



Important Information

THE CHS SHOP

The Crawley Horticultural Shop in Ifield Avenue, West Green, Crawley (tel. 01293 535585) is open in 2008 from;

9.00am until 12 noon every Sunday until 7th December,
9.00am until 12 noon every Saturday from 1st March
until 27th September, and
6.30pm until 8.00pm every Wednesday from 2nd April
until 25th June.

NEW MEMBERS

The CHS policy for recruiting new members is by word of mouth by you the members. Why not pass the word about the benefits of membership to like-minded friends and relations. A perfect present for a birthday or special occasion would be CHS gift voucher/token to be spent in the shop, or a membership enrolment for one or four years.

NEXT NEWSLETTER

This Newsletter will be on the Society's website by early May with printed copies made available for Group Meetings and in the Shop .

Helen Green

100 Malthouse Road, Crawley, RH10 6BH

Telephone 01293 535972

Email—bergreen2003@yahoo.co.uk

Enquiries about the Society should be addressed to the Hon. Secretary,
Chrissie Smith—telephone 01293 539221

If you would like to receive your Newsletter by email, please contact the
Membership Secretary, Peter Nash on 01293 511919

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Members are reminded that annual subscriptions and four year subscriptions taken out in 2003 expired on 31st December 2007 and should be renewed as soon as possible. Renewals can be made in the Shop or direct to the Membership Secretary, Peter Nash, 65 Millbank, Ifield, Crawley. RH11 0JQ.



Crawley Horticultural Society

Newsletter

Spring 2008

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CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

As most of you will know, I am involved with the Fruit and Vegetable Group and needless to say we think everybody should be finding some space to "grow your own". There are many reasons to do so including – Better taste; cheaper than the supermarket, no commercial pesticides; they are truly local so no air miles, and of course you get lots of exercise and fresh air.

Also, don't forget that in the shop there is 20% off the recommended retail price of all vegetable and ornamental seeds. Come along to the Vegetable and Fruit group meetings for help and advice as well as to hear our visiting speakers and see their slides. See page 9 for the preliminary programme for the year.

It has not been a very good start to the gardening year, with the weather being too wet and too cold, but lets hope for a warmer end to the month of April and a sunny May. Don't forget the Plant sale on 17/18 May and also the various shows throughout the year. If you don't feel you can exhibit please come and have a look round to admire the efforts of the exhibitors. You will find the dates later in this newsletter as well as a reminder that we welcome volunteers to help in the shop on Saturday and Sunday mornings,

JOHN GREEN

THE SECRETARY'S SLOT

Hello everyone. Some of you will already know me. My name is Christine Smith - I prefer to be called Chrissie - I'm a 50 year old artist, (that's the painting type). I've been a member of the Society for 3 years and have joined in all the shows since autumn 2005.

I am a member of the Alpine group, - because I love rock gardens and every house I've lived in since leaving my parents home in 1975, I've had a rockery. I'm in the Fuchsia group, because I've loved them since I had my first garden. I'm in the Delphinium/Perennial group because that group covers so many aspects of gardening it seemed like a good idea to join them. Sometime last year, not sure when, but I 'slipped' into the position of Secretary. And I'm also Secretary of the Bonsai Group. I joined them because bonsai's fascinate me and I wanted to know how to grow them

In 1991 I passed an NVQ level 4, 'The RSA Higher Diploma in Administrative Procedures', I then went to Brinsbury Horticultural College in 1990 - 91 and took a one year course in Recreational and Amenities Horticulture. So I know a little about a lot and hopefully my experiences will help me to be a good secretary for the Society.

I'm outgoing and love adventures trying something new and exciting and meeting new people; these things keep me alive. I'm approachable, so if you see me around come and say hello. I do a shift in our shop once a month now so pop in and have a chat .

I will do my very best to help promote the Society and support all our efforts. My mind is always coming up with ideas, some good, some not so good and some darn right daft, but I make people laugh and that can't be a bad thing, can it? I hope to meet more of you as time goes by.

