

MARLBOROUGH GARDENING ASSOCIATION



NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2017

**NEXT MEETING: WEDNESDAY 8 NOVEMBER
CLASSIC, RARE & UNUSUAL BULBS
SPEAKER: GILL HAZELL**

Venue: Christchurch Wesley Hall, Oxford Street, Marlborough
Doors open 7.15 for 7.45 p.m.

Do you need to spice up your Spring borders, add glamour to the Summer display, plant for late Autumn colour or to enliven Winter's gloom? Gill Hazell, our speaker for November, has some answers. She has worked in Bristol growing and selling bulbs. Now retired (her daughter has taken over the business), Gill still enjoys gardening.

Lectures are free to members and there is no need to book. They are also open to non-members and a donation is appreciated. Tea and biscuits are served before the talk so come early to chat to friends and buy some raffle tickets. Garden related offerings for the raffle – plants, books, seeds etc. - are always much appreciated.

MARLBOROUGH in BLOOM WINS GOLD!

Tricia Hayllar writes: Following our elevation to the Champion of Champions class in the South West in Bloom Competition 2017, Marlborough was awarded GOLD in the main competition by judge Jon Wheatley, Chairman of SouthWest in Bloom. Jon reported, "It was a delight to walk around the many excellent horticultural and environmental features that the Marlborough in Bloom group have developed over recent years. You are congratulated on your GOLD award and excellent standards that you have achieved throughout the year."

In addition, six of our It's Your Neighbourhood entries received OUTSTANDING awards: Coopers Meadow, Marlborough College Gardens, Marlborough Community Orchard, The Merchant's House Garden, Stonebridge Wild River Reserve, The Victorian Cemetery and The Waterfront Garden at Kennet Place. Jon reported: "The excellent water meadows and Victorian cemetery are fine examples of IYN projects, which have major influence on the overall Bloom entry. The water meadows along the River Kennet demonstrate how with vision and leadership the involvement of volunteers can be used to great effect and have long term impact."

Many congratulations to all involved, especially Anne Crawley, Chairman of Marlborough in Bloom and also a committee member of the Gardening Association. Anne notes, "It is wonderful that the dedication and love for our beautiful town has been recognised by these awards. We will be presenting the certificates and trophies at the AGM on Tuesday, 7th November at 6.30 p.m. in the Town Hall together with a display of the work of our volunteers and of the award winning portfolio. All welcome."

HOME REQUIRED FOR TWO MATURE CACTI.

Jacqui Taylor writes: Variety unknown but one flowers in springtime. Both measure 7" across. I will deliver to the next gardening meeting. Please email if interested:

jqtaylor@btinternet.com

SAVE THE CHILDREN NEEDS HELP

Jenny Brisker works tirelessly for the Save the Children Fund and each year has a plant fair in the Shambles in Devizes in May, with the proceeds going to SCF. Jenny is looking for growers for Save the Children. She writes: *"If you know of anyone who loves raising plants (perennials in particular but annuals too) and might consider helping us, please email jbrisker1@aol.com or phone me: 01672 851925. Our main grower, who has contributed for 10 years, feels she needs a break and it's going to mean a vastly depleted profit unless we can find a replacement."*

REPORT ON THE OCTOBER TALK: CLEMATIS

Floyd Marcell gave a beautifully illustrated talk to a packed audience on the vexed topic of how to prune and care for clematis. There are three groups:

Group 1: Early-flowering species, Alpina, Armandii, Cirrhosa, Montana, whose flower stems are produced from the previous season's ripened stems. Prune after flowering to allow new growth to be produced and ripened for next season. Remove dead or damaged stems and cut back other shoots that have outgrown their allotted space.

Group 2: Early, large-flowered cultivars, Josephine, The President, Nelly Moser. Flowers are produced on short, current season's stems, so prune down to three feet in February/March before new growth starts. Remove dead or damaged stems and cut back all others to where strong, leaf-axil buds are visible. (These buds will produce the first crop of flowers.)

Group 3: Late, large-flowered, small-flowered and herbaceous clematis: Flowers are produced on the current season's growth only, so prune before the new growth commences in early spring. There were gasps of astonishment as Floyd siezed a yard-high specimen and with one deft blow of his secateurs removed all the top growth to within 6" above the pot! This drastic treatment will avoid the "bird nest effect" – a mass of tangled stems six feet up the support with flowers on top out of sight.

At the end, a question and answer session resulted in some good general advice about clematis care. To avoid clematis wilt, plant deeply; dig a hole 18" x 18", line with compost and set in plant. If growing through a tree, plant on the shady side. Don't feed when in flower but these are greedy plants and will benefit from heavy mulches, particularly on chalk soil. Shade the roots and feed with "Bud Burst" or Tomorite. Copper sulphate spray will cure clematis wilt.

Clematis do well if grown in 18" x 18" pots with a drainpipe inserted to get water down to the roots. They will last up to 10 years if you top dress regularly and prune annually. You can take internodal cuttings of semi-ripe stems in May but layering is more reliable (and easier!)

For more information, visit www.floydsclimbers.co.uk, the website for Stowell Nursery near Chippenham.