

# Wheathampstead Horticultural Society

## Your Village Garden Club

Issue 14

Summer 2009

Editor:- David Singleton

**A Big thanks to everyone** who helped at the **Plant Sale** and all those who brought plants and cakes for selling. It was a great success with profits in excess of £430. As in previous years, the surplus of plants brought by members were donated to support St. Helens School Fair and the excess plants grown on especially for the Plant Sale were sold at the Flower Club Open evening with the takings shared between the two clubs. The Flower Club were very grateful for the additional contribution to their Open evening.

*David Singleton*

### Horticultural Meetings Coming Up

- June 21<sup>st</sup>** Coach Outing, see below.  
**July 1<sup>st</sup>** Barbecue at Marford Farm, Sheepcote Lane., see next column.  
**August 19<sup>th</sup>** Car Share visit to Capel Manor, see below.  
**Sept 2<sup>nd</sup>** Joe Sharman presents a talk on Grasses.

*Koomi Sullivan*

### COACH OUTING

**There are just a small number of tickets left** for our coach outing to **Wakehurst Place** on 21<sup>st</sup> June. It's just two weeks on Sunday so don't delay in contacting George Giffen (01582 833485) or John Pike (01582 833230). Tickets cost £18 for the coach and entry to the gardens, or just £10 if you are a Kew Gardens or National Trust member. The coach will leave Marford Road at 10am and please remember if you are a National Trust member to bring your membership card with you.

### Car Share Visit to Capel Manor



**This 30 acre estate** near Enfield is only about half an hour's drive away. There's much to explore at any time of year with many themed gardens. Refreshments are available and access is good for the less mobile.

We expect admission to cost between £4 and £5.50 depending on numbers.

**Date:** Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> August. Meet in the Memorial Hall car park at 11.30am. Expressions of interest and offers of spare car seats to Jane Singleton (01582 832348)

### My Favourite Wine & Home Brew

Wine club members may already know that one of my favourite red wines is Montepulciano D'Abruzzo, from Italy. When eating out we often choose it when it is on the restaurant list, as it is good value and generally reliable. Although widely available (incl. from Somerfield), I've never found one better than that from the Roxan Co-op – a full flavoured red with rich berry fruits, and only £5-50 from the Wine Society in Stevenage.

For a white, I'd go for a crisp Sauvignon Blanc such as Villa Maria from Marlborough, New Zealand, although a well-chilled bone-dry Muscadet Sevre et Maine (Loire) sur Lie is hard to beat to accompany white fish. We home wine-makers will be hard pushed to approach anywhere near that standard, but acceptable table whites are not too difficult to achieve. A seasonal tip is to harvest elderflowers when they are in full bloom to provide some bouquet and zing to your summer whites. First check that your selected elder bush is not of the "catty" variety, and then pick a few of the large flat flower heads when they are in full sun. Snip off the delicate



white florets until you have a half-pint jug full (pressed lightly down) and steep in a pint of boiling water. Strain, and it will keep in the freezer until required for addition as part of the liquid in your next gallon. Not everyone is overly keen on elderflowers, so don't be tempted by Nature's abundance to

overdo it!

*Peter Woodhams*

### SUMMER BARBECUE

**Tickets are now on sale – only £5.50** – available from George Giffen at the June meeting or at other times from John Pike (18 Tudor Road) or David Singleton (6 East Mount).

We open this event at 7.00pm and aim to start serving food at about 7.30pm.

The event will follow the traditional but popular format, and we may have a quiz to two (to pass the time between courses?). Gentle interlude music with a Fifties theme is on the cards.

We are very grateful to Tim and Angela Lamb for use of their garden and barn at Marford Farm.



**AUTUMN SHOW - SATURDAY 12<sup>th</sup> SEPT.**



This year's Show will be on Saturday 12th September (no-one's allowed to go on holiday until 13th!) Schedules will be available at the June meeting so you will have plenty of time to gear up your plants and practice the recipes. Let's see if you can outdo the amazing number of entries you came up with last year.

*Jacqueline Turner*

## Some Local Gardens to Explore

**6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> June** **2 Ruins Cottage**, Ayot St Lawrence AL6 9BU. Saturday 12-5pm, Sunday 4-7pm (£3). "Imaginative and inspirational".

