

Sedlescombe and District Garden Society

Newsletter No. 62 – June (2) 2020

Your President writes. 3



This series will tend to identify plants that were very common, but have 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.

Take yourself back some 30 years ago before the days of the *Phalaenopsis* (Moth Orchid). The moth orchid came to the fore as the trade soon discovered the merits of such a plant as it could be propagated easily with meristem culture and no doubt with some degree of automation, and its flowers were very showy and would last for months. They could also be retailed at £5 in the supermarkets, so cheap were they to cultivate.

However, before that, the orchid of choice was the *Cymbidium*. This is a larger untidy plant with tufts of leaves, two to three feet high emerging out of a series of pseudobulbs. Its merits were that it produced a series of flower spikes with 20 or so individual flowers which will last for a month or so. Not as long as the *Phalaenopsis* though. These, the growers would sell singularly leaving a couple of flower spikes on the plant which they would sell for about £30. It was quite a money spinner, but the down side was that they needed labour intensive cultivation. The plants would stand outside in a shady spot for the summer, but needed to be brought into the green house in November. The plants needed warm days and cold nights to trigger them into flowering which they did in January to February. Valentine's day comes to mind and there used to be a multitude of pink individual flowers sold. I remember buying some spent plants at Blackbrooks Garden Centre at about £5 each as nobody wanted them after they finished flowering. However this was a bargain as they could be bought in to flowering the following winter (that's if you wanted a *Cymbidium*), and it was exciting to see which colour they were going to be. Re-potting was a bit of a chore as they had extensive roots and they needed a special compost of tree bark, sphagnum moss and peat. They originally grew in trees; the roots are really to gather moisture from the air. A trait that lots of the non-terrestrial orchids share. They grow quite vigorously so in no time at all, you need to repot them and divide them. I keep mine in the greenhouse during the winter, relatively moisture free, and then they live outdoors for the summer and then they go back in the greenhouse. I have a room heater connected to a house thermostat so I aim for a minimum temperature of 5C. When one repots them which you need to do after a few years, one can divide them so, in next to no time, one has quite a lot. Mine must number about 20 now. Much too many though one has one's favourites. Lets hope if we have our Orchid speaker again, she will cover the cultivation of the *Cymbidium*.

If anybody would like to try and grow one, I am willing to lever off a few pseudobulbs. Well worth the effort and they can give pleasure for a long time. Chris Hone.



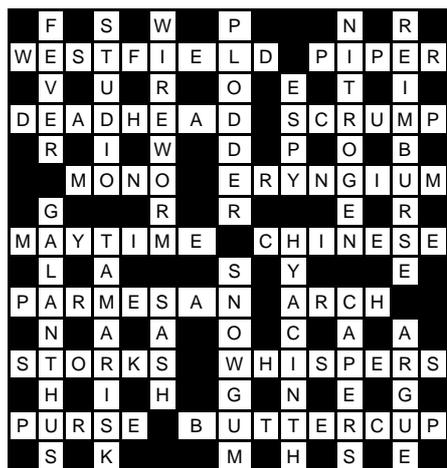
Our rainbow colour this issue is Blue.

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First a Plumbago and the others are from Celia Burge's garden. The bluebells are just lovely and a reminder of what has just passed.



For those who haven't been into Nextdoor Sedlescombe recently, I advise you to read what Nigel Ford has to say. For those not signed up to Nextdoor, the scammers are out again, this time phoning, saying that you are a contact for the disease, asking for loads of personal details and telling you that a test will cost £50. It is rubbish of course, the NHS don't contact anyone in this way, so just put the phone down. Stay Alert in more ways than one.



The Gardening Doctor

Received from Chris Elmes

Do you suffer from <i>Plumbago</i>	And <i>Corpus capitosa</i>
Is your back a little sore?	Has played havoc with your toes.
Or perhaps it's <i>Pyracanthus</i>	How's your <i>Viburnum tinus</i> ?
Which you caught in Singapore?	Have you lost your sense of smell?
You've a nasty little <i>Hosta</i>	Use a <i>Syringa reflexa</i>
Which I think I'll have to lance	That should help to keep it well.
And I notice a <i>Spirea</i>	I'm afraid your <i>Macrocarpus</i>
Has been leading you a dance!	Isn't really up to scratch
Are you getting forgetful?	And do avoid <i>Nigella</i>
Is <i>Nemesia</i> the cause?	It's a nasty thing to catch!
Does your <i>Antirrhinum</i> pain you	Still, I think you're doing nicely
When you're walking out of doors?	Watch the <i>Quercus</i> in your knees
You've had <i>Skimmia rubella</i>	Take your <i>Berberis</i> twice nightly
I can see that by your nose	Cheerio! Next patient please!

