



September 2024

Newsletter

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Dear Members,

Welcome to our September newsletter.

You don't need to look at a calendar to know that autumn has begun, with the drop in temperature and the closing in of the daylight hours, we are all too aware that time to enjoy our colourful borders and ripen our tomatoes is limited.

For now though, our gardens and greenhouses remain a wonderful reminder of the stunning display we had at our Annual Show in July and it's a good time to reflect on what went well and what we might change for next year, both in our gardens and at the show.

Thinking about the show - we have gathered feedback from our judges, the committee and those of you who were kind enough to give us your views and we will implement as much of this as we can for our 76th Annual Show on 19th July 2025. In the meantime there are a couple of sections in this newsletter with feedback and tips from the judges as well as our cup winners.

We are planning to review the show schedule at our committee meeting on 30th September to have it finalised and out to you for October. So, when you are planning the changes for your gardens & allotments why not add in a few extra seeds for the one of the fruit, flower or veg sections? We know that we have many talented gardeners in our club and our show is the perfect setting for you to share your achievements with our members as well as the public who love to see the spectacular annual display. As usual, we will send the schedule and guidance documents out to all members via e mail and publish it on our website.

The website is currently being redesigned by Judy Lambourne and so you can look forward to this being unveiled in the near future with more space for photos and an easier to navigate format.

In this newsletter you will find a list of our speakers for 2025. Alison Watson puts this together for us each year and networks with many other horticultural clubs to find us engaging speakers. Many thanks Alison for what looks like a varied and interesting programme.

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. The daffodil bulbs will be for sale at this meeting, so you can get them planted ready to be entered into the judging at our Annual Dinner in March

Looking forward to seeing you all again.

Ann

Photography Tips

From Nigel Briggs

Nigel was the judge for our photography classes this year and is one of our speakers for 2025. He will be giving a talk on "Garden Photography on 26th June. This is a great opportunity to learn from a talented photographer (those of you who have bought any of the cards that Nigel sells to raise money for Save the Children will attest to this), and to get tips on how to enhance your own photos.

We will be finalising the themes for the 2025 classes in October and hope that these will inspire you to enter the show. For the first two we are returning to some old favourites:

- F66 MY FAVOURITE FLOWER
- F67 GARDEN SCENE

So you have the chance to capture the end of summer in your gardens while you await the full class info. Remember that the HEART OF ENGLAND TROPHY is awarded to the best exhibit in the photography section, so you could have a cup winning photo just waiting to be snapped.

In the meantime here are some tips/things to think about from Nigel, based on judging the entrants in the photography classes for 2024:

General Points

- The main interest/focal point has to be in focus and the background not too distracting
- Think about whether having the main interest in the centre works best (it usually doesn't...)

Theme

- The photograph should have a clear link to the theme

Composition

- Did the arrangement within the photograph enhance or detract from the overall impact
- Were there areas of the photograph which added little or confused the image

Viewpoint

- Did the angle/direction from which the photograph was taken enhance the impact
- Was it clear what the main subject was
- Were there any distractions

Technical

- Was the photograph sharp where it needed to be
- Was the exposure right for the subject
- Were there any areas which were over or under exposed which affected the image's impact

Impact, Interest & Emotion

- Did it grab the viewer's/judge's attention
- Did it generate some emotion – intrigue, calmness, joy, sadness...

BDHS 75th Annual Flower Show – How to Avoid the Biggest Mistakes

Input from our cup winners; Jane Brennan, Edward Cotterrell, Laura Eden, Barbara Haynes & Helen Jones

General

- Read the schedule **and** the exhibitors guidance document which has more detail on the specifics for some classes
- Read them again, it's easy to miss the detail the first time!
- Pick out possible classes to enter when the show schedule comes out and look for any instructions or guidance given if that is relevant to your entries
- Always have a standby just in case
- Check for any special instructions relating to your classes e.g. as grown, leave roots on, show on paper plate
- Don't bank on specific things in the garden as the weather might dictate your options - keep an open mind and be flexible
- Check plants most days for pests/dead leaves and flowers
- Calculate last pruning dates
- Send you entries in early - don't leave it until the last minute
- Enter as many classes as you can - you can always miss some out if the blooms, plants, pots, produce don't work out
- Cross your fingers and hope for good weather...

