

Sedlescombe and District Garden Society

Newsletter No. 61 – June (1) 2020

Dear Readers. We have a new mini-series starting this issue on garden birds, in particular what to look out for as the year progresses and tips on growing to encourage nesting and feeding. These articles will intersperse with Chris Hone's on unusual plants. The writer is Christine George, who is one of our committee members and her first article is on young robins.

I have been interested in birds since being a teenager. About 25 years ago I started to be involved with bird monitoring surveys for the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) and I currently undertake a wide variety of bird surveys both in the garden and the wider countryside. Despite the long training required, bird ringing fascinated me and I have progressed to being a fully qualified bird ringer.

Look out for.....**Young Robins.**



At this time of year birds born this spring are starting to appear in the garden. We tend to think of Robins as having red breasts but youngsters look quite different. When they first fledge, they can hardly fly and skulk around in the undergrowth wanting two things, food and not to be noticed by anything or anyone except their parents. Gradually they grow bolder and stronger and start to come out of hiding. Robins are very territorial and the lack of red on the breast of the youngster is

thought to help with both camouflage and avoiding the aggression of other Robins. The parents will feed the young for about three weeks after they leave the nest and then the youngsters are on their own. Robins will often have two or three broods each year, so once the first young are off their hands, many adult Robins will start nesting again. As the summer progresses young Robins will start to develop their red breast and then be ready to fight for a territory.

Ivy, particularly thick Ivy is a superb all round plant for the garden attracting a variety of wildlife throughout the year. Robins will often choose to nest low down in Ivy, particularly for their early nests. Many other birds will also nest in Ivy. So, please, - don't cut back your Ivy in spring or summer, be patient and enjoy the visitors it attracts.

Christine George



Our rainbow colour this issue is Green.

This time a marvellous entry to a spring show, by Nicholas Wilde.

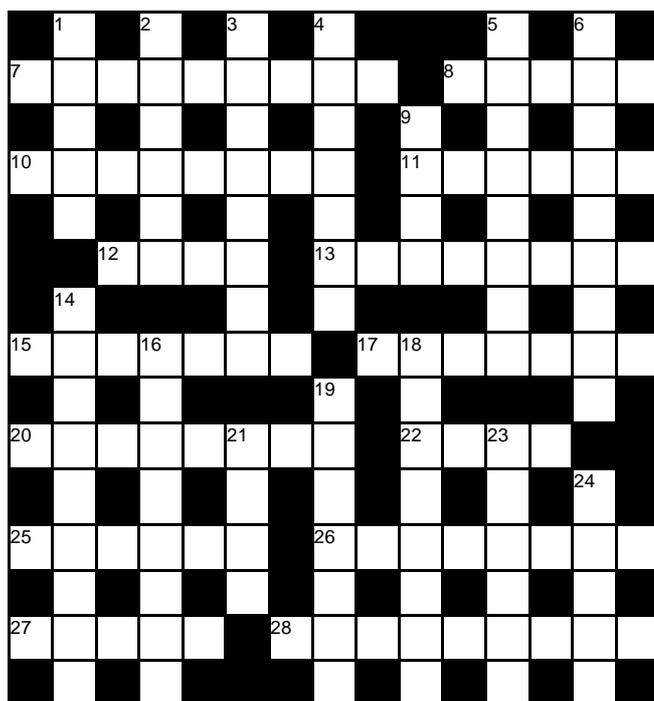
Landress, not very common but it looks delicious, grown by John Tunstall and a pot of basil, which won a 1st prize for the Editor

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In the last issue, Chris Stovold gave an interesting list of good gardening books to read. I have no doubt that many of you have favourite gardening reads, apart from RHS guides and Hessayon. Please share your choices with a few words about each book and maybe we can have this as an occasional feature. As usual please send to sdgs.secretary@gmail.com or phone 870455.

As the National Garden Scheme open gardens are not happening at present, you may like to check out their website (www.ngs.org.uk/virtual-gardens) as they are producing videos of some the gardens that would have opened.

Crossword No 2



These crosswords were compiled some years ago by Ian Davison for the Society's magazine The Trug. Ian's wife has kindly allowed us to reproduce them and we make no apology for using them again as they are very good. Answer next time.

Across

- 7 But it's S.E. for this near-neighbour! (9)
- 8 May be sand, horn or pied (5)
- 10 Rhyming couplet to encourage more flowering (8)
- 11 Target apples and pears (6)
- 12 Moon alone (4)
- 13 Sea-holly (8)
- 15 Season for circling pole (7)
- 17 Cabbage, gooseberry or lantern or game with 26 ac. (7)
- 20 Hard cheese (8)
- 22 Principle garden feature (4)
- 25 Baby birds! (6)
- 26 Passes secrets covertly (8)
- 27 Shepherd's money bag? (5)
- 28 Wild flower updated to margetub maybe? (9)

