



June 2022

Newsletter

PRESIDENT: Jackie Tomnie CHAIR: Wendy Jenkinson 02476 421607
SECRETARY: Angela Shaw 01676 534562 TREASURER: Helen Jones 01564 772645
NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Marion Keeley 07973 911313 Web site: www.bdhs.club

Dear Members,

£380 - an excellent result for BDHS funds from our plant sale on Saturday 14th May! A huge thank you to members who donated plants to sell and to all who came to purchase. We must also thank those who gave up their morning to set up the sales tables, sell the goods, and clear away afterwards. Your Society has made a donation of £100 to Hill Close Gardens, Warwick, in memory of our late Show Secretary David Ashcroft. We have also sponsored an apple tree in Temple Balsall's new heritage fruit orchard, to be named The Queen's Platinum Jubilee Orchard in response to HM's Green Canopy Project. Our sponsored tree is a Peasgood (Nonsuch), a large culinary apple. Originally raised from seed in the 1850s by a Mrs Peasgood of Stamford, Lincs., it both cooks well and is a juicy eater when fully ripe. **Sponsors are welcome to attend the official naming & blessing by the Vicar on Sunday 19th June, starting at 2.30pm in Temple Balsall Church then out to the orchard, before rounding off with tea & cake in the Old Hall. I hope to see some of you there!**

We enjoyed a lovely day out to Hergest Croft & Brobury House Gardens in Herefordshire on Wednesday 25th May. Despite a damp start, we were undeterred – just ask Gloria Cordery & Jean Wood who let neither drizzle nor mobility issues stop them! Thanks to Angela Shaw & Helen Jones for arranging this coach trip.

We have arranged an evening visit at 6.30pm on Thursday 23rd June to the garden of Sarah & Andrew Heath, daughter & son – in – law of BDHS members Celia & Cyril Davis. Their address is 1 Marton House, Birdingbury Rd, Marton, CV23 9RY. Travel is in your own vehicle but note that parking is limited at the Heath's address. Please **DO NOT** park on Birdingbury Rd, obstructing their neighbours, **NOR** by the defibrillator on the wall opposite their driveway. Sarah & Andrew have obtained permission from the owners of the 'Essence of India' round the corner for use of that carpark instead. Access to their garden is through the gate from the rear of the Heath's parking area. Helen Jones emailed travelling directions to you on 15.06.22 – see pg 4 of newsletter too.

Our monthly meeting is a week later in the Village Hall on Thursday 30th June at 8pm, when David Wood will speak about 'The Work of a Master Thatcher'. Refreshments will continue to be served **BEFORE** the meeting as this proved popular last month. Bring your own mug. **Please note: tickets for our next coach trip on Sunday 25th September to RHS Garden Bridgewater in Salford, Greater Manchester, will be on sale at this meeting and also at our Social Evening at 6.30pm, Thursday 28th July, at Pet Hawley's, 19 Alder Lane, Balsall Common.** Our Society is affiliated to the RHS which gives us free entry, so you will only be paying for the coach which is estimated to be £18 per person.

Berkswell Open Gardens is on Sunday 26th June, 11am – 6pm, with 4 of the 8 gardens belonging to our members – Helen also emailed out the flyer for this to you on 15.06.22.

Finally, don't forget that our Members Annual Show is on Saturday 23rd July from 9am at St. Peter's Hall, Balsall Common. The Show Schedule was sent out electronically by Helen as an attachment on 11th May, so you should all be busy beaver away preparing your entries! Please note that the closing date for entries is the **Wednesday before the show** and not the usual Thursday. Last year's cup winners are asked to return their silverware (clean & shining) at the June meeting. It is proposed that members who are baking either for show entries, or refreshments, should submit a form listing ingredients and possible allergens. I'm sure that Helen will send this form out separately.