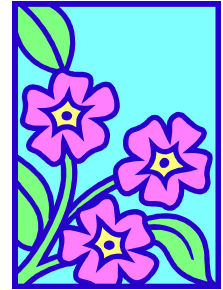
CHRISSIE SMITH

SPRING FLOWER SHOW

The Show was held on Saturday 29th March which was quite late as the weather earlier in the year had brought many spring flowers into bloom in February. March was very wet and windy making gardening difficult but 25 exhibitors managed to stage their plants. We also had 20 children who entered the painting class, and also the miniature

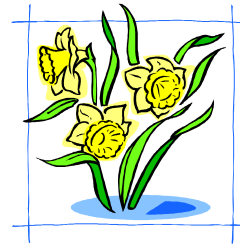
2008 PLANT SALE

The annual plant sale will be held in the hall over weekend 17th and 18th May between the hours of 9.0am and 12 noon.



2008 BULB SALE

The annual bulb sale will be held in the hall over the weekend 30th and 31st August between the hours of 9.0am and 12 noon



SHOW DATES

The dates for the Shows in 2008 are as follows:

Cactus Group Annual Show	Saturday 31 st May
CHS Summer Show	Saturday 14 th June.
Fuchsia Show	Saturday 2 nd August
CHS Autumn Shows, Saturdays	6 th and 13 th September.
Orchid Autumn Show	Sunday 16 th November

As we plan to run a Tombola at the second week of the Autumn Show we are requesting donations of suitable items please. These can be dropped off at the shop or can be collected if necessary by Show Secretary, Christine Martin, telephone 01293 882871

All the shows are held in the hall and are open to members and general public from 1.30pm, except the Cactus Show which is open from 10.00am.

Fungal spores are then released back into the soil, where they can survive for over ten years until another brassica crop is grown. Plants affected include: broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, kohlrabi, mustard, radish, turnip, alyssum, honesty, rockcress, stock, sweet alyssum, shepherd's purse, and yellow-rocket and many common weeds such as Willow Herb, shepherds purse and fat hen.

Club Root can be identified by stunted growth especially if infected as seedlings, with discoloured leaves that wilt and roots that are a thick distorted mass. The swollen roots cannot absorb water and nutrients properly. The disease is a fungus within the soil, often introduced by bought seedlings or soil brought in.

The only treatment is prevention. Never grow brassicas on the same soil in any three years. (Some say four years, allowing the plot to lie fallow for a year.) Use careful crop rotation.

If the soil is acidic, reduce the acidity with a dressing of lime the winter before planting. The Club Root fungus prefers acidic soil. It is important, first, to carry out a pH test to determine whether liming is really necessary. If the soil already has a pH of 6.5 or higher, liming will be of little benefit and may be detrimental. The autumn is the best season for liming soils, just prior to digging, as the lime can take effect over the winter months and will not damage young growth.

Lime should not be applied at the same time as organic matter or fertilisers, when it may cause the release of ammonia, which wastes nitrogen and may damage tender growth.

Grow your brassicas from seed in a sterile soil-based potting mix to produce a good root system that can survive an attack after planting out. Do not plant brassicas on an infected site for at least five years. Also, if a pocket of soil is removed from infested ground and replaced with a mixture of garden compost, blood, fish and bone fertilizer and lime, the plants may not be affected.

If you have identified a plant with club root, carefully dig around the infected area and gently remove the entire root system from the soil so as to prevent the clubs from breaking up and potentially releasing thousands of spores. Discard (don't compost) the infected plants.

GRAHAM JONES

garden in a seed tray, all from Charlwood School. Our Show Secretary sent a certificate for display on the school notice board.

Peter Armstrong gained most points in the Daffodil section, and was awarded the mantel clock which he will hold for a year. Entries were well down in the Alpine section this year as most had bloomed in January and February.

Visitors braved the heavy showers and after viewing the show enjoyed the tea and home made cakes which were available all afternoon.

Next year we hope to see more Members participating in the show. If you require any advice contact the Show Secretary, Christine Martin.

MICK REED

TRADING

Earlier this year we received a letter from our main supplier of fertilizers stating that the cost of raw materials for the production of these items had increased by more than 65% since they set their 2007 prices. Also, transport costs had risen by 7%

This will result in increased prices for all J Arthur Bowers products from 1st February 2008 varying between 3.5% and 30%. Fortunately, most of our stock was purchased before that date.

The manufacturer has suggested that we should increase our prices now to reflect the new market value of these items. However, unless we have to order new stock, our prices will remain unchanged with the exception of Potash which we only recently purchased. This will go up now and will increase further in the future. Other manufacturers have also given notice of increases.

