



Castle Cary Gardening Association Newsletter 2019

If you need to check a date for an event, get a copy of the show schedule, or just want to catch up with a talk you missed – just go to <http://ccga.btck.co.uk/>. These are some of the stories from 2019 covered on the website.



The **2018** season ended with Heather coordinating the CCGA entry for the Christmas Tree display in Castle Cary. The tree was decorated by club members for the Cary Christmas festivities. A giant allium seed head was at the top of the tree, with walnuts, chillies, seed packets & gourds among the decorations seen on the tree. Some great entries by other local clubs too, including a lovely display of chillies on the Eat Cary team entry.

Around 40 members enjoyed our **2019** New Year lunch on the 19th January at North Cadbury.

We loaded the draft show schedule onto the website much earlier this year. For anyone wishing to know what to plant or grow, it gave them a chance to adjust their seed or plant order. Among the small number of changes made in 2019 were new classes for lilies and orchids. If you have any suggestions for 2020, do let us know!

David Usher gave our February talk on the care and management of trees and shrubs. David, who had gained many years of expertise from his time at Hestercombe and elsewhere, took us through everything you needed to know from planning and research, through planting and feeding, then through to pruning and maintenance. We will all be sharpening our secateurs and looking for some unsuspecting shrubs to practice on - let's hope we remember which to prune when!

Very few members brought back blooms from the 2018/19 bulb challenge (we had just 4 blooms brought to the club meetings). And, very few people seemed to take bulbs in autumn 2019 for the 2020 season (Daffodil King Alfred was available at the October meeting). It is a 'use it or lose it' situation, so if you want us to continue sourcing free bulbs again at the end of 2020 do let us know, otherwise it is likely this will be dropped.

The show schedule was printed in March. Despite circulating via a wider set of outlets we didn't use as many paper schedules this year. Increasingly, people are making use of the online schedule and entry form, which is great!

Our March talk was by Paul Cumbleton, on bulbs from South Africa. Paul had taken some stunning photos, and certainly provided plenty of food for thought by telling us about a wide variety of plants that most of us were completely unaware of. Some members could be seen jotting down the names, and will be now searching specialist nursery web sites to source some bulbs!

We had a small innovation and switched the coffee and tea to the start of the meeting. This allowed members the chance to chat, but also to have a final chance to browse our seed exchange table for this year. Does this change work for you?

Our April talk by Brian Jaques was an entertaining and informative trip through the naming of plants and, as the title suggested, we heard about the origin of the words cabbage and lily. Indeed, we found out that many plants called lily (eg day lily) aren't actually lilies. We now also know about formal scientific 'binomial' plant names, though most of the names you see mentioned on our club web site are the common names of plants.



Those at the April meeting also had the chance to buy some 'early' plants ahead of the plant sale, and acquire one of the sharpening pens that David Usher mentioned at his February meeting. We also had the free plug plants from Castle Gardens for this year's club challenge.

Our Spring Plant sale was held at the Market House on Saturday 27th April. Despite the prospect of strong winds, we had a lovely day and the event was enjoyed by all who attended. The photo shows the early morning preparations well underway. In the left foreground we can see the vegetable table, which sold particularly well. We had run out of courgettes and tomatoes well before the end of the morning, and we ended the morning with near empty tables. There are clearly plenty of people in Cary growing vegetables! All the plants for sale are provided by members of the club, and were available at very reasonable prices! Hopefully, we helped spread a little gardening knowledge

along the way! The proceeds from the sale help run the Annual Show and other club activities.



Our May talk was by Christine Stones on water in the garden. Christine took us through a plethora of interesting facts and pictures concerning water in the garden. In May, members also enjoyed a discount evening at Castle Gardens.

Our June talk was on the Italian Gardens of Lazio, by Hilary Little. Hilary took us through 7 gardens in the Italian region of Lazio. These included Hadrian's famous Villa Adriana and the Villa d'Este at Tivoli. We will all be booking our next Italian Grand Tour!

In July we heard about how to make a butterfly garden, in a fascinating talk by Martin Young. Martin took us through how to plan and plant a butterfly garden, and the differences between the kinds of plants butterflies and bees enjoy. Martin also had some lovely plants to illustrate the talk from his own nursery in Weymouth, and these were available for members to buy and take home.

Members were invited to visit the Black Shed Cut Flower Farm in June. Many thanks to Jane for organising the trip, which was really enjoyed by those attending. A view of the flower field is shown here. We hope to invite Black Shed to talk at one of our meetings in 2020.

We held the Annual Show in August, and Erica says *'As I write this we are starting to have some of the first rain since late June! The lawns are brown which saves all that dull mowing but the borders and vegetables are also browned off, which is less good! In spite of this our Annual Show at Caryford Hall on Saturday August 3rd was wonderful with the most beautiful displays of fruit, flowers and vegetables, as well as cakes and jams, jumpers and quilts, paintings and photos, limericks and children's handiwork. It only works so well because of the huge efforts made by the growers and showers and bakers and makers, the lovely people who help with the lunches, the teas and bake splendid cakes and, of course, the raffle. The committee are the silent stars who just get on with things and iron out wrinkles and make it all such a success. I failed to thank anyone in the heat of the afternoon and would like to do so now – THANKS TO ALL!!!'* Details of all the cup winners (and more photos) are available on the website.



Two of our members opened their garden to fellow members on 11th August. Despite some heavy downpours it didn't dampen our enthusiasm. Those who attended were able to see over 300 dahlias in bloom. And, of course, there was plenty of opportunity to drink tea and eat delicious cakes baked by club members. The afternoon was another great perk of being a member of the club.

Our September speaker, Dr Anne Bebbington, gave us a fascinating and informative talk about the 'Fruits of Autumn'. The photographs that went with it were superb along with an amazing demonstration of how wild oat seeds plant themselves when wet! Seed dispersal is greatly helped by animals, especially long-haired dogs. Her spaniel's record seed catch was 2000! Those of us with pets don't find that hard to believe... but the patience required to actually count them!

Our October talk was by Rosemary le Grand. Her talk was entitled 'Spectacular South African Flora' which was with the usual beautiful slide show. We were amazed by how many of our garden plants were originally from the Cape. It gave us a visual final blast of heat before autumn gave way to the inevitable.



As we approached autumn, members posted photos of their produce – Turk's Turban squash and purple carrots

Our November event was the AGM, together with a seed swap and a quiz. There was a time-lapse movie showing the setting up of the Annual Show. We also circulated a questionnaire to solicit some feedback.

We finished the year with a talk by Castle Gardens on Winter Hanging Baskets & Tubs.

Details of 2020 events will shortly be advertised on your membership card, or the website