



# RUISLIP CENTRAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

**JUST** over a year ago the Ruislip Central Horticultural Society hosted a fantastic evening with the very well-known Horticulturist Bob Flowerdew. We asked Bob for his ideas on how we could introduce children to horticulture and engage them in the great hobby that many of us adults couldn't do without. Bob came up with some great ideas of which the RCHS took forward.

*I would like to introduce RCHS Show Manager Patricia Swindells who took this idea forward to a very successful outcome, and explains how so many children became involved.*

How many children when asked "What is their favourite pastime" would answer gardening? Not many would be the answer. However this might be about to change as schools are seeing the advantages that come from engaging their pupils in gardening clubs and societies like the Royal Horticultural Society initiating the campaign for School Gardening. Ruislip Central Horticultural Society has also started to engage with the younger generation with their

*"Spring has Sprung"* competition in the Spring Show. All those who attended the show remarked on the high quality of the exhibits on show from *The Sacred Heart Primary School, Ruislip Gardens Primary School and Lady Banks Primary School*. Many Secondary and Primary schools in Hillingdon have very active gardening clubs as I can testify as a governor at *Glebe Primary School*.

So why this interest in engagement with the younger generation? Well they are our future and with so many competing activities gardening could lose out on a whole generation unless some positive action is taken. However beside this 'selfish' motive there is a lot of evidence that shows that

gardening has many benefits for the youngsters themselves. Educationalists know that getting pupils engaged results in them getting outside, away from computers and video games and undertaking valuable exercise. The young gardeners also develop social skills such as verbal communication, interaction with others and learning to work as a team. They have to develop listening skills for taking and understanding instructions. They must be disciplined in order to get things done and perhaps most importantly they develop resilience i.e. the ability to accept and learn from failure as well as success!

**On Tuesday 15th September HEATHER ANGEL (British nature photographer, author and TV presenter) will be coming to give a talk. Please call 01923 451616 for details.**



Many parents worry that hobbies and activities can encroach on their child's learning but in fact children who join a gardening club or involve themselves in gardening are actually re-enforcing, enhancing, stimulating and supporting their learning. This can be easily illustrated for example in Mathematics children are constantly measuring and weighing. They are recognising symmetry and patterns. They also have to work to a budget.

Pupils are constantly using their literacy skills because they have to read instructions; they may produce posters with regards to shows and sales. They make records for others to follow. They also have an early introduction to Latin! Their Geographical knowledge is improved by their learning about ecology, soils and weather. Even History is supported when the pupils learn about the discovery of plants and the natural and man forced movement of plants. They are encouraged to use their computer skills to design gardens and record their activities. The pupils are asked to produce drawings and sketches. The pupils become familiar with the scientific principles behind concepts of Acid/Alkaline, Water cycle, Photosynthesis and Phototropism.

So what should be evident is that gardening is good for the younger generation and if it is good for them then it goes without saying that it is good for the rest of us! All the advantages that have been listed above apply to all of us – it keeps us fit, active in mind and body and it provides a very strong link between the generations.

Next month we will be bringing you results and pictures from the **RCHS Summer Show**. We will also be featuring our mailbag - you can email the RCHS with any gardening queries you would like to put to the panel on [rchstalks@gmail.com](mailto:rchstalks@gmail.com).

If you would like full details on upcoming events visit [www.ruisliphorticultural.org.uk](http://www.ruisliphorticultural.org.uk).

Until next month.

*Warren*