



**FRENSHAM &
DOCKENFIELD
HORTICULTURAL
SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER**

No 169 August 2023

INTRODUCTION...

by Sharon Bleach



It is amazing and encouraging to see that many of the plants that appeared to be dead after the winter, have actually survived. We have shrubs which have 'come back to life' and other plants which are positively thriving from the weather challenges!

One of my dahlias (Café au Lait) seems to have grown even bigger through the neglect and hot/cold/hot weather in the last 12 months and we now have an amazing display of flowers – my challenge is to keep them blooming until the Autumn Show.....

Plenty of social events ahead for FDHS – see below for more information on what is coming up...

COMING UP...

Saturday 9th September - FDHS Autumn Show, Marindin Hall

Thursday 14th September Dahlia nursery and trials gardens visit – see more below

Thursday 28th September 7:30 pm - FDHS social evening Marindin Hall – Quiz night

Thursday 26th October 7:30 pm – FDHS AGM and social (mainly social!)

Friday 24th November – Members supper, Marindin Hall



Team Rose at the Ready

Following the great success of our Rose Competition last year, Team Rose (Penny Hearn, Annette Clayson and Ruth Murphy) couldn't wait to get this one on the road, along with wearing the now infamous Team Rose T-shirts! With a one adjustment made to the five categories available to enter and a streamlined voting slip, we were ready.

A total of 17 entrants (13 FDHS members and 4 non-members) with a total of 59 roses exhibited across the five categories. This was slightly less than 2022; was the cooler spring to blame? Based on those who did enter, we think not! Well done to everyone who came along to enter and to the 219 Fayre attendees who voted for their favourites.

Annette Clayson took charge of the score sheet and at 1pm the voting frenzy began, with Penny ably guiding all who entered the Marquee to vote.

Voting closed around 3pm and the big count revealed the following winners, who each received a rose themed prize and certificate. Congratulations!

- Class 1 – Best scented rose – Jo Gayton and Janet Caiger with 51 votes
- Class 2 – Best rose bud – Jo Gayton and Janet Caiger with 44 votes
- Class 3 – Most unusual rose - Sheila Aiken with 74 votes for Rose Tequilla Sunrise
- Class 4 – Most romantic rose - Sheila Aiken with 68 votes
- Class 5 – Best buttonhole - Sharon Bleach with 96 votes for Rose Peach Melba with eucalyptus

Overall non-member winner with a grand total of 127 votes across all categories was Jane Thorne with her beautiful selection of roses from her garden, winning her a shrub rose 'For your eyes only' donated by Seale Rose Garden Nursery along with FDHS membership. The roses she entered in order of the 5 categories listed above were:

- Young Lycidas
- Iris
- Koko Loco
- Evelyn
- Claude Monet



The FDHS member overall winner was Sheila Aiken with a total of 197 votes across all categories, well done Sheila and congratulations on being awarded the coveted Perring Cup. Seale Rose Garden had donated both overall winner prizes and Sheila took possession of a beautiful lemon shrub rose 'Arthur Bell', along with the cup.



Sharon Bleach winner of Class 5 Jo Gayton & Janet Caiger winners class 1 & 2

A big thank you to Penny and Annette for volunteering to help again this year and to all our members and Frensham & Docketfield villagers that entered or came along to vote. If you would love to join in the fun next year and offer to help out on the day, please get in touch.

Visit to Gilbert's Dahlias - Thursday 14th September

Karen has arranged for an exciting outing to Gilbert's Dahlias close to Romsey, for FDHS members on Thursday 14th September. This (as the name says) is a specialist dahlia nursery and we have arranged a talk by the grower (at 2pm) as well as having the opportunity to walk around their trials field (some uneven ground) and see what beautiful flowers might be available next year.

They also have a small café for refreshments at the nursery and if the weather is right may have bunches of dahlias to purchase as well as plants. If you are interested in attending this visit, please email events@fdhs.org.uk to book your place. We will try to sort out car share/lifts for people once we have an idea of numbers.

Their website if you are keen to see more ahead of a visit is: www.gilbertsdahlias.co.uk

Here are a selection of the questions and answers from the evening at the Church of the Good Shepherd at the end of May.

What are your best tips for stopping mould and black spot on roses?

Consider planting a resistant variety – David Austin roses have a good selection.

Good hygiene important – removing fallen leaves from the ground and destroying them, heavily mulching and feed in Spring to improve health of plant. Can try fungicides if non-organic!

We have a 21 year old wildlife pond which we try to leave it as much as possible to its own devices. In the last few years it has become more and more overgrown with an invasive water weed which is incredibly difficult to remove. How do we get that out without removing the larvae and the creatures it was designed to host?

Invasive water weed – we think its *Crassula helmsii* – New Zealand pygmyweed.

Leave cleaning out the pond until the end of the summer – September is good, as the water is still warm, but insects will have stopped pupating so there is minimal risk of disturbing larvae. Leave any vegetation extracted from the pond on the side for 24 hours so anything caught up can crawl back in again, then dump the lot on the compost heap. Bales of barley straw do seem to help ponds affected by from pond weed.

