



Summer Newsletter

No 181



July 2026

Editors Notes

I am writing this article just as the thermometer once again hits 30c and no doubt there will be more casualties in the garden, and it is clear that we have to get used to the new normal and try as best we can to adapt our gardens to warm wet winters and hot dry summers. This leads me onto the fact that Caroline's article in the last newsletter about mulching was very apt, it is clear from our garden, that the areas that have been mulched are looking much better than those that have hot baked soil. As our garden is sun facing with very little shade, we have also decided that come Autumn, we will redesign part of our garden and also plant more trees in order to try and help with the climate changing and provide much needed shade for some of our plants. I am sure you all have badly scorched plants in your gardens.

As you will see from this newsletter the society enjoyed another successful Frensham Fayre and well done to Caroline and her volunteers on the stall, along with those of you who contributed plants. I understand the quality was exceptional and along with the success of the Rose Show this only enhances the societies reputation.



Our Hydrangea- Annabelle looking worst for the scorching summer weather

Neil

Veg Corner

Coping with Carrot Fly- Many of us will have had crops of carrots ruined by the larvae of Carrot Fly eating their way down through our carefully grown roots. Even a single tunnel in a carrot has the ability to completely destroy the flavour of what should be a beautiful tasty home-grown crop.

Exclusion of the Carrot Fly with fine netting is the only sure way of ensuring a good crop in my experience. Others recommend and carry out intercropping carrots with onions or leeks in anticipation of the scent of the alliums putting off the flies. I have not tried this? Have any of our members??



Carrots interplanted with Leeks (Lancia) at “The Rewilded Walled Garden” Knepp Estate, Sussex visited in early June this year.

A fascinating story of how a large walled garden has been redesigned and planted with perennial and herbaceous flowers that has little to do with “Rewilding”, despite its name!

Well worth a visit.

In the past I have used a complete covering of fine (1mm mesh) netting, supported by Geoff Hamilton’s hoops (polythene water piping with rebars pushed into the ends). This works but you have to be very careful there are no gaps at the ends of the tunnel and the mesh needs to be fly-proof all along the sides. If there are any gaps they will find them. In the past I found this difficult to manage as it needs to be dis-assembled for thinning and weeding, and, because of the fine mesh, not much water or rain gets through to the plants. I read somewhere that Carrot-fly do not fly higher than 2 feet above the ground and I have always wondered if this is really true or just another old gardeners’ tale with little factual evidence. Surely the wind sometimes gusts them higher or they fly higher in certain conditions; like looking for likely plants to lay eggs on?

Three years ago I thought I would put it to the test so I cut my 4 foot wide 1mm mesh netting in half lengthwise and attached it to uprights around a raised bed to provide a 2 foot high barrier. The netting was stapled into the timber surround being careful not to have any fly-sized gaps. The carrots were now open for any thinning and weeding and to the elements for rainfall.

The result? My first completely Carrot-fly-free crop of carrots. This result was repeated last year and this year's netting was recently erected.



Above is the Carrot bed at Jeffreys Cottage with first sowing in background (cropping now- Nantes Early) and 4 rows of main crops showing good germination (Chantenay Red Cored, Nantes and Sweet Candle). The netting is looking a bit ragged (it is nearly 10 years old) but still seems to work.

Note from Neil

For the last two years I have grown some of my carrots (Sweet Candle) in black rubbish bins, which are about 1.2m high and have had no casualties to carrot fly. In the past I have also sown varieties such as resistafly and flyaway and these seem to have good resistance. Dan may also have a point in perhaps companion planting with onions, garlic etc, or even grown with a barrier of herbs such as Rosemary may possibly work.

Dan Bosence

Inter-village competitions

As members of the Surrey Horticultural Federation, FDHS can enter the inter-village competitions. Let me know if any member or group of members who would like to contribute to FDHS submissions to the competitions this year, and as a team we can enter something wonderful.

This year the competitions are:

The **Close Brooks Cup** hosted by Elstead on **12th September**. Submissions must include a flower arrangement, a display of fruit and vegetables and a pot plant.

