

Sedlescombe and District Garden Society

Newsletter No. 71 – October (2) 2020

Look out for.... **Redwings**



Redwings are now starting to arrive in our area from Scandinavia, Eastern Europe or even Russia. For those with good hearing, the high pitched Tseep of migrating Redwing on a clear calm night is a familiar sound of Autumn.

For many of us however, the first sign of these winter arrivals is of a flock of colourful thrushes gorging themselves on berries in our gardens.

Slightly smaller than a Song thrush with a distinctive white eye-stripe and, as their name suggests, – a red under-wing,

they tend to go around in small flocks and will brighten up any autumn or winter's day. Red berries are by far the most desirable food, with Hawthorn, Cotoneaster, Pyracantha, Holly and Rowan all being firm favourites. These birds have flown hundreds, or even thousands, of miles to reach us, escaping bad weather and food shortages on their breeding grounds further north and east. To survive, they need to find plentiful supplies of sugar rich berries and our gardens, parks and hedgerows are a good place to start. Later on, in the winter, when all the berries have gone, they will move on, perhaps to France or Spain or turn to foraging for invertebrates on pasture land.

As spring comes, small flocks will join up and then they will be off again, back north and east to breed. There is a very small breeding population in Scotland but at present it is largely unknown where these birds spend the winter. Redwing also breed in Iceland and the Faroe Islands. These birds, which are generally bigger and darker than the eastern ones, tend to winter in the north-west of the UK. Interestingly, the Redwings you see in your garden this winter could easily be spending next winter in Greece.

The more red berries you have in your garden, (birds tend not to like yellow, or white unless they are desperate), the better your chances of seeing these and many other winter visitors. Berries really can be a lifesaver for birds, perhaps see if you can make space for another red cotoneaster somewhere and in addition, the bees in spring will also love you!

Christine George

Chris Hone's article last issue was different and maybe confusing for some but John Tunstall has sent a link to a source (see below) which explains it in more detail for those who may interested.

<https://www.huntbotanical.org/admin/uploads/11hibd-huntia-2-pp180-184.pdf>

Crossword No. 4 Answer

B	E	T	U	L	A	N	A	N	A	S	T	E	T
A	H	A	U	O	A	E	R						
R	E	E	D		R	I	N	G	F	E	N	C	E
K	S	B	T	S	F	O	S						
L	A	D	Y	M	U	C	K	O	W	N	U	P	
T	U			R	I	R						A	
H	E	R	B	A	G	E	D	R	E	D	G	E	S
A	U	N						S	A	S			
L	I	S	T	I	N	G	C	O	T	E	R	I	E
I			M	R	A						D	R	
C	O	P	R	A	A	N	T	E	A	T	E	R	
T	I	T	Z	A	S	N	B						
R	A	P	T	O	R	I	A	L	P	R	I	D	E
U	E	R	E	P	I	A	D						
M	O	S	S	B	R	O	A	D	C	A	S	T	S



Another poser- what plant has these pretty flowers-answer next time

DIVIDE YOUR PERENNIALS

Now is a great time to divide perennials. The soil is still warm, and the plants won't dry from drought. I've divided a good number recently. Just dig them up, cut them into sections, depending on the size of the plant. A lot can be divided by use of a spade and welly power. Others like agapanthus, with very intense roots, need to be sawn into pieces (really, and it does work!)

Then just replant as you wish, in a similar site (sunny/shade as before). Add some fresh compost to help them get going. Plants always look nice in sets of three.

Plants where this has worked well for me: agapanthus, phlox, golden rod, kniphofia, crocosmia, rudbeckia, euphorbia (if you must, not a favourite of mine, and the sap can cause a rash), sedums, and hemerocallis. Hostas are better divided in spring.

Separate tip re crocosmia: these look lovely when threaded in a twisting line through a long bed.

Also, look for self-sown foxgloves, verbena bonariensis, verbascum, and forget-me-not plants. Lift and move these now to where you prefer them to be.

Chris Stovold

More Dahlia advice and tips next time



What to do in October (2)



1. Lifting and dividing large clumps of summer flowering, herbaceous perennials (see above) every few years will ensure healthy, vigorous plants and you will have lots more plants – maybe you would be willing to donate the spares to next year's plant sale? Now is also the time to lift bulbs and corms that won't withstand a winter in cold areas or heavy soils.
2. Continue to check fast growing tree ties to prevent constriction.
3. If you grow blackberries or hybrid fruit such as tayberries or loganberries, it is advisable to prune them now. Most produce fruit on the previous seasons growth so prune off fruited canes and tie in the new canes
4. Broad beans can be sown towards the end of October. Hardier cultivars will overwinter to produce an early crop next year. This early crop often avoids the dreaded blackfly.
5. Spring Cabbages can be planted out when they have 5 or 6 true leaves. Plant with the lowest leaves at ground level and water well.
6. Mound up soil around the base of Brussels Sprouts to provide support and prevent the roots being disturbed in windy weather.
7. Good garden hygiene helps stop diseases such as blackspot on roses and scab on apples being carried into the next year. Remove affected leaves and dispose of them but not in compost
8. Plant nectar rich spring flowering bulbs and corms such as Snowdrop, winter Aconite or crocus to provide food for pollinators.
9. Encouraging birds into your garden can help with pest control so you may like to have a range of feeders and a bird bath if you don't already have them. Windfall fruit can be cut up and put on a bird table. Reading our excellent articles on birds by Christine George will also give valuable advice on plants etc. to keep birds happy in your garden.