It is as well that we are able to buy in bulk and store under cover where they do not deteriorate, unlike a number of garden centres etc.

PETER COLE
Trading Secretary.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2008 AGM REPORT

Chairman's Report:

John Green gave his thanks to all the committee for their hard work as usual. Trading was better than 2006. He said the compound was well stocked with very few price increases. He asked that members please support Peter Cole as he works very hard and long to keep the shop supplied. He appealed for more Society members to volunteer as we desperately need help in the shop especially on Saturdays. If we don't get more help we may not be able to keep the shop open on some days. He also asked for more support from members by attending and entering the shows that are laid on throughout the year. (Show schedules available in the shop or the hall)

John also said that it would be nice to see more people joining in the groups as they cover a wide range of topics. He also gave thanks to Mick Reed for his work in building the website.

Treasurer's Report:

Bill Gunning reported that the Society is in a good position with end of 2007 figures up by £3,470 on 2006. Membership subscriptions at £2,305, compared to £1,985 for 2006. The hall hire is up by £1,219 at £1,499 from just £280. But our shop trading is down from £4,240 to £3,576. Our total net current assets were £50,252. We had donations of £2,988.

Membership Fees:

The membership fees will remain the same as last year, at £4.00 for 1 year and £14.00 for 4 years.

Elections:

Ron Spraget and Bill Gunning retired from their positions after serving for 18 years each. They were thanked for their service and dedication to the Society and their hard work was recognised.

Elections for the two positions were taken and the newly appointed Treasurer is Mr Peter Armstrong and the new Secretary is Mrs Christine Smith. All other officers were re-elected unopposed. Two new committee members were elected:

Barry Morton, and
Trevor Figg.

President's Address:

Mabel Clackson thanked Christine Smith and Peter Armstrong for filling the positions of the Secretary and Treasurer and wished them well in their new roles.

Note: It is important to read the manufacturer's instructions for use and the associated safety data information before applying chemical treatments. If the aphids are noticed early, simply paint them with methylated spirits, or scrape them off individually.

TREATMENT—Organic

Check tree shoots and bark regularly for signs of woolly aphid. Scrub areas within easy reach with a brush and a bucket of soapy water. Spray infested areas with a firm jet of water to help reduce aphid numbers. Spray with natural fatty acids such as an insecticidal soap. The parasitic wasp *Aphelinus mali* will attack aphids above ground level. Aphid predators such as ladybirds, aphidoletes, hoverflies, and lacewing larvae can be released onto the affected areas.

PREVENTION

Regularly check plants for signs of infestation and deal with them as soon as they appear. Encourage natural enemies like ladybirds, hoverflies and lacewings to become established in the garden by planting daisy-like flowers, yellow flowers and in particular, the poached egg plant *Limnanthes douglasii*.

Avoid using broad-spectrum insecticides which will kill beneficial insects as well as aphids. Encourage insect-eating birds such as blue tits, by hanging feeders in winter and nest boxes in spring. If planting new apple trees, use rootstocks which are resistant to apple woolly aphid. Paint pruning wounds with a tree coating composition to help prevent infestations establishing.

It is believed that growing nasturtiums up, say, *pyracantha*, helps to control the infestation. A good strong blast from a garden hose will dislodge most of the pests.

CLUB ROOT - (*Plasmodiophora brassicae*)

On my vegetable plot, for many years, I had problems with Club Root. I don't have a problem now – I don't have a veg plot! However, I researched the fungus and here is a synopsis of what I found. -

The fungus is present in the soil as a slime mould. Spores germinate in response to chemicals produced from the roots of host plants. Conditions which favour this are wet compacted soils, since this favours the fungus, but also leads to poor root development. Once infected, roots become swollen and then rot.

Why are gall mites such a concern? When you see gall mite damage on a plant it is a quantity issue. When you see one gall mite infected area on a plant, that one infected area has over one hundred adult and baby gall mites feeding on that plant. Which means in one season, the gall mite count can quickly become out of control if the situation is not resolved. Gall mites are like head lice. They are all over a plant and not just at the infected area.

How can gall mites be spread? In America it is believed that it is spread by humming birds, bees and the wind, but also frequently by humans as they move from plant to plant. As Rodney says "I did what a lot of people do, I went from plant to plant using my fingers to kill the whiteflies on the leaves because I didn't want to spray. I repotted several plants one after the other, pinched new growth going from plant to plant, made numerous cuttings touching several plants in a row, removed and picked up old leaves and flowers going from plant to plant – and so they can spread".

