



Members' Newsletter – July, 2020

Welcome to the July edition of the Gardening Club Newsletter. Here we are, now in a slightly reduced “lock down” situation, so hope you have kept safe and well and perhaps many of you have been able to meet up with others indoors or out somewhere, or in your “bubble”

We have put together some information from the RHS and the NNHS as well as one or two other articles to hopefully cheer you up.

If you have come across something that you think fellow members would like to see, please send it in to us.

Not sure that there will be an August Newsletter, as the Club does not normally meet in August. However if we receive enough photos, queries or interesting copy, then we will organise one, so please send any items to: [Blofieldgardeningclub@outlook.com](mailto:blofieldgardeningclub@outlook.com)

Welcome to the Grow Wild June newsletter.

This month, we're focusing on using the senses to appreciate the unique qualities of wild plants and flowers.

We know that wildflowers have [undeniable benefits](#) for our wild spaces, bringing pollinators and biodiversity to the most unlikely of places. But if we look more closely at individual plants, we can start to appreciate their uniqueness from a variety of perspectives by using each one of our senses in turn, one by one.

In this month's blog, we explore how we can use our five senses to look at plants in new ways, and share some insights, resources and ideas along the way.



Grow Wild Blog

Using our senses

Exploring new ways of looking at plants, using the five senses.

[Read the blog](#)

Do you have an idea for our blog?

We love hearing your feedback to our posts, and we had some brilliant responses to last month's musings, so please do keep your comments and suggestions coming in! We love to feature our Grow Wild community stories, too, so if you have a story to share then please do get in touch. You can see examples of previous stories [here](#).

As ever, you can share your thoughts and ideas with us by [email](#), or on social media; [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#).

Training opportunities - have your say

We've been busy behind the scenes coming up with lots of new ideas for workshops, training and other opportunities for our Grow Wild community to get involved with. But we need your help! Fill in our [survey](#) and tell us what events and resources you'd like us to send you, or let us know what you'd most like to learn and participate in.

[Have your say](#)

We look forward to hearing from you! Our next newsletter will be sent out in July. In the meantime, we hope you and your loved ones stay well.

Ellen, Chloe, Katy & Alison

The Grow Wild Team



Supported by the [National Lottery Community Fund](#) using National Lottery funding, Grow Wild is a national outreach initiative of the [Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew](#).

Blofield and District Gardening Club – Summer Show 2020 Recipe for Class No 43

Walnut and Honey cake

Congratulations and thanks to the only club member who baked the standard recipe and sent in a photograph. Doesn't it look delicious!



Plenty of spare time to bake on a rainy day. So gave last month's newsletter recipe a try - well worth the effort - the taste and texture went well beyond my expectations. I found the recipe easy to follow and execute. Fortunately I had all the ingredients in my store cupboards.

So it was a *piece of cake* to make!

Will have to now watch the waistline. Tony Gould.

Royal Horticultural Society : Blooming Brilliant News: Issue 5

Volunteers' Week might be over but we're still being amazed every day by the work that is going on in communities. This image was sent to us by Low Moor Community Kids' Allotment where the volunteers have found new ways to continue helping local children learn about growing food - and have successfully grown lots of rhubarb and purple sprouting broccoli!

You can read more about Low Moor, along with many other brilliant things going on all around the UK, below. Keep sharing your stories with us via email us at communities@rhs.org.uk and we will continue to share as much of it as possible in our newsletters and over on our Community Gardening [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages. As always, you can send this email on to your fellow volunteers, colleagues and friends and they can sign up at the bottom to be added to the mailing list.

Grow and Tell

Two months ago we started our weekly rainbow, inviting you to share your different coloured blooms with us. We received almost 500 photos from you which is amazing. It's been so lovely to see everyone growing and sharing. Pink was the most popular week by far and interestingly green was the least!



We've turned your photos into a rainbow as our way of saying thank you to all of the wonderful volunteers that are helping to keep communities blooming and people smiling

Show us your rainbows!

We've seen some amazing displays being made to say thank you to our wonderful key workers, like a fab display made by the King's Lynn in Bloom group in Norfolk. If you or your group has made a rainbow display using or featuring plants and flowers, please email them to us at communities@rhs.org.uk. We'll be putting together a special round up in a future newsletter.

Through the garden gates...

We have another wonderful video to share, this time kindly filmed for us by Grenville Johnson, who set up [St George in Bloom](#) in the South West back in 2005. Grenville's unique inner-city garden, at his home address in Bristol, features a Gothic folly, large stone font, stumpery, fernery, water feature, woodland glade, and so much more! Grenville loves to create exciting and exotic planting schemes using a method he calls "painting with plants." Watch the video [here](#).

