

# Hartley & District Horticultural Society Winter Newsletter 2023

Please consider receiving newsletters, news and updates by email - send your email to Jenny G: [hartleyhortsoc@hotmail.com](mailto:hartleyhortsoc@hotmail.com)

See website for photos & news: [www.hartleyhortsoc.org.uk](http://www.hartleyhortsoc.org.uk)  
Items for the Spring 2024 Newsletter to [suezoghob@hotmail.com](mailto:suezoghob@hotmail.com)

Happy Christmas and  
New Year



"A Promise of Spring" - Kay's  
Primrose for 2024 Spring Show

## Message from Jenny R and the Committee

We hope you have enjoyed the Christmas and New Year holidays and are looking forward to a good growing season in 2024, not too wet and not too hot.

We are very pleased to welcome our new committee member, Elaine Webb, to the committee. We are looking forward to seeing you all back at our meetings. Once again we have organised a very varied programme so there is something of interest for everyone. As usual we have Shows in Spring and Autumn complete with special classes that change every year plus an organised trip to Leonardslee Gardens in the Spring. This should be excellent providing the weather is more kind to us than it has been recently. Then we have a number of speakers on varied topics and a plant show/sale/swap in June in time for growing summer vegetables and flowers.

We also intend to keep members more informed with more regular newsletters sent out electronically. Don't forget we also have a website, [www.hartleyhortsoc.org.uk](http://www.hartleyhortsoc.org.uk) where you can find out more information.

Gardening keeps you mentally and physically fit so why not encourage your friends to join us.

## Preview for first six months of 2024 - See Schedule and Programme for further details and dates

10 January – A Year of Weeds – Chris Cook

14 February – A Cobham Garden, 20 Years later – Nigel Gibson

13 March – Spring Show

10 April – Kitchen Garden - Steve Edney

08 May – Trip to Leonards Lee (more details at meetings)

June – 60th Anniversary Plant Sale/Swap

Jenny R has invited the Cactus Society, Flower Club, the Alpine Society, Hardy Plant Society to have a display table with some plants for sale. We will have some history of the society. Members will have a stall to exchange plants

## Autumn Show – September 2023

Congratulations and thanks to Jill and Brenda and the team for organising our very successful Autumn Show. Thanks to exhibitors, The Flower Club and our members who came along to support this event.

We were delighted to see so many members attending! The hall looked very colourful with entries of flowers, fruit and vegetables. These were judged by John Hughes, who explained his choices afterwards, and gave some useful hints on presentation, and the things he looks out for - both good and bad. The flower club provided some beautiful arrangements. We also hosted the Inter Society Village Challenge with competition from Ightham and Stansted. It was lovely to see other local society members. Congratulations to Ightham for coming first.





Congratulations to all of the prize winners:  
 Humphrey Memorial Trophy – **Keith Scott**  
 George Graves Cup – **Bob Fisher**  
 Charles Turner Trophy – **Chris Gifford, Peter Griffiths, Lesley Fancote and Bob Fisher**  
 E H Lane Trophy – **Keith Scott**  
 Span Trophy - **Lesley Fancote**  
 J P Tate Trophy – Best Exhibit by the Flower Club – **Jean Hoar**  
 Special Society class – Heaviest tomato grown from seed “Delicious variety” – **Frances Moore**  
 Photography – A vegetable garden in 2023 – **Sue Z**



**October 2023  
 Health Awareness Day –  
 Growing Vegetables**  
 Thank you to everyone who helped towards our display and on the day. We signed up some new members and we handed out a number of flyers  
**Jenny R**

**October Meeting** - Floral displays from Hartley Flower Arrangers who demonstrated how to use supermarket flowers. Thank you for donating these to our raffle.



**AGM and Cheese and Wine:** It was lovely to see so many members who were able to attend our AGM in November. Thank you to Sylvia, Jill and Brenda for arranging our cheese and wine. A copy of our AGM minutes and Accounts will be on the Notice Board at meetings.

**Yearly medal and trophy winners:  
 Banksian Medal**

(A yearly medal engraved with ‘Hartley & District Horticultural Society’, given by RHS and normally awarded for most show points during the year for horticultural classes) (N.B. winners in previous two years are excluded):

- 1st 48 points – Keith Scott - winner**
- 2nd 29 points – Frances Moore**
- 3rd 27 points – Sue Ogley**

**Jubilee Trophy** (awarded for most show points during the year in other plant classes):

- 1st Bob Fisher - Joint winner**
- 1st Sue Ogley – Joint winner**
- 3rd Frances Moore**

**Harry Lucas Cup – Flower Club**

(Harry Lucas was a prominent member of the society many years ago)

- 1st Jean Hoar – Joint winner**
- 1st Dee Samways – Joint winner**
- 3rd A Aylett**
- 3rd Chris Jenkins**
- 3rd A Kirkby**
- 3rd Jacqui Simms**
- 3rd Pauline Tester**

**Lifetime Membership Award:** The Committee were delighted to award a Lifetime Membership to Lesley Facote at the AGM. Lesley has served on the committee for 12 years and from 1972 has been an active member for many years. She regularly comes to meetings, raises money by selling things and enters the shows and supports the society. She is also a very knowledgeable bee keeper

**Subscriptions for 2024 are due:**

Individual increased from £8 to £10

Joint increased from £14 to £18

Teas from 50p to £1

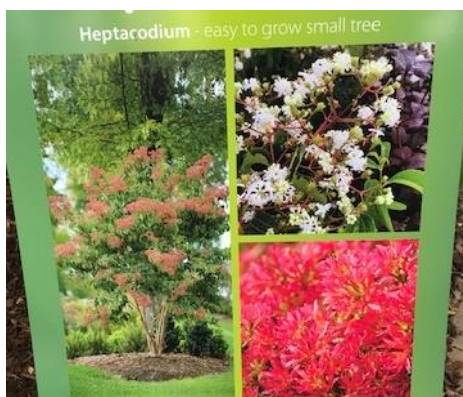
Teas to be charged for at shows

Hopefully, these small increases will keep us viable for another year.