CAROL GUBLER

PESTS AND DISEASES

WOOLLY APHID

A common pest of apple trees, the woolly aphid (*Eriosoma lanigerum*) also infests ornamental crab apple, pear, prunus, cotoneaster, hawthorn, pyracantha, elm, hawthorn, sorbus and other related plants. Adult aphids are up to 2mm long and elliptical in shape. They are pinkish-brown but their waxy coating gives them a white, woolly appearance. Long white, or occasionally blue-grey, waxy residues which look like cotton wool appear on the bark and branches especially around old pruning wounds.

The aphid does not over-winter as eggs but as young, under loose bark, or in cracks in the bark or surface roots. The young emerge in spring to re-establish the colony.

Adult aphids can give birth to as many as five live young a day so rapidly produce large colonies. After a few generations, winged adults develop and move on to new trees.

The aphids feed on plant sap and excrete plant sugars as honeydew that may become infected with black sooty mould. The feeding may cause knobbly galls to form making the tree more susceptible to canker and other infections.

TREATMENT—Chemical

Products containing the following chemical ingredients are all effective on apple woolly aphid:

Bifenthrin Imidacloprid Pyrethroids and Pyrethrin

The President thanked Ron Spraget and Bill Gunning who had both served 18 years in these roles, for their hard work, especially in the past few years. She reminded the members that it is these two who stood up to the local Council and achieved a reduction in our business rates.

Mabel went on to thank the Chairmen of the various groups and the hard work they do in keeping the groups going on a shoestring, especially when speakers are so expensive. She said that fortunately the small social group is at hand to make extra funds by running their very popular quiz evenings.

Finally she thanked the committee for their hard work over the past year and wished them well; also the members who continued to support the Society by buying their garden supplies from the shop reminding everyone that the shop is our main source of income.

CHRISSIE SMITH

DELPHINIUM GROUP NAME CHANGE

At April's Delphinium and Perennial Group meeting we had a discussion about the group name. It was felt that the name was a little long and might not give a true impression of the group's nature. As we cover most aspects of gardening and any type of plant grown, (not just Delphiniums and Perennials) it was felt people may have been put off by the name.

After a discussion a new name was suggested, and we decided to change the name to **The Cottage Garden Group**. We hope this new name will encourage more members to join us.

So don't forget, the first Wednesday each month is now The Cottage Garden Group, meeting at 8pm in the CHS hall. A schedule for the remainder of this year is displayed in the shop and another in the entrance to the hall along with a poster about our guest speaker for 2nd July, Mr Tom Hart Dyke.

Tickets are now available for The Cottage Garden Group meeting for 2 July. Please contact Chrissie Smith on 01293 539221 or email groovygranny572002@yahoo.co.uk to reserve yours now.

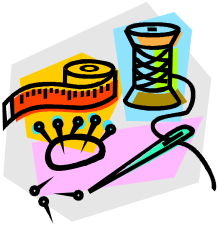


WANTED—VOLUNTEERS

We are always in need of more helpers in the shop.

If you can spare 3 hours on either a Saturday or Sunday morning at about 6 week intervals your assistance will be greatly appreciated. Besides the company and the free flowing tea and biscuits, you will be entitled to a 10% discount on your own purchases.

The shop is the life blood of the Society and without it the Society would not be able to function. If you can help, please contact Jackie Whiting on 01403 270646 or have a word with the duty committee member in the shop.



CALLING ALL CRAFTERS

We are inviting crafters to take a stall at the Summer Show on Saturday, 14 June. Whatever your hobby or interest come and join us this summer.

Also, we are planning a separate craft show at the beginning of December, and welcome crafters who make items with a Christmas theme.

Anyone interested in taking a table to sell crafts please contact Christine Martin, telephone 01293 882871.



Just chop the stems into sections of one or two inches long, allow to dry for a few hours and pot up making sure you do not reverse the stem sections. The end nearest to the base of the plant goes into the compost.

What about seed sowing? Forget it! Unless you are dedicated cactophil and have access to a supply of fresh seed it is rarely worth the effort. Plants grown this way are extremely slow to mature and only a very few species reach flowering size in less than four or five years. Just concentrate on vegetative propagation and I reckon you will have plenty of plants to give to your friends and convert them into cactus lovers.