The **Snow cup**, titled "Mirror Image" which will be in Headley on **5th September**.

The **Floral Art Cup** which will be hosted by Grayshott. Date to be advised.

I will have more details in the coming weeks. Let me know if you'd like to do something for these competitions and I will keep you on the loop.



Close Brooks Cup winners 2025 Tilford Horticultural Society.

Jilly Steventon

Society Events

Plant Heritage Talk **Thursday 27th August.**

Following the success of the last two years with well attended summer talks, we will once again hold a talk, this time by David Ford who will be talking about Plant Heritage and the National Collections.

David is the current Chair of the Surrey section of Plant Heritage as well as being a previous Treasurer of the overall organisation and also holds the National Collection of Quince plants so is well qualified to talk all Plant Heritage and National Collections, please come along to what will be a very interesting and insightful Thursday 27th August.

Marindin Hall 7.30 for 8pm

Autumn Show **Saturday 5th September**

Please ensure that your entries are ready
for judging by 10.30am.

Viewing and prize giving will be from
2.30pm to 4pm

Society Annual General Meeting

Thursday 22nd October - Marindin Hall 7.30 for 8pm.

As well as holding the AGM, we have the pleasure of welcoming Dr Jassy Draculic, a plant pathologist from the Royal Horticultural Society, researching the biology and management of honey fungus in UK gardens.

Advance reminder: Our annual Members Supper will be held on Friday 27th November at the Marindin Hall 7.30 for 8pm

Frensham Fayre

The Frensham Fayre Plant stall this year was a huge success. We had many more plants than ever before and we made over £1000!!! This is a great contribution to our coffers.

We had a great team of 16 volunteers helping with the plant stall on the day which was just as well since it was busy! Thank you all so much and thanks also to everyone who contributed plants.

This year we had a great banner on the gazebo and our aprons and hand out plant care/membership cards made us all feel much more professional.

The biggest thank you must, of course, go to Caroline Plant who organised the plant stall as she has done for many years. Well done!



From L to R: Kate Aitkinm Sue Franklin, David Williams, Caroline Plant, Jo Gayton and Janet Caiger

Caroline Plant

Rose Competition 2026

Once again, we had a fabulous display in the marquee at Frensham Fayre for our annual rose competition. We had a huge number of people coming along to sniff the roses – particularly those entered in the ‘most scented rose’ category but also many others too!



Overall, we had 38 entries, which received 902 votes from the people who came to see the display. Our winners this year for each category were:

- Best scented rose: Jo Gayton
- Best rose bud: Annabel Sommerfelt
- Most unusual rose: Jane Thorne
- Most romantic rose: Jo Gayton
- Best wedding buttonhole: Sharon Bleach

Each of the winners received a bottle of rose feed to help along their roses to even better strength next year.

Our overall winners for the competition were:



Member with most votes: Jane Thorne (pictured left), who retained the Perring Cup and received a beautiful rose bush kindly donated by Seale Rose Garden to add to her collection.

Non-member with most votes: Margaret Hurley (pictured right) who also received a beautiful rose bush donated by Seale Rose Garden and membership of FDHS for a year. We welcome Margaret to FDHS and look forward to seeing her at meetings and shows too.

Thank you to all the helpers at this competition and to all who entered.



Sharon Bleach

COMPANION PLANTING



Gardening with nature rather than resorting to chemical pesticides sums up the approach to growing vegetable and herbs presented by Belinda Allen who attended our May meeting.

Belinda rattled off a compendium of advice on how to make our gardens compatible with wildlife by controlling pests without harming other desirable species. Gardening the organic way starts with feeding the soil using compost and other organic materials to favour the growth of beneficial microbes and invertebrates that promote soil fertility.

The 5 pillars of organic gardening are:-

1. Building and maintaining soil life.
2. Encouraging biodiversity by having a wild-life pond and installing bird feeders.
3. Using resources responsibly, e.g having water butts and building raised beds with re-cycled materials such as timber and plastic to line them.
4. Avoid using chemicals harmful to wildlife
5. Maintain healthy well balanced areas by planting a diversity of crops.