Enjoy your gardening
Marion

MONTHLY FLOWER STEM & POT PLANT COMPETITION FOR MAY

Flower Stem 1. Barbara Money (Bearded Iris) , 2. Angela Shaw (Rosa 'Gertrude Jekyll'), 3. Diana Jagger (Lupin)

Pot Plant 1. Barbara Haynes (Sarracenia / Pitcher Plant) 2. Alison Watson (succulent Graptopetalum bellum)
3. David Cotterrell (Pelargonium)

SPEAKER REPORT

Plants Amongst the Ruins : Natives & Invaders by Michael Brown

On 26th May, we welcomed back Michael. A garden historian from Northants, he spends much of his time travelling and investigating plants through the ages. He showed us over 50 glorious slides of plants he has found at historical sites & derelict gardens, adding folklore & traditional uses where applicable. Some are considered British natives, some might be called weeds, and some may be found in our gardens. Amongst his slides were:

Buddleia davidii, from China, frequently encroaching along railway embankments. It was one of the plants to re-colonise Chernobyl, post - catastrophe.

Lesser Bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*) is common in poor soil on kerbsides.

Ivy (*Hedera Helix*) which sometimes holds ruinous buildings together!

Valerian (*Centranthus rubra*), of which there are also white & pink forms, can split walls. Not to be confused with true valerian, (*valeriana officinalis*), which in tea form can aid sleep.

Russian Vine (*Fallopia baldschuanica*), or 'Mile a Minute plant', can also split walls and is difficult to dig out.

Wild Thyme (*Thymus serpyllum*) creeps 'like a serpent' and provides fragrance between paving if crushed.

Cowslips (*Primula veris*) may be made into wine. A legend is of St Peter dropping heaven's keys onto the plant.

Coltsfoot (*Tussilago farfara*) has been used for cough sweets (*tussis* means cough in Latin) and has hoof shaped leaves, hence 'coltsfoot'.

Lichens & mosses on old stones have been used as natural dyes.

Eyebright (*Euphrasia officinalis*) is low growing, semi – parasitic on grass, and likes poor soils. It is used in homeopathic eyedrops.

Alexanders (*Smyrniolum olustratum*), commonly found in Norfolk, was introduced by the Romans, and used by the Tudors & Victorians as a food plant.

Wallflower (*Erysimum cheiri*) is wild, yellow and not hugely scented. Arriving with the Normans, it can be found in the building stones of castles & abbeys,

Yellow corydalis (*Pseudofumaria lutea*) originated in the Alps & is easier to grow than the garden blue variety.

Stinking Iris (*Iris foetidissima*) is also called 'Roast Beef Plant' because of the smell when its leaves are rubbed, and has been used as a purge. In Tudor times, gardens had little colour as autumn began, apart from the bright orange seed pods of this plant, hence another name, 'Gladwin'.

Fleabane (*Pulicaria dysenterica*) once used with rushes on the floors of houses, or in bedding, to deter fleas.

Snapdragon (*Antirrhinum majus*) around since Tudor times, commonly growing at the base of walls.

Common Polypody (*Polypodium vulgare*) likes damp walls & has been used as a laxative and to treat coughs.

Sweet Violet (*Viola odorata*) often found at monastic sites as the flower is associated with the Virgin Mary. Violet syrup is used in homeopathic medicine.

Maidenhair Spleenwort (*Asplenium trichomanes*) will grow out of old walls. The Victorian's passion for fern collecting to create garden ferneries, saw a decrease in ferns in the countryside.

Nipplewort (*Lapsana communis*) whose flowers resemble nipples was used by nursemaids to treat sore nipples.

Navelwort (*Umbilicus rupestris*) so named because of its navel – like leaves grows on old damp walls.

Water Crowfoot (*Ranunculus aquatilis*) grows in slow flowing waters & has been used to treat gout & rheumatism.

Wall Acre (*Sedum acre*) grows in walls and has been used to treat burst boils and for skin poultices.

Burnet Rose (*Rosa pimpinellifolia*) is easy to grow, has black hips, but suckers. Medieval people believed its 5 petals represented the 5 wounds of Christ. Rosewater & rose oil can be made.

Scotch Thistle (*Onopordum acanthium*) apparently appears everywhere Mary Queen of Scots was held, as she scattered its seeds. Beloved by bees.

Birds Foot Trefoil due to its seedheads (*Lotus corniculatus*) is beneficial to insects. Also called 'Bacon & Eggs'.

Glastonbury Thorn (*Crataegus monogyna* 'Biflora') flowers a little at Christmas and allegedly came to Britain with Joseph of Arimathea as his wooden staff.

Lady Smock (*Cardamine pratensis*) loves damp areas and flowers in May as the cuckoo arrives, hence also called 'Cuckoo Flower'. Popular with the Tudors, especially the double form.