How should I plant azaleas?

Ericaceous compost if in a pot – likes a part shade/shade aspect. In the ground plant spring or autumn – neutral to acidic soil. Make sure that the stem where it emerges from the ground does not get covered up – it is a good idea to plant azaleas and other rhododendrons slightly proud of the ground so that as the soil settles, they are not below the soil level and at risk of debris accumulating around the lower stem, causing moisture to be trapped and cause rot to set in. Feed in spring – slow-release fertilizer such as BFB, or proprietary feed. Mulch well to keep moisture in the soil, with organic material (not manure – that will be too nutrient rich for an ericaceous plant like a rhododendron and do more harm than good) – paper and cardboard– maybe with leaves or similar sprinkled on top to disguise it; sheep clippings and feathers from old pillows work well too!

Carrot fly, leek moth, rust, canker, asparagus mite, potatoes blight, scab, tomato blight not to mention slugs, snails and caterpillars. How do you grow anything to eat let alone exhibit whilst staying organic?

Companion planting – good hygiene of tools. Greenhouse crops, good ventilation. Avoid watering foliage. Feed regularly and improve soil with home garden compost or organic farmyard manure. Crop rotation. No dig approach seems to help.

How can you get the best out of growing hydrangeas?

Plant hydrangeas in a moist but well drained soil – preferably in a slightly shady position, and where they are not exposed to the wind, so they do not dry out too quickly. Hydrangeas will grow on any type of soil, but the blue-flowered ones will tend to turn pink if they are on alkaline soil. Hydrangeas, like many shrubs, develop very thick and woody stems, so it is a good idea with a mature plant to cut out one in 4 or 5 older stems at the base in Spring – new lush growth will appear from the base. Hydrangeas have a tendency to die back a bit from the tips over winter, so cut back dead twiggy

growth and old flower heads back to this year's set of leaves in spring – or even to a set of leaves lower down, if the stems are getting leggy. Flowers are produced on this year's growth with hydrangeas, so you are not risking losing any blooms by doing this, instead you will have a lush and well-balance plant.

What do you need to do to young pear trees of about 3 years old, to produce more fruit?

To train as a cordon or espalier- summer prune new growth back to a couple of buds. Winter prune leaders approx. ¼ of last years growth and lateral branches to 3-4 buds. Late winter feed and mulch.

Given the truly exceptional weather conditions we had over the last year do you think it's still worth planting things that we have got used to being "hardy" in the UK but clearly weren't this year, like phormiums and Pittosporums and salvias?

Yes! But maybe consider position in garden – avoid planting in potential frost pockets and exposed areas. Consider planting into pots and moving to a sheltered spot for winter, or fleece wrap plant.

Have any of you had good experiences with peat free composts?

Ruth – very mixed results over the last three/four years. This year had a complete fail with tomatoes. Had good germination but then died off very quickly (perhaps old compost!). However, other seedlings were successful and grown on strongly.

Caroline – I note Squires (other garden vendors are available) sell at least 2 such composts – their own is made up of recycled old pallets, coir mats, etc. – anything organic, with some residual nutritive value in them; the other is by Miracle-Gro, who produce a compost made of wood pulp with added nutrients. I have used the Miracle-Gro before and found it very acceptable

I used to be able to grow peas successfully but in recent years I have had problems with germination despite protecting the row? Any ideas?

Old seed, soil too cold for germination? Try starting off undercover in pots or root trainer modules.

FDHS Garden Visits to Binsted Place and Wheatley House



Our thanks go to Harry Glover who organised these garden visits for our members.

On Thursday 22nd June a number us were able to go and visit these two fabulous local gardens and enjoy the company, the (very warm) sunshine and views. Both owners were great hosts and talked to us about how the gardens had developed over time and their thoughts for how to develop them further in future.

Anyone who missed this outing might be pleased to know about Wheatley House opening for the NGS this coming weekend – See attached poster.

FDHS Autumn Show Saturday 9th September Marindin Hall

We look forward to welcoming people to the Autumn Show and seeing what everyone has been enjoying in their garden recently. Please note the following points:

- Please can holders of cups for the Autumn Show return them to Annabel Sommerfelt by the end of August suitably clean and polished so they they can be presented on Show Day
- Entry forms for the show are in the members handbook or you can send an email to bleachsharon@gmail.com with the class numbers you wish to enter.
- Entries should be submitted by 12 noon on Thursday 7th September.
- Staging of exhibits is between 09:15 and 10:45 on the morning of the show.
- The show is open for viewing between 14:30 and 16:00 (along with tea and cakes of course!) after which exhibits are to be collected.
- Announcement of prize winners 15:45.
- Any offers of cakes for the tea and cakes gratefully received – please let me know if you are willing and able to help.
- After her recent talk our floral arrangement judge Elizabeth Barralet did ask for more arrangements – just one per member would be fine – let's see if we can surprise her with the number of items to judge at this show!