Down

- 1 Before few could recognise chrysanthemum (5)
- 2 Outside loses end to make room (8)
- 3 Does larva of click beetle send message to early bird? (8)
- 4 Gray's homeward-bound weary ploughman? (7)
- 5 Four-fifths of air (8)
- 6 Pay back (9)
- 9 Spot E.007? (4)
- 14 Snowdrops (9)
- 16 Mark it as a coastal shrub (8)
- 18 Spring bulb Apollo's victim (8)
- 19 Mugs won over for eucalyptus (7)
- 21 Cumberbund (4)
- 23 Used as sauce for mutton and lambs' antics! (6)
- 24 Urge a change to dispute (5)



Following on from the heavy and consistent rainfall of the winter, the spring and early summer has been dry. This raises the question of whether to water or not and over the years there have been many arguments for and against. A few reminders may help. Plant roots are hydrotropic and will seek water from deep in the soil. An experimental station in the 1960's found that, providing lettuce roots could force their way through the soil, the roots at eight weeks

went down nearly 4 feet. So, providing there is a water table, roots will find it. A little sprinkle now and then is harmful as it attracts roots to the surface and if you go away on holiday you could come back to a disaster. (However, this argument could be challenged at present as no-one is going anywhere it seems for this summer!) The drier the soil, the more difficult it is to wet again. Fine droplet sizes will penetrate better and quicker than flooding the soil. We all know that steady, light rain is better than a downpour. Although water is absorbed through leaves, this will gradually weaken the root system so it is better to keep hoses low and thoroughly water the root area.

The next vegetable from your garden may be **BROAD BEANS** (French, feves Italian fava beans), however, I think they must be like Marmite, love them or hate them. I love them, even at their simplest in a parsley sauce with gammon. It is nearly as good as leeks in cheese sauce. The Italian recipe last time for asparagus also had broad beans in it but I make no apology for more broad bean recipes. If in doubt add bacon to your broad beans— the two are a match made in heaven or cheese if you prefer vegetarian food. Whether you skin the shelled beans is a matter of choice and the size and age of the beans.

Broad bean soup. *To serve 4 as a starter Blending half the soup gives a creamy soup but with bite.* Simmer 8ozs broad beans, 8ozs of peas and a large peeled and chopped onion in a mixture of half a pint of vegetable stock (Marigold Bouillon would be good) and quarter pint of milk for about 20 mins. Blend half the soup then add to the rest. Season to taste, re-heat gently and serve hot garnished with cooked, chopped bacon.

Broad Bean Bake Serves 2 as a main meal. Savory is a herb used traditionally to flavour broad beans so it is worth seeking it out if you can but if not just use the other herbs.

1.5lbs fresh broad beans or 8ozs frozen
2 medium carrots, cut thinly at an angle
2 medium parsnips, cut into small chunks
1oz butter
1oz flour (any you prefer)
Half pint milk
2 tspn chopped mixed herbs -savory, thyme,chives, parsley
1 tsp prepared English mustard
Salt and pepper
Topping
2 tspn porridge oats
2ozs cheese, grated
1oz chopped mixed nuts

Cook vegetables in salted water for 10 to 15 mins until tender. Frozen beans will only need 5 mins.
Melt butter in a pan. Add flour and mix well. Add milk and cook, stirring continuously until thickened.
Stir in herbs and mustard and cook 2 mins. Season to taste, add vegetables and cook for 2 to 3 mins.
Pour into one or 2 dishes
Mix oats, cheese and nuts together, sprinkle on top of the vegetable mixture, brown for 2 to 3 mins under a hot grill.



What to do in June



June should be the time when gardeners can relax and enjoy the warm weather but it is also the time to water and weed.

1. Continue to weed regularly but, if you can, leave a few weeds to provide food for butterflies and other insects. Water patio pots and containers once a day. Water the whole garden in dry spells (see above item on watering)
2. Early potatoes and glasshouse tomatoes will be starting to crop this month. Tomatoes need feeding, especially in growbags. Once the bottom truss is set, feed with high-potash-feed for a start; if the tops start to look pale and trusses smaller switch to a general feed with magnesium – little and often being the rule. Shade all plants under glass. Remove tips from cucumber plants when seven leaves have formed and give a weekly feed of liquid manure.
3. Watch for bugs and treat with insecticides as necessary, especially on broad beans and fruit.
4. Tie up and/or stake tall plants. Tie in new stems of climbing and rambling roses. Remove dead heads and patio pot plants past their best.
5. Heathers Use young shoots of Erica carnea as cuttings and trim back remaining growth.
6. Fruit. Thin fruits if crop is heavy but remember there is likely to be a natural drop of fruit in July. Water apples, pears and blackcurrants. Train in new blackberry and loganberry shoots.
7. Vegetables. Plant out sprouts, winter cabbage and broccoli. Plant leeks and spinach beet. Plant outdoor tomatoes and support with 4ft canes. Continue sowing salad crops, peas and French beans. Salad leaves and radishes can be planted in between slower growing veg such as brassicas. Florentine fennel can be sown up to mid July and is less likely to bolt. Cease cutting asparagus.
8. Take cuttings of sage and rosemary and start picking herbs, especially those for freezing. Herbs freeze well and keep their fragrance for a long time.