

Newsletter

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Dear Members,

Welcome to our August newsletter.

As the sun continues to shine we reflect on a busy time since our last monthly meeting at the end of June. We've had all the prep for our annual show, the show itself and a very enjoyable social evening in Jane Lynch's garden – thank you Jane for hosting.

More thanks are due as a show of the scale and quality we produce as a club can't take place without commitment from our committee and members and so many thanks are due to:

- The volunteers who helped set up the hall on the Friday night and those who helped clear up on the Saturday after the show
- The Stewards who accompanied our judges, ensured that we got the scores in on time and put out the prize cards
- The cake bakers who did us proud and ensured that our refreshments were in high demand and the space always clean and tidy (see recipe of the month for one of the favourites)
- The volunteers who manned our plant stall, sold raffle tickets and helped with serving the refreshments

...and of course those of you who entered the classes - in total we had 442 exhibits, slightly more than last year, and these made a very impressive display as you can see from the photos below (more on our website).

We had very complimentary comments from our judges, some of whom were new to our show for 2025. Watch out for future newsletters when we will share some of their "top tips" for exhibitors.



Our next meeting is on 26th September when we will be welcoming Catrina Fenton from the Heritage Seed Library to talk to us about Seed Saving and the library itself. Looking forward to seeing you there, especially our 4 new members.

Ann

BDHS 75th Annual Flower Show – Cup and Award Winners

THE DEELEY CHALLENGE CUP Awarded for the most points in Sections A & B - Vegetables & Fruit

EDWARD COTTERRELL

THE MAISEY CHALLENGE CUP Awarded for the most points in Section C - Flowers and Foliage

HELEN JONES

THE DAHLIA BOWL Awarded for the best dahlia bloom in class 43

LAURA EDEN

POT PLANT CUP Awarded for the most points in Section D - Pot Plants

BARBARA HAINES

THE SOCIETY CUP Awarded for the best exhibit in Section E - Flower Arrangements

JENNIFER LEEMING

THE HEART OF ENGLAND TROPHY Awarded to the best photograph in section F - Photographs

SUE TIMMIS

THE PRODUCE CUP Awarded for the best exhibit in Section G - Produce and baked Goods

ALISON WATSON

THE BALSALL TROPHY Awarded for the best exhibit in section H - Arts and Crafts

PET HAWLEY

THE WILKINS CHALLENGE TROPHY Awarded to the best entry in Section K - Plants from Plugs

JANE BOSTOCK

THE SOUTHFIELD GERANIUM CUP Awarded for the best geranium or pelargonium in the Show.

JANE BRENNAN

THE JARDINERIE CUP Awarded to the Novice gaining the most points in the Show. (A Novice is a person who has never won a first prize at a BDHS Show.)

ELLIE ATKINSON

RHS BANKSIAN MEDAL Awarded for the highest total of points in classes A, B, C, D & K (Excluding winners in the previous 2 years).

HELEN JONES and JANE BRENNAN

THE BALSALL CHALLENGE CUP Awarded for the second highest total of points in all classes.

ALISON WATSON

CHALLENGE CUP Awarded for the highest total of points in all classes.

EDWARD COTTERRELL

Recipe of the Month

From Pet Hawley (It was great success with customers at the Annual Show Teas)

Guinness Cake

Ingredients

FOR THE CAKE

- 250 ml Guinness
- 250 g unsalted butter
- 75 g cocoa powder
- 400 g caster sugar
- 150 ml sour cream
- 2 large eggs
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 275 g plain flour
- 2½ teaspoons bicarbonate of soda

FOR THE TOPPING

- 300 g cream cheese
- 150 g icing sugar
- 2 teaspoons cornflour
- 125 ml double cream (or whipping cream)

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C, and butter and line a 23cm / 9-inch springform tin.
2. Pour the Guinness into a large wide saucepan, add the butter, in chunks or slices, and heat until the butter's melted, at which time you should whisk in the cocoa and sugar. Beat the sour cream with the eggs and vanilla and then pour into the pan and finally whisk in the flour and bicarb.
3. Pour the cake batter into the greased and lined tin and bake for 45 minutes to an hour. Leave to cool completely in the tin on a cooling rack, as it is quite a damp cake.
4. When the cake's cold, sit it on a flat plate or cake stand and make the icing.
5. Lightly whip the cream cheese until smooth, sieve over the icing sugar and cornflour and then beat to combine.
6. If using double cream, add it and beat until you have a spreadable consistency. If using whipping cream, whisk first to soft peaks, add a couple of spoonsful into the cream cheese mixture and once this is combined, fold in the rest.
7. Ice the top of the black cake so that it resembles the frothy top of the famous drink.