Many examples of using companion planting to deter insect pests from crops were described such as

- The use of nasturtiums as sacrificial plants by planting them next to cabbages to attract aphids away from the cabbages.
- Marigolds too give off a scent that deters aphids making them ideal companion plants for a variety of plants including tomatoes and cucumbers. Marigolds can also deter the carrot root fly, or it can also be controlled by growing onions and garlic alongside carrots.

We were reminded that many insects such as hover flies, ladybirds and wasps are beneficial as they destroy other insect pests and play an important role as pollinators so these should be encouraged.

She also reminded us that the use of any pesticides even on lawns should be avoided, what's wrong with the odd weed but there are ways of managing pests, such as the use of nematodes, to control different types of pests organically. Neem oil was recommended as a natural product for controlling insect pests the organic way and also homemade garlic spray.

Recent talks & activities

Since the last newsletter it has been a busy time for FDHS members and so I thought we would recap on the various activities that have taken place.

April: Stella Diamond talking about the Therapy Garden

Stella spoke very eloquently about the value that the Therapy Garden in Normandy brings to their clients. It was started by a passionate local lady and is now a significant part of the local community in and around Normandy. The many aspects of increasing health from being in the outside and growing plants are being proven on a weekly basis by the results the clients benefit from. A very interesting and inspiring talk. It is well worth keeping an eye out for the Therapy Garden Open Days under the NGS to see what they do, they are not generally open to the public.

May: potting up day

A new idea which worked well for the plant stall at the Frensham Fayre. A group of members got together to pot on some smaller plants in time for them to be in great shape for sale at the Fayre. The plants were well received and so you can expect to see this appear again in next year's calendar. Don't forget to take cuttings as you prune and pot things up if you have spare plants when dividing up your plants.

May: Walk and talk at Forest Research Arboretum at Alice Holt hosted by Chris Reynolds

One Saturday morning we had the fabulous opportunity of a guided tour of the Arboretum where Chris talked about the history of the arboretum and the various species that had been planted over the years; he explained the current research underway to find trees that will cope with climate change, so that our forestry industry can provide trees for commercial use in 50+ years' time (a generational project); identifying which trees from other climates seem to be doing well over the past years of hot and dry summers as well as wet winters. It was an interesting tour as we dodged from one patch of shade to another and the arboretum was just the place to be on a hot Saturday!

June: Teas in Members Gardens

A lovely, relaxed opportunity to see different gardens in our local area – despite the rain showers and forecast thunderstorms! Thank you to all the hosts and guests for continuing with this tradition despite the weather.

June: Visit to Pepperpot Herbs, Alton

This visit was cancelled due to the temperatures forecast (and exceeded) for the day we had our visit planned. We are in contact with the nursery about the possibility of another date and will let you know if we can arrange something. There is no shade at the nursery and their poly tunnels do get extremely hot, so we need to avoid extremely hot days both for our sakes and their staff.

Sharon Bleach

St Mary's School

French Bean Competition

Early in the Summer Term, Sharon Bleach and Sharon Miller went along to St Mary's School to present this year's Growing Competition. This year it was decided to try vegetables, and all the children were given some Dwarf French bean seeds, and advice about growing them.

Towards the end of the term the two Sharon's returned, and had the difficult task of finding prize winners amongst the many plants that had been brought in from the children's homes for the judging. They were delighted to see so many healthy looking plants - especially as the first set of seeds given out really didn't seem to be doing very well so a new lot of seeds were bought and distributed to all.

Two prize winners from each class were chosen and awarded gifts -in the photo are;

Arthur, Lucie, Mabel, Seffi, Lyla and Wilfie with their beans and prizes.



Everyone who bought their plants back to school were given a packet of seeds to encourage them on their growing journey. We hope the bean plants will continue to flourish over the summer and provide some produce for the children to share with their families.

Sharon Miller