Our Young Gardeners Helping Hands Required

The Society has had an excellent past record of promoting an interest in plants and natural history among the younger generation largely through its active involvement with the School Garden Club and an appointment of a Young Gardeners Co-ordinator. Sadly, over the years, the school club discontinued and we have failed thus far to find a replacement Co-ordinator. Consequently, there has been a virtual absence of young gardener activities within the Society. The seriousness of this loss of garden-based learning for the young is recognised, especially now in view of the high possibility of future climate change and loss of biodiversity endangering plant culture and food production. A progressive garden society has an important part to play, even an obligation, to ensure that combined gardening wisdom of the membership is passed on to a younger generation through its activities.

There must be many ways to achieve this goal and we ask if there are any members of the Society, with imagination and a bit of drive, who would be willing to take up a challenge to encourage young people in gardening pursuits? We would like someone to take advantage of the search for knowledge that the young undoubtedly have and to find ways that we can adjust our events to fully include them. The co-ordinator could be an individual or maybe a small team of 2 or 3 members. We do not expect you to be a member of the Committee but liaison with the committee would be required. Please contact the Secretary (01424 870455 or return e-mail) for further details.

Advert by John Tunstall and the Editor

Seed Collection Update

Dear Members

One of our committee members, Chris Stovold, and I have passed quite a few packets of vegetable and flower seeds over to Reg Glew recently. As you may remember Reg is the garden society seed co-ordinator. He would be pleased to hear from you if you wish to donate spare seeds, or exchange your seeds. You can also purchase seeds for a minimal amount if you wish. Should you need to contact Reg please phone him on 01424-870258, and he will be pleased to help. Recently one of our members John Tunstall has been kind enough to donate some plants to the society. I have kept some of the tomato plants to carry out a tomato trial. The idea is to collect seeds later on in the year, and pass them on to members if successful. I must admit the majority of the plants I am not familiar with, so I await the results of the trial with a certain amount of apprehension and optimism. There are fourteen varieties to grow on and keep an eye on, I just hope that the blight keeps its distance and I have many seeds to pass on.

Stay well and good gardening. Rod.



Recipes this issue are for New Potatoes. The pictures are not appropriate but much sunnier than a pile of potatoes. The photos are from my daughter's garden.

Potatoes – a basic in our diet that often is overlooked but good, fresh English new potatoes straight out of the ground can be so delicious. Even plain -boiled or steamed -with loads of butter, they lift a meal. Then leftovers can be sauted and are great with a salad or a steak (or both) and they make a very good potato salad, keep it simple and allow the potato flavour to come through. Or make it more substantial with chopped parsley and chives and quartered hard boiled eggs and whatever dressing suits you – mayonnaise, salad cream or something more elaborate – see below



Dressing for warm potato and egg salad

Melt 2ozs (60gr) butter in a double saucepan, stir in 8ozs (225gr) soured cream, then 2 lightly beaten eggs, 1tbsp white wine vinegar, salt and pepper and 1tbsp sugar (optional). Stir gently until sauce thickens but is not stiff.

For those that may like to try something different, this a Spanish recipe, for which salad potatoes can also be used.

Chargrilled pork escalopes with potatoes in tomato and cheese sauce, should feed 4 to 5

2lb small new potatoes

Olive oil

1 onion, chopped finely

2 or 3 chillis chopped (how many and whether you leave the seeds in are a matter of choice)

6 ozs passata or similar

1lb can of tomatoes, drained but keep the juice

1teaspoon of chilli powder (again adjusted to choice and may not be necessary if you leave seeds in whole chillis)

2ozs butter

4 or 5 pork escalopes

4 or 5 slices Mozzarella cheese

Boil or steam potatoes until tender. Meanwhile, heat a little oil and fry onions and chillis until soft, add passata, juice from the can of tomatoes and chilli powder, if using, and reduce to a coating consistency. Drain potatoes and add to tomato mixture with the canned tomato pieces, bring to the boil, but don't break up the tomato too much, and keep warm. Chargrill the escalopes for 4/5 minutes each side, arrange on individual plates, spoon over potato and tomato sauce and top with a slice of mozzarella. Flash under the grill until cheese starts to melt. Garnish with basil and serve.