

TALKS & EVENTS

A long overdue promised mailbag this month as well as a lowdown on the happenings at the RCHS in 2016. Committee Member Patricia Swindells gives us a great insight into some events that I know many members are very much looking forward to.

Over to Patricia...

The 2016 season of talks and events for the Ruislip Central Horticultural Society has begun with a very entertaining talk by Jim Buttress (Channel 4 presenter). He talked for over an hour on 'London's Royal Parks' dispensing facts with amusing anecdotes on what goes on behind the scenes. He highlighted the dedication of the gardeners who keep the gardens in the best possible condition for the millions of visitors who come at every season of the year. Perhaps even more interesting were his tales of what went wrong!

Throughout the year there will be speakers on Growing Fuchsias for the Garden and Show bench; Kew Gardens; and the Making of Henstead Exotic Garden. The final talk of the year will be given by Pippa Greenwood. Details of all these will be found on the R.C.H.S. website.

Our next talk is on **Tuesday, April 19th** at our usual venue of St Lawrence Church Hall, Pinner, HA5 2SJ, starting at 8pm. The topic is 'Creating a Butterfly Garden' by David Bevan, who has had a long association with conservation and wild flowers.

Sir David Attenborough is President of the *Butterfly Conservation* and he wants to spread the message of conserving butterflies and moths across the world. "Butterflies are some of the loveliest wild creatures we have in the countryside," says Sir David Attenborough. "However, they are in trouble".

Here is our chance to find out how we can do our bit by knowing what to plant in our gardens and window boxes to provide food for butterflies.



Clematis Group 3, Pruned ready for Spring

As well as providing talks the Society also has three shows a year appropriately Spring, Summer and Autumn. These shows are designed so that our members can exhibit flowers, pot plants, fruit and vegetables. There is a sharing of ideas and information and of course the awarding of prizes. However the spirit of these shows is one of support and encouragement and the exhibitors display a wide variety of experience. One thing is for sure once you have exhibited you get bitten by the bug and it becomes addictive! Please consider entering and if you are a member and would like to exhibit please go to the website and view the schedule. There are classes for photography, craft items and domestic produce. If exhibiting is not for you then please come along and support our members. **The next show is on Saturday, 2nd of April, 1pm to 4.30pm at the Great Barn, Ruislip.**

Finally, throughout the year we have one off events such as the Plant Sale on the 16th April (10am-12.30pm at 106 Evelyn Ave, Ruislip); a coach trip to the 'Gardeners World Live' at the NEC on June 14th. A demonstration of Floral Art in July and a Quiz in October.

There is something for everyone and the Society welcomes old and new members to all these events. If you have never been to any of our events then you are very welcome to come along. Look at our website <http://ruisliphorticultural.org.uk/>

We look forward to seeing you throughout 2016.

Thank you Patricia, well, as I promised this month we are going to address some gardening questions that have come through to us over the past few months, any question put in an email to the panel will be addressed in return by email, however here are a few we think maybe useful to all gardeners out there. Please keep those questions coming in to rchstalks@gmail.com

RCHS MAILBAG

Q I have noticed that due to the mild winter many of my clematis are already shooting and some have flower buds on, what's going on, these are not normally in flower until August! Sally, Ruislip Manor.

A You are not alone! It may seem harsh, however if the Clematis you are referring to is group 3, this group comprises of clematis that flower from mid- to late- summer on the terminal 60cm (2ft) or so of the current year's growth. If this type is left unpruned growth will continue from where it ended the previous season, resulting in a tangled mass of growth, flowering often well above eye level and stems bare at the base. These late-flowering clematis are best pruned back hard in February each year to the lowest pair of buds. So even if they have started shooting and you haven't pruned it since last year, then do it now.

Q I'm looking for a fast growing climber; however, it is for a North facing wall, can you help? Martin, Eastcote.

A Martin, one I have growing on my own wall which is north west works fantastically well and that is Climbing Hydrangea Anomala Subsp. Petiolaris. It is fantastic for shade and low sun walls, slow to get going however, once it has found its roots and comfortable it will rocket. It bears huge lacecap style hydrangea flowers (See September 2015 issue on RCHS website). This climber has the *RHS Award of Garden Merit*.

See you on the **2nd April at the RCHS Spring Show**, The Great Barn, Ruislip, which this year, has been kindly sponsored by *Gibbs Gillespie*.

Warren