Please note: We also have an amendment to the Carrot Cake Muffins recipe in your membership booklets as it does not say when to add the sultanas which are in the ingredients list. These should be added when the carrot is added at step 3.

Also do let us know if you think there are other classes that it would be good to include in 2024

Other recent FDHS events:

Elizabeth Barralet who has judged our Floral Arrangements classes on a number of occasions gave a very interesting talk in June. She talked about how she started in Floristry and then eventually ended up Judging at Shows. Her demonstrations were really impressive showing how a few tweaks to arrangements and a 'less is more' approach on many occasions can result in more impressive displays. She also talked us through how floristry design has changed over the years with many fewer men now exhibiting and more modern designs being seen with less formality in the approach – see above for her challenge for our Autumn Show!

My Favourite Plant was the topic of a presentation and discussion in July. Many different plants and reasons for those being favourites. Caroline has a copy of the slide show if anyone wants a copy let her know.

Ben Berthoud also shared a useful way of being able to judge the age of a mature tree:

Measure the circumference in cm at 1 metre height and divide by 2.5 – he has tried this out and it certainly works fairly accurately on trees of known ages.

FDHS 75th Anniversary Celebration at Quinnettes Barn, Churt



About half of our members got together at Quinnettes Barn in Churt at the beginning of July for a great lunch event to celebrate the FDHS reaching the grand old age of 75! Lovely weather and a great speaker in Jim Buttress, complemented the delicious meal and of course brilliant company!

Jim spoke about how he started gardening to avoid other more scholarly lessons and the different roles he had undertaken through his career. He had some good tales about working for the Royal Parks including memories of our late Queen and her mother too. He was very inspiring in terms of how a passion can turn into a career even if your only formal qualification is a cycling proficiency certificate! Jim went from our event to the Hampton Court Show where he was involved in adjudicating the judging.

The food supplied by Maggie's Kitchen in Elstead was really fabulous – and we were brilliantly supported by the local guides who served and cleared and washed up!

We were very pleased with the gifts local businesses generously gave us for our 75th anniversary lunch raffle - a £75 gift voucher from Lindsey Clark in Churt - who have on offer not only aggregates, compost, chipped bark etc., but also a number of gardening perquisites:

- a £25 voucher from Squires Garden Centre in Frensham;
- a £25 voucher from the butchers Hands of Rowledge;
- a lovely scented deciduous azalea from Millais Nurseries;
- an enormous blue flowered hydrangea, some good sized lavender plants and an unusual fern from C. G. Mathias in Tilford. They offer hedges and trees but also few other plants at wholesale prices - they are happy to welcome members of the public who make an appointment.

Attendees at the lunch also received their copy of a Brief History of the FDHS a book about the Society which Neil Mumford has compiled with the help of members past and present. This is a great book and Neil has spent a great deal of time and effort on this project. It is very interesting to understand from the various stories how we became the Society we are today. We look forward to hearing what memories it brings back for people.

All members will be getting a copy – we are gradually delivering them or you can pick up a copy at the next events. If you are keen to get your copy sooner, do let Neil or I know and we can arrange something!

Other garden related activities and dates for your diary...

Caroline Plant has volunteered to lead the renovation of the 25 sq metres of garden on the road frontages of the Marindin Hall. This will involve a lot of new planting, most of which she has sourced from her own garden.

Caroline is looking for a few volunteers to help with 2 one-off jobs - first, ripping out some of the existing shrubs; then, on another day, covering the area with Strulch - processed mineralised straw which acts as a weed-excluding mulch and a soil improver. We're looking at doing this on any of these days -

- Saturday 16 September - morning or afternoon
- Sunday 17 September - morning or afternoon
- Saturday 23 September - morning or afternoon
- Sunday 24 September - morning or afternoon
- Saturday 30 September - morning or afternoon
- Sunday 1 October - morning or afternoon

Who will volunteer to spend a couple of hours on one or both days? Please contact Caroline on 07900-287361 or caroline.tonkinxxx@gmail.com with your availability - sooner rather than later, so she can co-ordinate dates. You will need to bring your own gardening clothes (including gloves - the rose bushes will be prickly) and spades, or whatever else you think fit. Thanks!

Finally – we are thinking about **the Members Supper** and how to make it easier, in particular to clear up. As many of you will realise the kitchen at the Marindin Hall is not ideally suited to washing up all the crockery and cutlery for the size of party we tend to have - so ideas are being considered to make it simpler. If anyone has ideas we should include please do email me and we will add them in to our thinking... so far we have the following on our list to consider - Fish and Chips, Street Food vendor(s), Paellas. What other ideas?

I look forward to seeing people very soon and of course at the Autumn Show if not before!
Don't forget to enter as many or few classes as you wish to – even one might win you a prize!

Best wishes and happy gardening,

Sharon



All unattributed articles are by the Editor Sharon Bleach.