**21<sup>st</sup> June** (Sunday) **Bride Hall**, Bride Hall Lane, Ayot St Lawrence AL6 9DB, A 'must see'. 2-5pm (£5)

**21<sup>st</sup> June** (Sunday) **Serge Hill Gardens**, Nr Bedmond. 'The Barn' has a courtyard, water feature, herbaceous perennials and a wild flower meadow; 'Serge Hill' offers parkland and unusual wall plants. 2-5pm (£6)

**28<sup>th</sup> June** (Sunday) **Mackerye End Gardens**, Harpenden AL5 5DR. Four gardens open in this local Hamlet. 2-5pm. (£5)

**12<sup>th</sup> July (Sunday) North Mymms Park**, Welham Green, Nr. Hatfield. "Spectacular formal gardens in a stunning setting". Music by Hatfield Banjo, Mandolin and Guitar Club. 2.30-5pm. (£3.50)

**12<sup>th</sup> July (Sunday) 19 Lancaster Road, St Albans** AL1 4EP. Plantsperson's garden. 2-5pm. (£2.50)

**12<sup>th</sup> July (Sunday) 24 Mill Lane, Welwyn** AL6 9ET. Small plantsman & artist's courtyard garden. 12-5.30pm. (£2.50)

**19<sup>th</sup> July (Sunday) 14 Spooners Drive, St Albans** AL2 2HL. Interesting town garden with water features. 2-5pm. (£2.50)

**19<sup>th</sup> July (Sunday) Chipperfield Gardens** WD4 9BS. Four gardens to visit; music and plant sale. 2-5pm. (£5)

*Full lists of gardens open under the National Gardens Scheme or British Red Cross are in the library*

*Jane Singleton*

## Jacqueline's topical tips



The Chelsea (or June) Chop – what exactly do you do, a friend recently asked. Well, for those of you not yet in the know here goes. We all know those hardy perennials that get too tall for their own good and always finish up falling over or needing staking such as Canterbury bells – the lovely blue and white ones that I allow to seed all over my

garden – well the way to do it is to take a deep breath around this time of the year and cut the top third off them. Ouch! Yes, I know they've budded up beautifully and you'll be cutting off potential flowers but, honestly, its for their own good. They will be bushier, shorter and covered in flowers in no time. Trust me I've done it for several years.

**Meanwhile down at the Allotment.....**

I remembered my tip to myself last year not to sow my runner beans so early because they got too tall and floppy before I could plant them out. This year I encouraged them to get the idea of climbing up a stick while they were still in the greenhouse so when I planted them out I could just transfer the twining onto the cane – worked a treat! I have planted Painted Lady this year because the flowers are so lovely. I'll let you know what the beans taste like!

*Jacqueline Turner*

## Flower Club

Do join us for a Masterclass by our local florist – **Fuchsia Pink**. The date is Thursday 18th June. The venue is the Memorial Hall. The time is 7.45pm.

This will be a fun evening working on ideas from the florist.

There will be a charge of approximately £5.00 for materials and a visitor fee if you are not a member.

The following Meeting will be held on 16th July – the programme is currently being arranged.

There will be no meeting in August but in September we look forward to 'Anniversaries and Celebrations by Elaine Enstone. Do come and be entertained and maybe win a lovely Raffle Prize.

*Patricia Giffen Tel: 833485*

## Cut a Thistle in May----

Cut a thistle in May  
it will grow next day

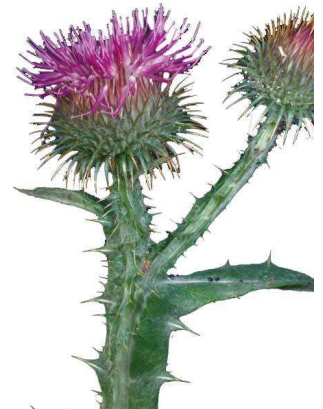
Cur it in June  
it will grow again soon

Cut it in July  
it will surely die

Cut it in August  
and die it must

– an old adage passed to me by Bridget Compton; but is it true?

Would you want to leave thistles growing in the garden until August (unless they are cardoons or scotch types) and let them set seed?. Fun though it might be to have 'snow flakes' drifting past in high summer I don't need another seven years of weeds, thank you.



Hoing off a tap-rooted plant when it's at full stretch, before it has time to store up food for another year might be a plausible way to reduce it's vigour. But unless you have a farmer's field to contend with I reckon you can't beat yanking thistles out right down to their root tips.

*David Singleton*

*next issue due 7<sup>th</sup> October 09  
copy to david.singleton@theiet.org*