhead the spent blooms, but leave the foliage until it turns yellow. This allows the bulbs to store energy for the next year's growth

#### Pro Tip:

For a natural look in borders and lawns, toss the bulbs into the air and plant them where they fall.

## Recipe of the Month

*From Helen Jones*

### **Ginger and Treacle Spiced Traybake**

#### **Ingredients**

##### **For the cake**

- 225g softened butter
- 175g light muscovado sugar
- 200g black treacle (weigh on top of sugar to avoid sticking)
- 300g SR Flour
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp mixed spice
- 1 tsp allspice
- 4 large eggs
- 4 tbsp milk
- 3 finely chopped bulbs of ginger from a jar

##### **For the icing**

- 200g icing sugar
- 3 tsp syrup from the jar of stem ginger
- 3 finely chopped bulbs of ginger from a jar

#### **Method**

1. Pre heat oven to 180°C (160°C fan)
2. Grease and line a 30 x 23 cm cake tray
3. Put all of the cake ingredients into a large bowl and beat until well blended
4. Pour into tin and bake for 35-40 mins
5. Cool for a few minutes, turn out of tin and remove parchment paper. Allow to cool completely
6. Make icing: sift icing sugar into a bowl, add syrup and mix until the icing is smooth and has a spreading consistency.
7. Pour the icing over the cake, spreading gently to the edges and sprinkle with chopped stem ginger to decorate.
8. Allow the icing to set before slicing into 15-20 pieces

Tip: This cake freezes very well un iced and in fact improves with freezing

## Monthly Flower Spike and Pot Plant Competition

Points are awarded for first, second and third positions (First – 5 points, Second – 3 points and Third – 2 points).

Prizes are awarded for the highest aggregate points at the end of the year. Multiple entries are allowed in the “Flower Spike” class, though only one award will be made per entrant.

### Pot Plant



1<sup>st</sup> Succulent  
Carolyn Travis



2<sup>nd</sup> Aonium  
Alison Watson



3<sup>rd</sup> Violas  
David Cotterrell

### Flower Spike



1<sup>st</sup> Sunflower  
Alison Watson



2<sup>nd</sup> Amaranth  
Helen Goodwin



3<sup>rd</sup> Aster  
Val Cotterrell

The competition was judged by our guest speaker, Catriona Fenton, and although the number of exhibits was lower than previous months, Catriona was very complimentary about the quality. Thank you to everyone who entered - the photos of the winners are also on our website.

As we head into winter it always surprises us how many flowers and plants are still going strong – so please think about entering yours as it is lovely to see the display they make at our meetings. Our next meeting is on 31<sup>st</sup> October.

## NOTICE BOARD

### BDHS Meetings:

#### 2024/25 Monthly Meeting Dates

*7:30pm Tea & Coffee. Please remember to bring a mug with you if possible, it helps the environment and the clearing up after the meeting. Speaker starts at 8pm*

*Guests are welcome - there is a small charge of £3 for entry which includes refreshments.*

31 <sup>st</sup> October	Nigel Hopes <i>(Hopes Garden Plants)</i>	A year in the life of John's Garden
30 <sup>th</sup> January 2025	Pip Smith	The Fragrant Garden
27 <sup>th</sup> February	Alun & Jill Whitehead <i>(Aulden Farm)</i>	Wild Shropshire - Gardens and more!
27 <sup>th</sup> March	Alan Deeley	Burton Green Honey
24 <sup>th</sup> April	Lottie Allen <i>(Head Gardener)</i>	Hidcote, the vision of one man
29 <sup>th</sup> May	Duncan Coombs	The Shaded garden
26 <sup>th</sup> June	Nigel Briggs	Garden Photography
25 <sup>th</sup> Sept.	Val Bourne	A year at Spring Cottage
30 <sup>th</sup> October	Drew <i>(Lincolnshire Pond Plants)</i>	Pond Plants

#### Other BDHS dates:

28 <sup>th</sup> Nov	AGM & Buffet – 7:30pm. Village Hall, Balsall Common
20 <sup>th</sup> March 2025	Annual Dinner – Village Hall, Balsall Common
19 <sup>th</sup> July 2025	76 <sup>th</sup> Annual Show – St Peter's Hall, Balsall Common

*Further events/details will be announced once they are finalised*

#### Other Dates for your diary

12 <sup>th</sup> & 13 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Harvest Festival Flower Display at St Mary's Church, Haseley - 10am to 4pm
12 <sup>th</sup> & 13 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Apple & Country Fair, Hill Close Gardens* – 11am to 5pm. With stalls & refreshments
26 <sup>th</sup> October	Chrysanthemum Day (in support of NGS), Hill Close Gardens* – 11am to 4pm

\* Hill Close admission prices - Adults £6; Children 5-17yrs £1

## Some jobs for the next few weeks...

Now that summer is over and the temperature is dropping there's plenty to do in our gardens:

- Keep deadheading – you will get flowers through until the first frost
- Collect seeds from your favourite plants and store in paper envelopes/bags in a cool dark place to use next spring (remember to label them)
- Finish harvesting apples, pears and nuts
- Start to clear the summer bedding and plant out winter bedding
- Bring tender plants into the greenhouse or a sheltered area if possible, otherwise apply a mulch to give some protection from frosts
- Dry herbs for use over winter and pot some up to bring indoors (fresh always taste better)
- Lift and divide herbaceous perennials. Now is also the time to move any of these (and any shrubs) that you would like to relocate
- Take hardwood cuttings from ornamental shrubs and trees
- Plant spring flowering bulbs. Tulips can wait until next month plus, the later you plant them the later they will flower, so consider a phased planting to give you a longer flowering season
- Sow winter salad in unheated greenhouses
- Sow sweet peas under glass (this will give you an earlier flowering than sowing in spring next year)
- Plant out spring cabbages
- Reduce the height of shrub roses and other flowering shrubs such as buddleia and Lavatera, by 1/3<sup>rd</sup>, to prevent wind damage. Complete the pruning in the Spring
- Prune climbing roses
- Cut back yellowed asparagus fronds
- Tidy strawberry beds and mulch with compost
- Divide established rhubarb crowns to create new plants
- Last chance to mow lawns and trim hedges in mild areas
- Dig open ground so that the winter frosts help break it down
- Apply compost manure to beds – no need to dig in, the worms will take it down for you
- Collect fallen leaves to make leaf mould