

Sedlescombe and District Garden Society

Newsletter No. 65 – July (2) 2020

Kent Federation of Horticultural Societies and SDGS 2020 Autumn Show - Cancelled

The following article from the KFHS speaks for your Committee as well and sums up the way we feel about holding a show at this time. So, as you read it, please bear in mind it covers both KFHS and SDGS.

'The coronavirus is causing us all problems, and it is a very traumatic time for many. The government's consistent guidelines to reduce the spread of Covid-19 and to keep people safe include, social distancing, limited contact with people not from your own household, and for people over the age of seventy to follow the government's lockdown and shielding rules.

Although the Autumn show is not for a number of weeks and lockdown rules at present continue to be eased, these particular guidelines make holding a "safe" show in a confined space (village hall or similar) with a high attendance of exhibitors, judges and visitors, quite simply, impossible. Consideration has also been given to the likelihood that confidence of both exhibitors and the public would probably not be sufficient enough to support a show at this difficult time. After much thought and deliberation, the committees have taken the very difficult decision to cancel our Autumn shows taking into consideration the health, safety, and wellbeing of all concerned. A duty of care to all involved is our overriding responsibility.'

SDGS will also cancel their event planned for October, however, it is possible that we can hold the AGM, even though we may be limited to 30 people and not provide any refreshments. Please remember that committee members are, as usual, at the end of the phone and also contactable by email should you have any questions. SDGS Committee hope that you all understand the situation at this time and will continue to give us your fullest and much appreciated support in 2021. Members may also like to know that Westfield Horticultural Society have also taken the same step to cancel their Autumn Show.

However, let's do the same as we did for the Spring Show, continue to grow your wonderful flowers, veg and pot plants and keep up the handicrafts as per the Schedule, and send us photos for a virtual show. If there are lots they will go on the web site, where they can be seen in larger form than we can put in the Newsletter. Those members who have paid their subscription this year will have a copy of the schedule, for others it can be found on the web site.

Christine George on Birds. No 3

Look out for.....**Greenfinch**



These big chunky finches, about the size of a House Sparrow, are not as common as they once were, but will still visit gardens if their favourite food, which is seed, is available. Stripy youngsters are now accompanying parents and will soon be on their own whilst the parents try to raise another brood. The male Greenfinch is a smart looking bird, with a grey and olive-green head, fairly plain yellow-olive chest and belly, plus a striking yellow patch on his wings and tail. The female is brown-olive, a little streakier and the yellow wing patch is barely noticeable. The Juvenile is duller and initially streaky all over. A Greenfinch's bill is large and thick for dealing with seeds.

Hardy geraniums are fantastic plants for the garden. They are tough and with the range of different varieties available, there will be at least one to cope with virtually any garden situation, enabling you to have several varieties dotted around the garden. They flower for a long period, attracting bees, butterflies and other insects, plus their seeds are large enough to tempt several species of birds including Greenfinches and Bullfinches. At this time of year, just after flowering, why not leave some of your plants to develop ripe seed to attract birds (like the young Greenfinch in the picture) and cut others down to a couple of inches. These should then re-grow and give you a second flush of flowers, often until the first frosts, and if left untrimmed, will provide seed for over the winter.



Borage seed is another favourite with Greenfinch. Prior to the production of seed, the bright blue flowers will liven up summer drinks and the cucumber flavoured leaves are good in salads and dips. Borage is an annual. It is too late now to plant for this year, but why not grow some next year.

Greenfinch also enjoy the seeds from fleshy fruit like haws, rosehips, yew berries and blackberries. Largely as a result of a bird disease (Trichomoniasis) but with many other factors also playing their part, this species has declined by nearly 60% in 10 years. A reduction in weed seeds in the wider countryside has led to the seeds in your garden, both natural and provided, being increasingly important. However, if you do provide artificial food, then please remember to wash your feeders and any bird baths regularly to avoid disease spreading

A Chilli Treat

Earlier this year John Tunstall offered Lemon Drop Chilli plants for members to grow on for seed next year to be distributed more widely as part of Reg Glew's initiative. The following is some information that may be interesting for those growing these pretty plants now or in the future. (We hope to have seed available later in the year).



The pictured Lemon Drop Chilli, *Capsicum baccatum*, also known as Aji or Hot Lemon, was sown in the spring of 2019 and first cropped in the autumn of that year. Severely pruned following harvest it has since re-grown well setting fruit again in April of this year. Throughout its life the chilli plant has stood on a south west facing window sill. Whether it will survive a third season remains to be seen.

Yellow Drop is a particularly tasteful, fairly hot chilli originating in Peru and has a lovely citrus flavor. Its Scoville heat rating is between 30,000 - 50,000 SHU's. The plant is an excellent example of what can be achieved with an indoor kitchen garden. Remember to handle chillies with care and, if necessary, wear disposable gloves when removing seeds.

This year during the lockdown the garden has become a very special place for many of us fortunate enough to have one. The garden at the Manse has only been in existence for three years, so it is evolving almost weekly. We are currently working on a children's garden which will complete the project, more details to follow. The Acers have all been grown by us over many years from 'babies' to what they are now. They give great pleasure to all that see them with their various colours, habits and growing styles.

A Delightful Return to the Manse Garden

From Peter and Marie Jackson

Many members will probably remember the making of this lovely garden, serialised in previous Newsletters.



The Coach Trip 2020.

Fellow Members

Unfortunately, I have to inform you that I have cancelled the coach trip to Wisley for this year. The coach seating would not be conducive to guidance for safe seating in these times. I hope we can have our trip to Wisley next year. In the meantime, if we can organise a self drive trip to an interesting garden, I will let you know.

Good Gardening Rod



Getting to Grips with a New Garden (or perhaps this should just be entitled 'Getting to Grips with Gardening!')

My new house in Bexhill has a small front and slightly larger back garden. Both are densely packed with shrubs, several of which I am unfamiliar with. There are also 4 clematis, which, between them, seem to encompass all the different types and I am confused about the different pruning methods recommended.

And the dead-heading! The borders are densely packed with what I hope I've correctly identified as Cerinthe. They looked lovely until a few weeks ago, but now they all need cutting back. There is even a small pond which I've never had in my life before. I was glad to see in your July tips that I should be removing blanket weed of which there seems to be a lot. Sadly, the little Japanese Maple at the side of the pond appears to be dying. Don't know why. Neighbours come up to me and tell me what a great gardener the former owner was. Ah well, I shall just have to try and rise to the challenge! Pauline Williams

Your Challenge – who can help Pauline with advice on clematis pruning and Japanese Maples?

Reply to the Editor please or straight to Pauline if you are acquainted