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



1st Fuchsia
Edward Cotterrell



2nd Succulent
David Cotterrell



3rd Bougainvillea
Liz Poutney

Flower Spike



1st Dahlia
Margaret Sears



2nd Alstroemeria
Felicity Hill



3rd Clematis
Alison Watson

The competition was judged by our guest speaker, Josh Egan, who had an excellent selection to choose from. Thank you to everyone who entered - the photos of the winners are also on our website.

It's lovely to see what we are all growing in our gardens and it is a great source of inspiration, so please think about entering your plants and flowers for our next meeting on 26th September.

NOTICE BOARD

BDHS Meetings:

2024 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.

26th September Catrina Fenton Seed saving & The Heritage Seed Library
(Garden Organic – Ryton)

31st October Nigel Hopes A year in the life of John's garden
(Hopes Garden Plants)

Other BDHS dates:

28th Nov AGM & Buffet – 7:30pm. Village Hall, Balsall Common

20th March 2025 Annual Dinner – Village Hall, Balsall Common

19th July 2025 76th Annual Show – St Peter's Hall, Balsall Common

Further events/details will be announced once they are finalised

Other Dates for your diary

10th August Marston Green & District Gardening club – 93rd Annual Flower show
2:00pm at The Parish Hall & Grounds, Elmdon Rd, B37 7BT. Admission £1.50,
children free.

16th & 23rd August The Charterhouse, Coventry, CV1 2JR. Open 11am – 3pm. Admission £6 adults,
£3 children. Biscuits and refreshments.

25th August Cedar House Open Gardens, Wasperton, CV35 8EB. 1pm to 5:30pm. Admission
£8, children free. Refreshments at the village hall .

14th September Wren Hall Autumn Garden Show. Open to the public from 2:30pm. Wren Hall,
School Lane, Wroxall, Warwickshire, CV35 7NF. Refreshments and homemade
cakes.

Some jobs for the next few weeks...

In the hot dry weather there are plenty of things that need our attention :

- Continue to apply tomato feed regularly to fruiting veg crops, including tomatoes, courgettes, pumpkins and chillies – also good for annual flowering plants in tubs and baskets. Water greenhouse tomatoes regularly to prevent split fruits and blossom end rot
- Increase greenhouse shading and ventilation to keep temperatures down on hot days, damp down the floor when you can
- Give dahlias a liquid feed, keep them well watered and tie the shoots of tall varieties to sturdy stakes as they grow
- Feed and deadhead roses to keep them flowering
- Water and feed sweet peas regularly, pick the flowers every few days, and remove seed pods to prolong flowering
- Cut back early summer perennials, such as hardy geraniums and delphiniums, after flowering for a second flush
- Pick courgettes regularly so they don't turn into marrows
- Cut down broad beans after harvesting, but leave the roots in the soil to release nitrogen as they decompose
- Take softwood cuttings from shrubs such as pyracantha, cotinus, hydrangeas and spiraea
- Make the last pickings of rhubarb and remove any flower spikes that start to form, cutting right down at the base
- Thin out heavy crops of apples, pears and plums, and remove any malformed, damaged or undersized fruits
- Prune plum (and any “stoned”) trees in dry weather, once you have harvested the fruits, when silver leaf fungal disease is less prevalent
- Shorten side shoots growing from the framework of trained fruit trees, reducing to about five leaves from their base
- Strawberries only give a good crop for 3-4 years, so make your own new plants by pegging down strawberry runners into pots of compost to root new plants
- Sow small batches of fast-maturing salad leaves, rocket and radishes every few weeks for continuous pickings
- Sow a last batch of pak choi, lettuce, peas, dwarf beans and carrots for an autumn crop
- Sow winter crops such as turnips (you can eat the leaves as well as the turnip itself) & cabbage
- Sow biennials, such as foxgloves, honesty, forget-me-nots and wallflowers, for blooms next year
- Give your lawn a quick acting summer feed, especially if it didn't have a spring feed
- Prepare for the summer glut, when everything is ready at once, and make room in your freezers