

Long Eaton and District Horticultural Society

After the usual notices were given out at the meeting on April 17th members had an interesting and informative talk given by Peter Farrow on 'Gardening through the Year'. Peter gave ideas for maintaining blooms and plants through the year both on his allotment and in his garden. The back garden had been transformed by felling some trees, and in the front he made terraces to make use of rather a steep slope, with lots of pots.

There are plants for each season; in Winter hellebores, snowdrops and cyclamen. crocuses and irises . Not only in the garden but the whole of the allotment is dug and prepared for planting out the gladioli and the dahlias intended for exhibiting. Work here is made a lot easier by having a shed for all his tools etc and, importantly, a water supply.

Spring is when many of the unusual shrubs come out, for instance, magnolias. With these you need to be careful of the actual location as they create shade when the leaves come out. Alpine plants also give a lot of colour with their dainty flowers. All available space is made use of to overwinter the corms and tubers meant for exhibiting, even in spare bedrooms –quite time consuming as there can be over 2000, and in the case of gladioli they have to be peeled –by hand to prevent damage.

In May and June there is summer planting of plants, seeds sown earlier and which can now be planted out; also shrubs such as rhododendrons (which don't mind being cut back) and hydrangeas come into flower.

When planting dahlias and gladioli out, both on the allotment and beds in the garden, timing is important if you want to exhibit at all of the shows, meaning a phased approach. Other jobs also need to be done on a regular basis to keep the plants in top condition for instance regular feeding, watering, even using netting as a windbreak. Peter exhibits at all the major shows, e.g. Southport, Chelsea, Hampton Court, Tatton Park, Chatsworth, winning first prize in many, and memorably, Champion of Champions.

In Autumn foliage effects come into their own, grasses, sedums, also planting bulbs, ready for next year. Gardeners are an optimistic group of people, for there is always something to look forward to and plan as part of the yearly cycle. Peter finished with his top ten plants: 10 Hydrangea ; 9 Iris ; 8 Clematis; 7 Hardy Geranium; 6 Alliums; 5 Aquilegia; 4 Daffodils/Narcissi; 3 Hardy cyclamen; 2 Snowdrops; 1 .

The meeting finished after the raffle; the next two meetings are on May 15th and June 19th, both at The Moorland Club, Curzon Street at 7.30 pm