

# Sedlescombe and District Garden Society

Newsletter No. 59 – May (2) 2020

Chris Hone, your President writes.

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. I am going to start with:

## 1. *Jasmine Polyanthum*

This plant used to be very common in the garden centres where it was sold as a pot plant with the stems twining around a specially prepared hoop. It has a very strong perfume and will out do hyacinths. I'm sure its demise came as it was labour intensive and its production couldn't be mechanised.

The plant originated from China and is a climbing species of up to 10 feet or so. It will only thrive outdoors in the most sheltered spaces, so best grown in a greenhouse or garden room, especially if you have an actual soil border. It's certainly worth trying.

Liberated from its pot and planted in the ground it will rapidly twine upwards and when it has got to a sufficient height, the side shoots develop which form the flowering spurs for next year. The white flowers are intensely fragrant to the point of being overpowering and in the greenhouse it will flower about April time. After flowering is the time to prune and this is easily done with a pair of shears.

It is easy to propagate as it does produce a profusion of shoots, some of which will root from the leaf nodes if near a suitable medium. If you have such a garden room it is well worth a try. I'm sure it will grow in a large pot in the greenhouse, but with this mode of culture, one must be careful to tend to its watering needs. If anybody would like to try it, I will willingly pass on a cutting. I enclose a couple of commercial pictures plus one of mine in the garden room. I am sure you will remember seeing these in garden centres.

Chris Hone.



Chris's own jasmine

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Our rainbow colour this issue is Orange and I have cribbed the flowers (left) from the following 'feel good' article by Pauline and Colin Raymond

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We thoroughly enjoy growing as many vegetables as we can. There's nothing like being able to dig your own potatoes or pick your own runner beans over a long season. But it's not veg' that I want to tell you about, it's a flower. Not an unusual or rare one but the ordinary African Marigold. The variety is called "Crackerjack" and its bright yellow and orange pom-pom flowers provide a wonderfully-bright splash of colour, even on dull days. All summer long they flower and, last into October if you are lucky.

As well as the colour and smell of these stately flowers, there is also another reason for us liking the plant. It brings back fond memories of a happy and enjoyable visit to Nepal 18 years ago in 2002 at the time of Diwali, Festival of Lights. It was marigold garlands that were placed around our necks on arrival at the noisy and vibrant capital of Kathmandu. We so wanted to retain the two we received and tried to press them between paper, but they just went mouldy. A few days later we started on a 10-day trek on the Annapurna Trail and were to see marigolds, both African and French, growing everywhere. But as we reached the few special days of the Festival, we saw girls sitting making marigold garlands and soon everything was dressed in them for the celebrations – brothers, sisters, houses, cows, cats, dogs, bridges – and us. Children would come out to put garlands around the trekkers' necks which was lovely. A special time which we can relive each year by growing a few of this easy annual in our back garden in Sedlescombe. Pauline and Colin Raymond

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This fun and informative list has been written by Chris Stovold, Committee member and professional gardener.

## COMPANION PLANTING

**Tagetes** great for **root crops** and **tomatoes**

**Mint** makes a barrier against slugs and torn up pieces of mint makes ants disappear

**Rosemary** and **chives** protect against carrot fly

**Borage** provides potassium and calcium, so plant near **strawberry** beds

**Parsley** is good against carrot fly; **run to seed** it attracts hoverflies, which eat aphids

**Broad beans** planted near **potatoes** inhibit each other's pests

Plant **artemesia** or **hyssop** to repel **cabbage white butterflies**

**Nasturtiums** are preferred by pests rather than brassicas

**Calendula** attracts lacewings, hoverflies, and ladybirds, which lay eggs on colonies of aphids

**Early flowering salvias** – *algeriensis* and *fruticosa* – are excellent in attracting **bumble bees**, which are better pollinators than honeybees

**Dwarf beans, beetroot, and potatoes** planted in adjacent rows help each other

**Basil** helps **aubergines** and keeps whitefly off tomatoes

Plant **cucumbers** close by **runner beans** – they help each other

Plant **lettuce** between **Brussels sprouts** when in their final spacings (30" apart)

**Tagetes minula** helps clear **ground elder, couch grass and bindweed**. The roots give out a chemical that is toxic to them.

**Chive tea** clears downy mildew. Bunch of **chives** in a container, pour on a pint of hot water; leave to go cold, strain, and make up two pints. Spray affected plants.

**Summer savory** deters blackfly from **broad beans**

**Thyme** keeps cabbage root fly off.

For **butterflies**, the best plants are: **buddleia, alyssum, aubretia, catmint, golden rod, honesty, lavender, mauve Michaelmas daisies, sweet William, thrift, valerian and sedum spectabile**. **Single varieties** rather than doubles. Plus **Erysimum linifolium 'Bowles Mauve.'**

For **bumble bees**, **borage** is excellent.

### Don't grow these near to each other:

Cucumber and sage

Basil and rue

Carrots and dill

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Chris Stovold's Companion Planting above shows a very good reason to plant herbs in your garden. Another very good reason is that you can eat them and use them to lift a simple meal into something more luxurious. So this week I am not writing a recipe but reminding you of the varied use of your herbs, apart from putting them in various meals. Herbs can be made into teas and tisanes – I used to give my children basil tea to help prevent travel sickness – I'm not sure whether it worked or whether they were determined not to be sick so I wouldn't give them any more. But, of course, herbs have been used medicinally for millennia including for soothing creams and lotions and hair rinses to improve appearance. (Vosene shampoo always contained rosemary essences.) They have been used for dyes and disinfectant and, of course, for embalming. So, your small herb bed has a rich history. I am not sure how many of you will have a go at embalming but that doesn't stop you using your herbs to enliven your cooking. Many of you will still make mint sauce and parsley sauce, not so fashionable these days, but great basic additions to meals. Basil and tomato are another classic combination but have you taken a large selection of herbs from your patch, chopped them finely and thrown them into a green salad or into a dressing for a green salad, added chervil to leek and potato or cauliflower soup or even made herb soups – chervil, coriander, tarragon, nettle or parsley. Herbs can be used for every part of meals, in soup, in dishes of meat, fish, vegetables, salads, sauces, desserts and ices, biscuits and cakes, drinks, preserves, oils and vinegars. And finally, they attract all sorts of insects and bees and just smell nice. This is a much bigger subject than I have touched on here but maybe it can be added to as the months go by. Editor

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*Answer from last week's picture. A woodpecker pecks at 20 pecks per second*

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If any of our readers have any gardening questions, please feel free to send them to the Editor ([sdgs.secretary@gmail.com](mailto:sdgs.secretary@gmail.com)) and we will endeavour to find an answer for you. Questions and answers will be printed in future issues.  
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### What to do in May



*This is a selection of things to be done in your garden during May. More next time. Information is from the RHS.*

1. Hoe regularly, preferably on a sunny day so that weed seedlings shrivel in the sun.
2. Feed your lawn. If you do it just before rain is expected you will not have to water in.
3. It is still possible for frosts until the end of May so protect tender plants at night.
4. Thin out seedlings, such as beetroot, when they have grown their first true leaves.
5. Prune rosemary. Hard pruning can be done but avoid cutting into old bare wood.
6. Earth up potatoes when stems are about 9 ins high.
7. Try to avoid wide fluctuations of heat in your greenhouse, cool down in the day by opening vents, damping down and shading.
8. Check regularly for aphids and control early.
9. Keep feeding the birds but avoid large food like peanuts, chunks of fat and bread that could choke nestlings.