

# Sedlescombe and District Garden Society

Newsletter No. 66 – August (1) 2020

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Many members will remember Ken Ferguson who sadly died earlier this year in France. The Society's thoughts and good wishes are with his family. Ken had been a member, our President and subsequently an Honorary member for many, many years. He always encouraged his young family to be involved in gardening and to enter shows and, to encourage others to do the same he provided the Ferguson Cup, an award for families to enter together. It would be nice to have some competition for this cup next year in his memory. Details from the Secretary – [sdgs.secretary@gmail.com](mailto:sdgs.secretary@gmail.com). Editor

## As I promised I am continuing the articles that Chris sent me. Your President writes. 5

This series will tend to identify plants that were very common, but seemed to have dropped out of the commercial markets, probably due to the cost of producing them for the market and also the changing type of garden fashions that now prevail. This time, it's the Orchid Cacti, a group of plants that have been extensively hybridised but will not be seen in Garden Centres as the flowers last barely a day. However, in times past they were seen frequently as house plants.

I really get annoyed when plants are described with the wrong title. These plants are not orchids, the flower is nothing like an orchid, and it is doubtful whether they can be classed cacti! The generic name is *Phyllocacti*.

For most of the year the plants resemble a bunch of green "sticks". Sometimes the stalks are flattened to give the appearance of leaves, but the true leaves have been reduced to a tuft of wispy washy spines/hairs. The plants can stand neglect and one can forget about them as one frequently does. They have been hybridised, but red seems to be the predominant colour. The real prize however is the white one. In late spring, however, from what can be described as a jumbled mass of twigs the flower buds emerge and develop at great speed. Perhaps a couple of weeks are all that is needed. The flower opens rapidly in the evening and barely lasts a day and the house is pervaded with a delightful delicate perfume. By midday, however, it will have started to droop. The flower buds develop in waves for a week or so and then the plant gives up and resumes its state of a bunch of green "twigs" again until the next season.

The only way of obtaining one is from a specialist nursery. Next time, it is "The Queen of the Nights" turn!.



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Beautiful Summer roses, variety Ice Cream, picked from the garden, sent in by Brenda Anson who says that the beauty of them in a vase makes up for the lack of scent.



*After all the healthy recipes for vegetables that have appeared in the Newsletters how about a bit of indulgence.*

## Chocolate Chilli Cookies

*Taken from SDGS Publication – Chilli Recipes*

This easy recipe makes delicious chocolate cookies with the chilli giving them a real boost. They show how well chocolate and chilli go together. Makes about 12 cookies.

### Ingredients

40 g cocoa powder, 1/4 tsp Chilli powder (or to taste) 150 g flour, 1/4 tsp Salt, 160 g Butter, softened, 100 g + 2 tbsp White sugar ,1 Egg, 2 tsp Cinnamon,

### Method

- Pre heat oven to 350°F, 180c 170 fan, Gas Mark 4.
- Sift the cocoa, chilli powder, salt and flour together.
- Beat the butter for one minute with electric mixer and then add 100g sugar. Beat for three minutes, scraping down the sides of the bowl as you go.
- Add the egg and beat for another minute. Stir in the flour mixture.
- Chill the dough in the refrigerator for 45 minutes.
- Use rounded tablespoons to drop dough on to non-greased cookie sheets.
- Bake for six minutes. Turn cookies over and bake for a further five minutes.
- Allow to cool for ten minutes and sprinkle the remaining sugar and the cinnamon over the cookies.



## What to do in August (1)



1. Cut hedges in August so that new growth can harden off ready for the winter. Continue to weed under the hedge.
2. Continue dead-heading and dealing with pests. Cut sweet peas regularly to prevent seed heads forming (unless you are saving seed)
3. Take cuttings of evergreen shrubs. Select this seasons growth, ideally non-flowering stems 4 to 6 ins with firm wood at the base and softer growth at the tip. Prune wispy, green, new shoots of wisteria to 5 or 6 leaves.
4. Camelia and Rhododendrons need much water now to produce buds for next year.
5. Pick early apples and pears whilst slightly under ripe because they retain their best flavour for a short time. Test for near ripeness by lifting fruit and twisting gently – when ready it parts easily from the spur. Summer prune restricted forms of apples and pears. Instructions in next Newsletter 67. Also watch out for fungal disease on apples, pears and plums and remove affected fruit to reduce the spread.
6. Cut out fruited shoots of loganberries and tie in new shoots. Protect ripening grapes with glass or polythene. Support heavily laden plum or damson trees.
7. Check sweetcorn for ripeness. Pick beans regularly to ensure long cropping.
8. Sow spring cabbage, brussels sprouts and lettuce (for early winter use).
- 9 For those having a meadow or wishing to create one, now is the time to purchase fresh yellow rattle seeds. This useful little plant supresses the growth of grass species allowing other flowering plants to thrive. Fresh seed is short-lived and should be sown in late summer/early autumn.

