

AHS Newsletter No. 114 January 2022

Founded 1885

<https://www.abingdon-hort-soc.org.uk>

Programme

The details about talks, shows, trips etc are on our web site.

<https://www.abingdon-hort-soc.org.uk/events>

If anyone needs a printed copy please contact membership@abingdon-hort-soc.org.uk

Membership

Many thanks to all those members who have sent in their subscriptions so promptly.

Most of you will have received a personal reminder about the subscriptions. We are now using our new database for this. Members who resign or leave for any reason will be automatically removed from the membership list 4 months after the resignation.

Application forms for new members and information about subscriptions can be found on our web site at:

<https://www.abingdon-hort-soc.org.uk/downloads/membership-form.pdf>

Any problems you have please contact

membership@abingdon-hort-soc.org.uk

Minutes of meetings will also be placed on the web site when they are available.

Christmas Lunch

Angela Hughes

Our Society Christmas Lunch was held at the Ock Mill Restaurant on 14th December when a group of 35 members enjoyed the opportunity to socialise with each other whilst enjoying a good lunch. I was warned in the morning that the service may be a little slow as they were extremely short of staff. It did turn out to be slower than usual but that gave us more time to put the world to rights and it didn't seem to be a problem with our members. The food was well prepared and cooked to perfection. The extensive menu at the Ock Mill made sure that there was something that everybody could enjoy, especially the ice cream sundae, and the friendly and helpful staff made sure that we had a very good time. It was unfortunate that more members could not join us this year but hopefully things will have got back to normal by next year and more members will be able to come.

Holiday

Angela Hughes

34 members enjoyed a break in North Devon, staying in the Durrant House Hotel in Bideford. We visited the RHS Rosemoor Flower Show and had a lovely day enjoying the beautiful garden in the sunshine. On our return journey we called at the fascinating garden at Kilver Court near Shepton Mallet with its iconic landmark viaduct. Other visits were made to the Walled Garden of Cannington and the National Trust property at Arlington Court. Hence a very happy but tired coach full of members arrived back in Abingdon on Sunday night.

Spring show and Schedules

Barbara Bingley

Show schedules are either included with this newsletter, if delivered, or online on the website. Bulbs are already showing in the garden and there's sure to be a class that fits the ones you grow.

If you enter your garden the judging takes place on Thursday, 7th April.

Seville oranges are in the shops now so why not make some marmalade to enter class 29?

There are already signs that Spring is on the way. If you take an interesting photograph that shows springtime nature please enter it in class 40.

We have missed two spring shows due to Covid. If you have been busy crafting, the handicraft classes are in this show.

Entries for all classes must be made, by email, phone or by bringing to 69 Radley Road, by 9 pm on Wednesday 6th April.

All the information about the show, the classes, and entry forms, is on the web site. Go to the Documents section to find the details. You will find a display version of the schedules and a printable version. If you wish to print your own copy the instructions are included.

https://www.abingdon-hort-soc.org.uk/show_schedules

Raffle prizes

Barry and Diana would like to encourage donations for the raffle on show days. The sale has always produced a useful income for the club, and is a bit of fun for the members. Gifts are always very welcome and minimise the need for purchased prizes.

Plant Sale

The plant sale last year proved to be very successful. We will hold another one on the morning of Saturday 14 May 2022. It will be outside in the car park of Northcourt Centre. We will be very grateful for your contributions, especially unusual plants with name labels! Sale starts at 10:00.

OXFORD BOTANIC GARDEN: 400 YEARS OLD

Peter Girling Volunteer Guide Coordinator, OBGA

Oxford Botanic Garden was founded 400 years ago in 1621 when it became the first “Physic Garden” in the British Isles. The ostensible purpose was to train the physicians and apothecaries about the plants from which herbal medicines were obtained. However, the garden at Oxford also took on a much wider approach to horticulture. The first 2 keepers of the garden were Jacob Bobart the Elder and his first son, Jacob Bobart the Younger. Together they managed the garden for 77 years and directed its development and use, encouraging the import and study of new species from abroad and the hybridising of plants to increase their horticultural utility and value. In keeping with its broader remit, the garden was eventually renamed the Oxford Botanic Garden in 1834.

This change of name also coincided with a gradual opening of the garden to allow students and later the public, to view its botanical wonders. Most recently, after a short closure during the first covid lockdown, the garden has provided a relaxing haven for Oxford citizens when many others were closed.

Unfortunately, the pandemic did necessitate the postponement of many special events planned to mark the 400th anniversary. The good news is that a full programme of events is now being planned for next June and these we propose to set out in another newsletter nearer the time.

Milk For a Fungicide?

Bryan Hitchman

On one of the gardening programs I watched recently, using sour milk to prevent potato blight, got me fascinated in this subject and it became a bit of an obsession. Below is a quick summary.

Using milk to prevent Powdery Mildew has been around for more than 50 years. Researchers in Canada discovered that milk sprays could help prevent powdery mildew on tomato and barley. Then the age of fungicides began, with no further published research on the milk cure until 1999. Since then, numerous small studies from around the world have validated the use of milk sprays on powdery mildew on a wide range of plants. Most recently, a spray made of 40% milk and 60% water was as effective as chemical fungicides in managing powdery mildew of pumpkins and cucumbers grown in mildew-prone Connecticut. In Australia, milk sprays have proven to be as effective as sulphur and synthetic chemicals in preventing powdery mildew on grapes. In New Zealand, milk did a top-rate job of suppressing powdery mildew in apples.

There is no consensus on which dilution of milk to water is best, with the most concentrated recommended mixture 40% milk and 60% water, and the most dilute 10% milk and 90% water. I fall in between using 30% milk to 70% water, with good results. It does not matter if the milk you use is skim or whole because it is the protein rather than the milkfat that is working on your behalf.

Milk not only helps prevent diseases, it is also a good disinfectant. Instead of using a toxic bleach solution to disinfect garden pruners, dip them in milk to disinfect them. I will be giving the sour milk recipe a go this year.

'The Regenerative Growers Guide to Garden Amendments' has a section regarding using raw milk in a 1:10 ratio. I also came across this chemical free solution as well.

The Cornell formula

Combine:

1 gallon of water with 1 tablespoon of baking soda

1 tablespoon of oil (although vegetable oil will work, horticultural oil is best)

2 drops of dishwashing liquid or insecticidal soap.

Mix it thoroughly and repeatedly, shake it during use.

Let's hope it warms up soon, as even my greenhouse is feeling the cold.

References

<https://www.capec Gazette.com/article/milk-not-only-helps-prevent-disease-it-good-disinfectant/13903>

<https://balconygardenweb.com/milk-uses-in-the-garden/>

'The Regenerative Grower's Guide to Garden Amendments'. Nigel Palmer. Pub. Chelsea Green Publishing company

Obituary

We recently heard that Mike Deane died in December 2021 at the age of 94. Mike was a Society committee member and Treasurer for many years.

Mike was pre-deceased by his wife Gina who, with Mike, filled our sales tables with plants of the highest quality. We have one of their Cymbidiums just coming into flower and so we often think of them.

Mike cycled round delivering newsletters well into his eighties. He moved away from Abingdon after Gina died to be closer to his family in Cambridge.

David Bingley