It's a bug's life!



Inspired by our feature on Amersham in Bloom's bug hotel plans (from issue 3), Gary and John from [Richmond Villages Nantwich](#), a retirement village in Cheshire, have built this bee-utiful bug hotel!

The pair lovingly hand-crafted and painted the hotel and have placed it in the village's private woodland for resident bugs to enjoy.



Growing as a family:

Low Moor Community Kids' Allotment in York works with groups of 12 children a year, teaching them how to grow food. But when the pandemic hit, Angela, lead organiser, and the group's volunteers had to get creative.

Each child now attends the allotment with their parents/family members for a 1.5 hour slot each weekend. They are sent a list of tasks and activities ahead of time and arrive to find everything laid out for them so they can get stuck in.

And it's not just the children that have benefited, one parent said, "*As a parent I've learned so many new skills and it's got us excited about starting to grow our own fruit and veg at home.*"

Read more about the allotment [here](#).



Some lovely pictures sent in by Barbara Basey-Fisher – thank you.

Above are “some of the plants in my garden and a bee on an allium”.

To the left is Barbara’s rosemary, “which has recently been 'pruned'- but not by me. It is now turning black in places. Can someone help please?”

Hope everyone is alright. It is a pity we will not have the Show this year but look forward to next year.

Barbara



Photo and quote from Tony Gould:

“In the garden *the stinky* has survived yet another winter and is resurrecting for yet another year of *Pooformance*.

There was a talk at the club some time ago about plants that smell awful when they flower later in the summer; we called our one ‘stinky’. We have had one for several years that seems to thrive on neglect.”

(Editor: I think this is a Eucomis / Pineapple flower or lily. Richard Clark of Panache Plants certainly talked about Eucomis at the June meeting last year.)

Club member Lynda Hunt has kindly agreed to join the Gardening Club Committee as the Programme Secretary. Lynda has sent through a little profile about herself and what is keeping her extra busy in the lovely village of Strumpshaw.

I live in Strumpshaw with my husband Bob in a lovely old cottage dating back to 1776. We have a large garden which keeps us busy, normally with the weeding. We grow a lot of our own vegetables including potatoes, onions, sweetcorn, French beans and runner beans, tomatoes, cucumber, chard, broad beans and some soft fruit.

We have 3 hens, Rumba a Light Sussex cross, Speckles a French Maran and Jet a Black Orpington cross they are fun to keep and are good layers. The chicken manure comes in handy for the garden too. Occasionally we let the girls loose in the main garden. They can be quite destructive scratching in the flower beds or enjoying eating some of the vegetables, so we do have to keep a strict control on where they go and how long they are let out for!

We planted four varieties of apple trees over the past 3 years and decided to choose old Norfolk varieties from East of England Apples and Orchard Project. We chose three eating apple varieties Hubbard Pearman dating back to the late 1796', St Magdalen dating back to 1890, Red Falstaff from 1989 and last year a cooking apple Striped Beefing dating back to 1794. They are lovely to have in the top garden with the hens.

In addition to the gardening, I am also a keen beekeeper and normally have one or two hives in the garden. I joined the Norfolk Beekeeping Association 3 years ago and have taken a number of exams to broaden my knowledge of these fascinating insects and to learn how to manage hives for health and disease and of course how to harvest honey. I have in the past collected a bee swarm; the process is quite simple and can be collected in either in a skep or a cardboard box. Bees are normally at their most docile during a swarm, they are full of honey and have no hive to defend and easier to manage moving them into a suitable hive. Last year I was very privileged to win first prize for my honey. This year I have extracted 19 lbs of honey and look forward to continuing to expand my skills and the number of hives.

Some useful updates from Sue Brown, the Club's link to local and national horticultural societies.

Norfolk and Norwich Horticultural Society

An urgent reminder that the President's Evening will be held on Wednesday, 15th July in Adrian Bloom's Garden at Bressingham, near Diss. 6.00 pm to 9.00 pm

It is essential to book a place online at the NNHS website at Events.

The address is www.nnhs.org.uk The deadline for bookings is 3rd July.