Vipers Bugloss (*Echium vulgare*) so named as its spotted stem resembles the snake and was traditionally used for snakebites. Loved by bees.

Birthwort (*Aristolochia rotunda*) when made into a slightly toxic tea had a traditional use in childbirth to aid expulsion of the baby.

Good King Henry (*Chenopodium bonus – henricus*) also known as Poor Man's Spinach / Asparagus and has been cooked as a vegetable since Roman times.

Horsetail (*Equisetum arvense*) likes damp ground and was once grown in industrial Birmingham, cut & dried to polish pewter. With its high silica content, crush it first before using weedkiller.

Rosa gallica 'Versicolor' is a sport of the Apothecary's Rose & has been recorded from the 1500s.

Weld (*Reseda luteola*) is a traditional dye plant like Woad & Madder. It produces a yellow colour but if mixed with woad, will produce lincoln green.

Mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*) was once used to brew 'Small Ale', providing a safer alternative to drinking water.

Wild Garlic / Ransons (*Allium ursinum*), both flowers and leaves are edible.

Yellow Toadflax (*Linaria vulgaris*) is a rapid spreader – beware!

Soapwort (*Saponaria officinalis*) produces a soft soap from its leaves & roots. Another spreader!

Pellitory on the Wall (*Parietaria judaica*) is a favourite of the Red Admiral butterfly and likes growing on or at the base of walls.

Stinging Nettle (*Urtica dioica*), a favourite of Peacock & Small Tortoiseshell butterflies, was once made into cloth.

Harts Tongue Fern (*Asplenium scolopendrium*), an evergreen often found in shade amongst stones, rocks & trees.

Butterbur (*Petasites hybridus*) has large heart shaped leaves once used to wrap butter for market.

Watercress (*Nasturtium officinalis*) can be used as a peppery salad leaf but beware of liver fluke if sheep have had access to the water it grew in.

Ground Elder (*Aegopodium podagraria*) came here with the Romans as a food, similar to spinach. It has also been used in traditional medicine.

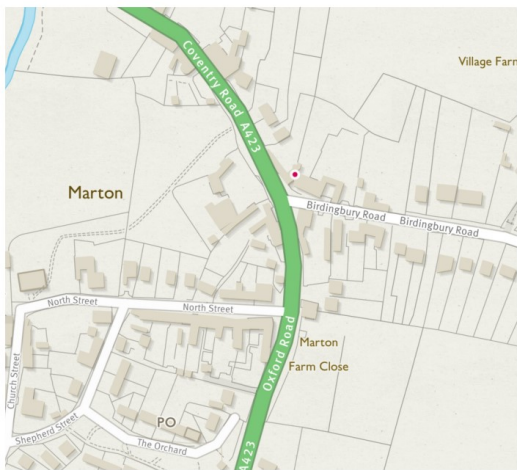
Yellow Flag (*Iris pseudacorus*) has a traditional significance in Catholicism, representing Trinity with its 3 falls.

Rosebay Willowherb (*Chamaenerion angustifolium*), a pioneer species quickly colonising burned & bombed out areas due to underground roots, hence also named 'Fireweed' & 'Bombweed'. Loved by the Elephant Hawk Moth.

Michael concluded by saying that it is always worth taking a wander amongst the ruins!

TOPICAL TIPS - JUNE

- Divide bearded irises after flowering.
- Regularly feed plants and vegetables grown in pots.
- Trim back *Alyssum*, *Heuchera* and *Aubretia* to encourage new growth and a second flush of flowers.
- Cut back spring flowering perennials.
- Sow spring flowers such as wallflowers and violas for next year.
- Inspect indoor plants for red spider mite, whitefly and thrips.
- Prune deciduous shrubs that have flowered on last year's wood.
- Treat lawn weeds.
- Put straw round strawberries.
- Remove blanket weed and duckweed from ponds.



Marton House CV23 9RY

Turn into Birdingbury Road from the A423 and you immediately pass Marton House. Off road parking is past 'The Old Dispensary' on the left behind the beech hedge with black metal gates. It's best to reverse in as leaving is unpleasant otherwise. When approaching from Coventry direction beware of the roundabout of the A45/A46 satnavs with older maps will get confused, make sure you are heading towards the M1 on the A45, a new underpass has been built for the A46.