DENYS SKINNER

FUCHSIA GALL MITE –

(This information about Fuchsia Gall Mite was first published in the Autumn newsletter of The British Fuchsia Society is published with the permission of the author. Submitted by Ivan Budgen)

In the early part of September 2007 Fuchsia Gall mite was detected for the first time on the mainland of the United Kingdom. I have been doing some research on the internet to give us a clearer picture taking information from Rodney Bergquist of the American Fuchsia Society where they have had it for over 25 years, and most importantly they still grow fuchsias! So “Don’t Panic!”

What are fuchsia gall mites? They are so small that you will need a microscope to see them. Gall mites are members of the spider family and have a worm-like whitish to yellow body with two pair of legs. Gall mites congregate around new leaf and flower buds. The gall mites feed on new growth and sooner or later the females lay eggs, which hatch in one to two weeks. As the new leaves or buds start to grow each gall mite punctures the new growth and starts injecting a growth hormone substance that causes the plant tissue to swell and become disfigured. In two to four weeks the babies become adults and move to new locations on the plant.

How to identify Fuchsia Gall Mite damage. The plant parts are fused together. They are also swollen and twisted. Infected areas look hairy and can look reddish. Some fuchsias are more resistant than others – so the symptoms can be more or less obvious. It is a reportable pest and if found even at a minimal stage then DEFRA must be contacted for advice etc.

MORE CACTI QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Hello there, how are your cacti looking after the winter? *Pretty perky I think, and some seem to have flower buds coming. My Christmas Cactus was a picture; one of my friends asked if I could get one growing for her. How do I go about it?*

Well the Schlumbergera is one of the easiest cacti to propagate but patience is essential because it will not flower for a couple of years. All cacti and succulents tend to take their time to reach maturity and flowering size. With a sharp knife just cut a point well below a leaf joint. Purists recommend leaving the potential cutting for a couple of days for a callous to form over the cut but I have found that an hour or so is adequate.

Dip several of these cuttings into a small pot filled with an open compost that includes some peat (or substitute) and leave in a warm but shady place - these are forest plants and do not like the full sun. Keep moist but not waterlogged. Later on in the summer you should see new leaves emerging from the top of the cuttings. They will be happy to overwinter together until you separate and pot on next spring.

Many succulent families can be rooted the same way as geraniums and fuchsias by stem cuttings but again they take longer to root. You could try your luck scrounging some alpine Sedums from a Society member. These small plants potted into a terracotta pan can make a nice display on the windowsill. One I can recommend is *S. Seeboldei*.

Thanks but what about cacti, are there any I could try my luck at? As you know several families of cacti throw out offsets as they mature. The larger of these outcroppings often have basic roots forming. Pot up in a gritty compost, this time missing out the peat and keep on the dry side in a light but not too sunny area until they tell you they have rooted. An easy specimen to practice on is *Lobivia* or *Echinopsis Chamacereus* (The Peanut Cactus). This small plant forms a cluster of creeping stems resembling the nut from which it gets its common name. Even just handling them will usually detach several stems (without roots) which can easily be potted up.

Any more? One easy candidate is the Rat's Tail (*Aporocactus flagelliformis*). You will usually see this in a hanging basket as its trailing stems can reach over a foot in length. The procedure is slightly different.

TOMATOES AND POTATOES – A BRIEF HISTORY TOMATOES

It wasn't until the 16th Century that exotic vegetables like red and green peppers, kidney and French beans began to appear in Britain. Among them was the "tomata" or love apple as it was sometimes known, which first arrived from Mexico via Spain in the 1570's. In Spain the tomato, as we know it, was boiled with salt, pepper and oil but in Tudor England it was considered to have no nutritional value and indeed was poisonous. It was in fact banished to the flower garden.

They were still believed to be inedible in the 18th Century although by 1770 some were being boiled down into a concentrated sauce and stored in earthenware jars. It took another hundred years before people were brave enough to eat them raw.

