

## Long Eaton Horticultural Society

On Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> May members enjoyed a talk given by Lee Woods on the subject of LILIES and some associated plants. Starting off in January, with hellibores, then on to snowdrops and daffodils and through to May, when we get other associated plants, including Paeonias, Camassias, and even a perennial purple geranium, also fritillarias, including the lovely Crown Imperial, part of the lily family in spring.

Mostly lilies are thought to be summer plants and usually as difficult to grow, but if a few simple rules are followed you can have a rewarding display from May right through to Autumn. When buying lily bulbs it is best to buy on size, as the bigger the bulb the more flowers it will produce, usually 16-22 cms (circumference) and of course healthy ones which are plump and fleshy with no damage. They can also be propagated from seed, by natural division, scales or from bulblets (especially the Asiatic varieties). When planting they should be planted 6" deep and some slow release feed added. Most varieties prefer either acid or alkaline soil and enhanced with blood fish and bone fertiliser, or tomato feed.

Pests - everyone knows the red lily beetle, a major pest, various ways to get rid of them include blasting off the plants with water or being picked off and squashed; they squeak, and if dropped fall on the soil on their backs, so not able to see them. Early wasps also eat the red beetle; incidentally these are good pollinators too. A spray of NEEM oil, (an organic oil also used in treatment of skin complaints) does the job but needs to be repeated from time to time and an insecticide is available as is one for vine weevil, made by Provado.

The first ones to flower are the Asiatic Hybrids, in May to June, and are largely unscented. During summer there are Oriental Trumpet types, easy to grow and hardy, varieties include Beijing Moon and Black Beauty, with reflexed petals. Also Oriental hybrids eg Stargazer, this can be fussy to grow. There is also a big pink one called Sorbonne-beware lily pollen is toxic to cats. These are associated with hydrangeas and clematis, which looks lovely growing up through trees. Aconitum is associated with later varieties, but take care as it is poisonous.

Lee finished with a top tip - they can be overwintered in the cold, but care must be taken not to get waterlogged. There were a selection of various types and associated plants for sale at the end of the talk.

The meeting finished as usual with a raffle. Next two meetings will be on June 19<sup>th</sup> and July 17<sup>th</sup>

Our Summer show will be held on Saturday 14 July at the United Reformed Church, Long Eaton.