

Aston Clinton, Buckland & Drayton Beauchamp Horticultural Society

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President Mrs Lorna Price



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Chairman Mrs Sue Lipscomb

Dear Members,

You will receive the diary with this newsletter, as is usual at this time of year. I hope you agree that we have an interesting and varied programme of events for the coming year. We have our Social Secretary, Frances Farley, to thank for this. There are several regular items that we have to look forward to. Our two shows are important features of the Society's calendar and it is hard to believe that it will be our 21st Spring Show and 60th Summer one in 2017! We are already thinking of ways in which our Summer Show schedule can reflect these 60 years! It will be hosted, I am delighted to say by the Cafe in the Park once again. We are really pleased with our new venue which will include the Churchill Hall and we hope some grassy areas where we can position our marquee and gazebos. Let's hope the weather is kinder to us than it was last year! More details will follow.

Could I just remind you all that we are still looking for someone to replace Ken Halls as Spring Show Secretary and would be delighted to discover someone to do this. There are other areas where help is needed and they have been outlined in the latest email from Diane Kolonko. Thanks Diane for keeping our website so spick and span. Another person we must not forget to thank is Maureen Ridler for the massive undertaking she tackles each year with our regular DT Brown seed order.

And now I would like to wish all our members a very happy and healthy 2017.

Sue Lipscomb

Pictures from the Society's visit to Burnham Beeches



It is nearly at the shortest day and then the days will be getting longer by 2mins per day. We gardeners are still kept busy putting plants to bed. The lack of frosts meant that the dahlias kept flowering into November but now the frost has killed the tops they can be dug up and the corms preserved. As with a lot of plants, the tubers will survive and it is usually the damp that kills them off. I have known Reg Price dry Dahlia tubers above their stove! Dave Elkins manages to save his by heavy mulching and covering with a sheet to keep the water off. If you do choose to dig them up, then they need to be inverted on the greenhouse staging so that moisture drains out of the stem before storing them. I shall try to think of a better way to preserve mine. The next problem is that as they start to shoot, the slugs and snails 'have a field day' and will eat them. Another plant that you have to protect, not from cold because they are surprisingly hardy, are Delphiniums. We had a presentation earlier in the year where it was explained that dormant delphiniums should be covered with sharp sand over winter and to use a liquid slug bait.

One of the events this autumn was the guided walk in Burnham Beeches. This was enjoyed by all who went and the photographers in the Society had a good time with excellent results. You can see them on the website here are a sample showing the range of fungi that grow there along with the vistas of the trees.



Diane Kolonko circulated a list of possible places to visit in the summer and whilst no final decision has been taken, it looks as if Beth Chatto's garden in Essex or Kew Gardens are the most popular. Further details will be circulated later.

Thank you for supporting the Society by ordering Brown's seeds. We have ordered enough to get a 60% discount. When they arrive we gardeners can start sowing seeds again. The first seeds to be sown are tomatoes, which I germinate in the warm airing cupboard. This should be followed by onion seeds. Surprisingly, grown from seed, onions can make a sizeable bulb. When you get your onion and shallot sets plant them in pots and grow them on in a cold greenhouse. This will give them a good start. The experts say that shallots should be planted on the shortest day and harvested on the longest day.

Many of you grow top fruit like apples and pears. Whilst there is no special fertilize, to obtain good flowering now is the time to mulch the base of the trees with a thick layer of compost. If you use manure then this should be spread thinly. This last season the fruit was not as prolific as in 2015, but what there was came on larger. So what are we to expect in 2017? It depends on the weather and apples and pears like a cold spell to help their fruiting buds.

All that remains is to wish you all a happy Christmas and a successful New Year.

Ralph Weston