POTATOES

A close relative of the tomato, a wild form of potato was being cultivated in the Andes at least 8000 years ago. They were recognised as an edible crop by the Spanish conquistadors in the 1530's and as every schoolboy knows were introduced into England and Ireland by Sir Walter Raleigh during Elizabeth 1st reign. Even so, they were considered rather dangerous (as indeed unripe tubers and other parts of the plant can be) and were only used as a pie filling mixed with sugar and fruits. Illustrations of potatoes first appeared in John Gerrard's *Herball* (1597). He believed the vegetable should be "either roasted in the embers or boyled and eaten with oyle, vinegar and pepper or dressed any other way by the hand of cunning in cookerie" but his advice was largely ignored.

It took another hundred years before potatoes became established as a food crop in Ireland and northern England, especially in Lancashire where they were boiled into a stew called "lobscouse". In the 1700's they also caught on in southern Britain by the upper classes who layered slices of potato into rich pies with mace, cinnamon, sugar and wine or they boiled small ones to be mixed with fashionable salads.

In Georgian Britain potatoes began to flourish. Philip Miller in the 1768 issue of his *Gardening Dictionary* declared them "so well known as to need no description." In 1833 William Cobbett noted that the poor were substituting potatoes for bread. By mid-century, they were being sold ready baked by street vendors for a penny.

By the late 1950's for the first time raw potatoes were being cut into strips and fried (French fashion according to Mrs Beeton) and so the humble chip was born. The potato has never looked back!
PETER ARMSTRONG

UPDATING THE SOCIETY

Over the years the Society has updated its methods of providing services to the members. Originally the members only met occasionally in hired premises. Then it was decided to provide gardening requisites to members and Derek Mountain stored and ran the 'shop' from his garage. Later when we acquired the site in Ifield Avenue the 'shop' functioned from there. During the 1970's the Committee and members of the Society set about building the hall. It was at this time that Life Membership was offered for £5.00 which at that time was a fortune. Once the hall was built the Groups were formed and met there once a month. Social evenings were arranged by several of the groups and the kitchen became a great asset.

When Newsletters were produced at a later date these were virtually all delivered by hand. Membership records were kept on cards and all address labels were hand-written. By the time we had 2,300 members in the late 1980's this had become a very onerous task, and so was the delivery of the Newsletters.

Over the years the Society's Flower Shows have been held in various places, marquees, the Hawth Theatre and the Society's hall. The biggest show was that celebrating the 40th Anniversary held at the Hawth Theatre in 1992 which was opened by Ann Swithinbank. We now hold four shows annually plus various Groups' shows, all held in the hall.

At present we have seven horticultural groups plus the Bridge group. Our President Mabel Clackson runs quiz nights to raise money for the Society. Even with this money and generous donations from the Bridge Group and Bonsai Group the Society made a loss in 2006, for the first time in 54 years.

The Society now has a website and you will have seen Pete Nash's article in the last Newsletter. If you are a member with access to the internet make sure that Pete Nash our Membership Secretary has your email address. Contact him on email: peteandbarbs1@tesco.net

Another innovation has been the introduction of craft stands at the 2007 Summer Show, in the marquee on the grass in front of the Hall. Craft stands will again be included in the Summer show on 14 June and of course we will have the plant sales as usual.

In the mid 1990's the membership began to decline and has continued to do so. We used to think that when married couples reached forty plus they would want to become green-fingered gardeners and would join

However, the one thing that hasn't changed over the years, is the Society's objectives which are:

'..... to further horticultural interest by arranging meetings, shows and visits, and to provide facilities for the supply of horticultural requisites'

This we still try very hard to do. We have more groups now than we had in the past and each of them endeavours to broaden the knowledge of members who attend. All the Groups would welcome new members and help to further their knowledge of gardening.

MICK REED

FRUIT & VEGETABLE GROUP

The provisional programme for the remainder of 2008 is as follows:

The Group meets in the Hall on the second Monday of each month at 8.00pm.

April 14	David Cheston – 'From Farm to Supermarket'
May 12	Not yet finalised
June 19	Not yet finalised
July 14	Richard Bailey – 'Unusual Vegetables To Grow'
August 11	Not yet finalised
September 8	Tim Pierce – 'Questions & Answers on Fruit and Veg'
October 6	Not yet finalised
November 10	Mark Dobel (Little Mynthurst) 'A Modern Kitchen Garden'
December 8	Not yet finalised.

Speakers cost money. It is difficult to justify the expense if the meetings are not supported. Please spread the word about the group.

Grab a friend and bring him/her along!

If you have any suggestions for an evenings activity please speak to Jackie Whiting