Looking a little way ahead **the Early Autumn Show is on Sunday, 6th September at the Costessey Centre.**

Is there any interest in entering any of the Affiliated Societies Classes? With so many people having spent many extra hours tending gardens and allotments there promises to be some wonderful exhibits. Entries in these classes are from Clubs, not individual people, so don't feel you have a few good things but maybe not enough. Members would work together on them. Please contact Sue Brown if you are interested in getting involved in this - or email Blotfieldgardeningclub@outlook.com

Full Show Schedule and Regulations can be found on:

<https://www.nnhs.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Affiliated-Societies-Show-Schedule.pdf>

EARLY AUTUMN SHOW – schedule for Affiliated Societies.

Entry deadline: Wednesday 2 September 2020 at 6 pm

<i>Class</i>	<i>Description</i>
AF12	Three kinds of flowers, not exceeding six stems of each, three vases, three pot plants, three kinds of vegetables, numbers as in individual classes in main schedule. To be staged within a table space 155cm x 80cm.
AF13	Two dishes of fruit, different kinds, numbers as in individual classes in main schedule.
AF14	A bowl of Dahlias, with any other foliage, grown by members. Space allowed 60cm.
AF15	Two Pot Plants, flowering
AF16	Two Pot Plants, foliage
AF17	Bowl of flowers, with foliage, grown by members. Space allowed 90cm.

Royal Horticultural Society

All the RHS gardens are now open again but it is necessary to book online in advance. The RHS website is rhs.org.uk.

The gardens are Wisley, Hyde Hall, Harlow Carr and Rosemoor. RHS shops and plant centres are open at these gardens. Sadly all RHS flower shows for the remainder of 2020 have now been cancelled, although the RHS Flower Show Tatton Park will be going "virtual" on the RHS website on 22nd July. For more information visit : rhs.org.uk/tatton

National Garden Scheme

Why not make it your Monday ritual to go to the NHS website at ngs.org.uk to see which gardens will be open during the coming week? **Any you might wish to visit have to be booked in advance via the website.**

Having visited Heggatt Hall two weeks ago I can confirm that the visit was as relaxed as such events always are and people behaved perfectly. Social distancing was certainly observed.

Sue Brown

Composting Know-how



Topic 3 – how to compost grass cuttings

A beautiful lawn is a great feature in a garden, but it can generate huge amounts of cuttings. This often creates the problem of disposing of them all. Grass cuttings are rich in nitrogen and can be recycled to do the same job as garden fertilisers. However too many in a compost bin can play havoc with your compost. Grass cuttings heat up rapidly as they rot, but too many will make a slimy, smelly compost bin.

- Always mix grass cuttings with tougher more fibrous materials like scrunched up newspaper, cardboard and shredded confidential documents. This balances out the nitrogen levels and provides air pockets that also help.
- Check the moisture levels inside the bin. Compost should be moist like a wrung out sponge. If you add a lot of grass cuttings there is a chance that it could become too wet. If this happens, dry it out by adding more dry “brown” material. If the moisture level becomes too dry, add water to the bin gradually, using a watering can and mix with a fork or broom handle to ensure there is plenty of air.
- Give the compost a turn. It is important to add air to the bin to aid composting. This can be done using a garden fork or broom handle. Mix materials that tend to slump and exclude air, like grass cuttings, with more open items such as twigs and scrunched up packaging to add air pockets.
- Young hedge clippings and leaves are also good. Ants may be a sign that the compost bin is too dry.
- If you want to speed up your composting process, add some soil or finished compost. Young nettles are also an excellent compost accelerator.

Other uses for grass cuttings:

- Mix the cuttings with autumn leaves and put in a separate container with plenty of holes to make a rich leaf mould. This can also be done by layering thin layers of grass with cardboard sheets between.
- Leave short cuttings on the lawn. They will soon break down and recycle into the soil to feed the grass reducing the need for buying fertilisers. Make sure any big clumps are broken up first.
- Grass cuttings make a good short term moisture-retaining mulch for fruit, vegetables and other plants. Used as a mulch around carrots they can help deter carrot root fly!
- Laying the grass cuttings over old newspapers will control weeds for a few months.

<https://www.norfolkrecycles.com/reduce-my-rubbish/compost/>

Next Newsletter composting topic: how to compost weeds and poisonous plants

Stop press: Norfolk County Council are offering subsidised compost and Bokashi bins through GetComposting.com, which now has the new reduced prices live on its website. A 220 L black compost bin now costs £10, with a 2nd bin for £5 offer, and a Bokashi bin twin pack for £15 (there is a £6 delivery charge on each order). Please promote this wherever you can!

If you have any composting queries, useful suggestions about composting, or any photographs that would be helpful in this series, please contact your composting agony aunt Sue on Blotfieldgardeningclub@outlook.com

Impressive views of June and Alan Drake's allotment – and the boss having a well-earned cuppa!