**Kay Turner’s Visit to Provender Nursery in October 2023 – “Problem Solving Plants”**



There were five talks in all and a competition to design a new garden. Nursery experts had flown in from Holland Germany to share their knowledge on easy care plants and a replacement for box for hedges and topiary which only needs attention for pruning twice a year.



One talk was all about space-saving trees and whilst I am not actively looking for one, it was such a funny and informative talk. I am sure, should anyone need a tree in their garden, you would get every help from the Provender Nurserymen. I learned a new word too – fastigate trees – meaning tall and slender.

Another talk was by Easydendron who have cultivated a Rhododendron which does not need ericaceous soil and grows anywhere in a small bush form and which does not get tall and leggy.

Clabor irrigation showed us how we can irrigate our whole garden whilst on holiday! The technology was amazing.

Lunch was something else – 7 large paella pans and 4 types cooked on site. Tea, coffee and soft drinks were served all day. The whole event was free and all they asked was for donations for Perennial, the charity everyone who works in horticulture can turn to.

The staff at Provender are so friendly and accommodating and these events are open to all members of our society. May I suggest the next time there is an event there and you have the opportunity, do go and visit as I am sure you will find everything there to interest you. **Kay**

*Don't forget we have a Provender discount card that members can use – please speak to Sue Z at meetings.*

### **Is this the last straw for our pollinators? Jenny Roberts**

Do you remember the days when you drove down a motorway and had to clean the windscreen afterwards from dead insects? When did you last see swallows flying at high-speed catching insects or bats swooping down at dusk? Our insects have been in decline for many years. Many will blame farmers and growers for the use of pesticides, but it is usually more complicated than that. Our extreme dry summers are probably having an impact.

Until recently the European Hornet was rarely seen in the UK. Now it is quite common as the climate has warmed (pictured on the right below).

This hornet is 2-3 cm long and looks quite fearsome but is in fact quite docile. It is usually active at night but can be seen in the evenings and is attracted to light at night. It feeds on tree sap, nectar, fruit and carrion and makes small paper-pulp nests in tree hollows or sheltered cavities about 2 metres above ground. It is a predator on garden and agricultural pests and therefore beneficial to gardens.



However, will the appearance of the Asian Hornet be the last straw as this is so easily imported on wood, plant materials, etc.? The Asian Hornet, pictured on the left, is smaller than the European Hornet and quite different, being much darker. This hornet is active during the day and preys on insects and other pollinators. It has a voracious appetite and can wipe out a colony of bees in no-time. It cannot survive in the North of the UK as it is too cold but will thrive in our warmer climate in the South. The Queen hornet builds her first nest in March/April. It looks very similar to a wasp's nest. As her brood increases, rapidly she will build a much bigger secondary nest from May to July usually much higher up in a tree. Do not disturb these nests if spotted as the hornets will sting you viciously. Instead, take pictures of the insect and note the location to either inform the authorities or if in doubt contact the local beekeepers as they are very well versed on these.

As gardeners we can help by staying vigilant and reporting sightings even if we confuse the two. We can grow more open-pollinated flowers for as long a season as possible, but they must have water to make the essential nectar to help feed insects. **Jenny R**

### **First Season as a Volunteer Seed Guardian – Frances Moore**

Early in 2023 I volunteered as a Seed Guardian for the Heritage Seed Library.

The Heritage Seed Library maintains the national collection of heritage vegetables and aims to conserve vegetable varieties that are not widely available. The seed library holds more than 800 varieties of seeds, including rare landrace varieties adapted to specific growing conditions, heirloom varieties saved over generations and varieties no longer available to buy. Once there is enough seed of each variety it is made available for members to grow and enjoy. Seed from the chosen

varieties is harvested from vegetables grown by Garden Organic's Heritage Seed Library (HSL) team at Ryton Organic Gardens and by volunteer Seed Guardians.

The HSL sends a list of varieties to volunteer Seed Guardians who then choose which ones they would like to grow to produce seed for HSL.



I chose a dwarf French Bean, Buckskin Girl, and a climbing French Bean, Dona Bobolink. HSL sent 20 seeds of each and the expectation is that you will return at least 200 seeds of each at the end of the season ..... no pressure then, hope the mice leave them alone!

I sowed them in modules in the greenhouse and was delighted when all 40 seeds germinated. I planted them out as late as I could so that they didn't suffer from any late frost – imagine the horror if all of them were killed by frost.

The dwarf beans romped away, the climbing beans were very reluctant to climb! The flowers were really pretty and much appreciated by bees and other insects.



All went well until one morning I went out to find that slugs had enjoyed a mega feast of the dwarf bean pods. Mercifully there were enough left to harvest when the time came.

We resisted the temptation to eat the pods when young and eventually ended up with a good harvest of mature pods.



Shelling them took a while ....

I managed to send 300 Buckskin Girl seeds and 400 Dona Bobalink seeds to HSL and still have some dried beans left for us to eat in casseroles etc during the winter.

Although challenging at times I thoroughly enjoyed the experience and will continue to be a Seed Guardian next year.

Frances

Thank you to everyone who has sent photos. If you have any gardening information and/or photographs to share with our members in our Spring newsletter and on our website - please email me - [suezoghob@hotmail.com](mailto:suezoghob@hotmail.com) A copy of this newsletter is also on [www.hartleyhortsoc.org.uk](http://www.hartleyhortsoc.org.uk) We look forward to seeing you in 2024

**Stay Safe and Happy Gardening - Sue Z**