Vegetable & Fruit Classes

- Pick, dig up or cut items for your entries, check the number needed and spread out those possibly suitable for each entry to determine those that are similar in size, shape, or length and are matching each other as is relevant to the class – it may not always include the longest or largest e.g. 5 matching runner beans 7 inches in length is preferable to 3 at 9 inches and two at 6 inches or 5 smaller tomatoes are better than 5 matching tomatoes with one missing its calyx
- Check how the vegetable or fruit entry needs to be displayed e.g. as grown, on a plate, directly onto the show table
- Potatoes - lift carefully 10 days before show, taking care not to damage the skins. Let skins dry before washing and keep in the dark or wrapped in newspaper. The day before show choose which potatoes are similar size to each other, have no skin damage, are correct for the class e.g. white, red or coloured, are clean and free from blemishes
- Root vegetables e.g. carrots or beetroot, dig carefully keeping tops and roots intact, match sizes, wash clean. Check if display is on a plate or on the show table without trimming foliage or roots
- Peas- match pod sizes. Holding pods up to a light may show up grubs or damage inside the pod
- Fruit - try to match sizes. Arrange the correct number on plate remembering to remove any spares you brought. Adding a few leaves of the fruit on show may enhance the entry

Flower, Foliage and Plant Classes

- Pot plants - check inside pot diameter is correct to schedule for each entry. Clean pot well, remove weeds, damaged leaves and spent flowers
- If possible, choose your bloom on the morning of the show and ensure that it is in pristine condition without any blemish or debris/insects lurking in the petals
- Look for flowers that are undamaged, good shape and in perfect condition, not waiting to open or going over
- Plant your containers in advance so they are well established
- There was a preparation table for 2024 to re-align your arrangements & top up water - very useful (it will be there for 2025)

- Check for flaws in your foliage – easy to miss and can be a big no no with some judges
- For flowers entries check the allowed vase size and if flowers are to be annuals or perennials and if the number of stems to be shown is specified. Ensure that the vase is stable on the show bench with the entry in it
- A suitably sized container or vase that is in proportion to your display will enhance your exhibit
- Make sure plant pots are the right size and clean

Just before the show

- Prepare as much as you can before the Saturday morning and consider your transport arrangements - I have a big slope on my drive so everything tilts forwards or backwards, too much water spills in the car and/or entries slides about
- Get up early on Saturday to make the 11.00 deadline ...
- ...and cross your fingers for good weather!

We are aiming to have the schedule for our 76th Annual Show out in October and, both it and the Exhibitors Guidance document will also be on the website.

Recipe of the Month

From Robert Leeming

With your potato harvest now in why not try this mayonnaise free potato salad.



Scrub or scrape the freshly dug potatoes from your garden (Charlottes are great). Boil until tender but firm then drain, cut to size, and place in a bowl. Cover with dry white wine whilst still warm, when cool place in the refrigerator for approximately four hours. Drain (you can keep the wine for your next risotto for a maximum of one week in the fridge) .

In a bowl mix a modest amount of olive oil and white wine vinegar and stir in chopped tarragon, chervil and parsley. Add the potatoes and coat with the herbs. Best fresh but will keep a day or two in the fridge.

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.

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

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

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...

The first few weeks of autumn are a great time to help your garden make the most of the warm weather and get a few jobs done:

- Harvest apples, runner beans and autumn raspberries
- Time for ripening tomatoes is running out, so remove any leaves that are shading the fruit
- Finish lifting main crop potatoes
- Transplant spring cabbages
- Check nets on all brassicas and winter salads – hungry pigeons are about!
- Divide herbaceous perennials
- Take cuttings of herbs and tender perennials
- Keep deadheading – with mild weather you may still get flowers through to October
- Plant spring flowering bulbs
- Plant wallflowers, pansies, forget-me-nots and other spring bedding in pots and borders
- Pot up bulbs for indoor colour over Christmas
- Collect and sow seed from perennials and hardy annuals
- Sow sweet peas in greenhouse or cold frame for early blooms next year
- Reseed any bald patches in your lawn
- Trim evergreen hedges
- Keep camellias and rhododendrons well-watered as they are forming next spring's flower buds and will drop them or make fewer if their roots are dry
- Weeds are still germinating, so keep hoeing to disrupt them and any slug and snail eggs
- Keep up with watering of new plants, using rain or grey water if possible
- Start to reduce the frequency of houseplant watering
- Clean out cold frames and greenhouses so that they are ready for use in the autumn
- Net ponds before leaf fall gets fully underway
- Start collecting the falling leaves to begin making leaf mould – store in a contained but open area, or in refuse sacks with holes poked through
- While you can see the last of summer in your garden, now is a great time to start thinking about your plans for next year and start that list of seeds and plants you would like to order