

An exciting year ahead - Events, Volunteering and a Growing Challenge

Hello everyone,

We hope you're all keeping well and enjoying the start of the year  It's shaping up to be a very busy and exciting one for the Horticultural Society, and we wanted to share a few early highlights and requests.

A year full of events

There will be lots happening throughout the year. Our programme is attached and will be on the back cover of the handbook, which will be out shortly (assuming you've paid your membership 😊). Do get the dates in your diary. Here's a heads-up on a couple of upcoming activities.

Luscious lawns talk

At 7pm on Tuesday 3 March horticultural writer and broadcaster Geoff Hodge will provide practical advice on lawn management. There will be welcome drinks and members are encouraged to bring seeds collected from their own gardens and/or young plants they have propagated (eg by division, cuttings) to swap and share. This event is free (as are many of our events) but donations for the Centenary Bed are welcome on the night.

Hedge workshop

On Monday 9 March we'll be holding a practical lunchtime hedge workshop with HGS Trust's Green Estate Manager, Frank Hawkins. The workshop will focus on pruning to revive hedges that are overgrown or lack density, as well as exploring ailments & remedies and giving advice on how to plant new hedging. It's hoped that the Monday lunchtime slot will allow those "working from home" to join us. Would you like to know what to do with your garden hedge? Email Alison via events@hortsoc.co.uk to volunteer your garden as one of our workshop venues.

3-day coach trip to Norfolk, 12-14 July

The enticing programme for this year's visit will include Anglesey Abbey, Sandringham, the walled gardens of Houghton Hall and of West Acre and private garden openings at East Ruston Old Vicarage and at Elton Hall. Chris Page has very kindly agreed to coordinate bookings again. Full details were emailed to members on 30 December OR full details are attached to this email. To book, please email docpage@hotmail.co.uk.

Potato growing competition

Get ready for a bit of fun and friendly competition! This year we'll be running a potato growing challenge with prizes for:

- the largest potato
- the heaviest overall potato weight (i.e. all potatoes grown in one bag are weighed together)
- the greatest number grown
- the most oddly shaped potato

Growing bags can be collected from **the Kids' Garden by St Jude's** on **Tuesday 10th February** between **4-6 pm**. If you can't make that time you can also pick up the materials at **4 Asmuns Hill** on **Wednesday 11th February (10am-1pm and 5-7pm) or Thursday 12th and Friday 13th (4-7pm)**. Before you go please contact Yvonne to confirm your pick up, (contact details on the newsletter, sent by email 20th Jan). The weigh-in will take place on **entry night for the Summer Show (9th June at Fellowship House)**. There may be an additional weigh-in date, keep your eyes open!

Summer Show Band

In past years the Autumn flower show has benefitted from the presence of a brass band, entertaining visitors in the garden of the Free Church Hall. We would like to extend this to include the Summer show, but need a sponsor to help with the cost. If you know anyone who might be interested in doing this please let us know.

Biodiversity needs you!

There is very poor data across the UK on biodiversity in urban and suburban areas, despite this being increasingly recognised as a vital habitat. The ambition of the [Britain's Biggest Living Garden](#) project is to establish HGS as the most biodiverse urban area in the UK, and to act as a case study for other community projects and urban planning elsewhere.

To do this, we need as much data as we can gather, and need your help!

iNaturalist is a free and simple app - search for it in your app store. Once you have it installed, you can click on the "Projects" button at the bottom, and search for Britain's Biggest Living Garden to "Join" it, which then connects all your observations. You can see the 680 observations so far here:

<https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/britain-s-biggest-living-garden>

Then it's quick and easy to start making observations. Simply take a photo, or choose one from your photo library. Click on "what did you see" and it will make suggestions to choose from. Then let it auto-detect your current location (really) important, and ensure Geoprivacy is set to "open". Then just click share.

Your observation is then shared with the community, and experts will look at it to refine the identification and add sub-species etc.

There are lots of how to resources here:

<https://help.inaturalist.org/en/support/solutions/folders/151000552105>

Any questions, message Dominic on biodiversity@hortsoc.co.uk

Date for your diary - Plant Sale by The London group of Plant Heritage

You may be interested that the above are holding their Spring Plant Fair on Saturday 25th April between 9.30am - 2pm. The location is St Michael's C of E Primary school,

North Road, Highgate N6 4BG. The entry fee is £2.50 (free to Plant Heritage members, under 18s, those with carers).

The regular nurseries will be attending: Daisy Roots, Edulis, Hedgehog Plants, Rose Cottage Plants, Monksilver, Dan Cooper Tools and Accessories, Culinary Herbs, Rotherview (and probably more yet to be confirmed).

All money raised goes to supporting the work of Plant Heritage and National Collections.

We really hope you'll get involved in as many of these activities as possible—whether that's growing, volunteering, learning, or simply cheering others on.

Thank you as always for your continued support.

Warm wishes,
The Horticultural Society Committee