

# *Over The Fence*

## The West Malvern Garden & Nature Club News Letter

Lockdown No 2

August 2020



Hello again!

Welcome to the second edition of the Lockdown Over the Fence. Hopefully by now you will see that you can contribute something! It really is easy isn't it?

Here is a message from our President!

*Dear Fellow Gardeners*

*If our gardens aren't looking good this summer, they really ought to be – what with all the time we've been obliged (!) to spend locked down in them, some wonderful weather, and a magnificent growing and flowering season!*

*I'm at best a pretty third-rate gardener, but here at Greenbank we've been having some real success. Outdated seeds that I planted more in hope than expectation have come up and produced some super lettuce, carrots and calabrese, and I'm hoping that some leek plants I bought at the rather good farm shop in Birts Street will come to something. And I even cut up a potato I liberated from Sue's store, and now have two rows of healthy-looking plants (just crossing my fingers that there are some spuds underneath all the greenery).*

*Talking of scrounging, a few years back I "borrowed" a handful of seeds from a path-side hollyhock, and now this July the display is breath-taking...*

*An intriguing newcomer here is Arenaria: I have two quite different varieties (there are, my RHS Bible tells me, some 160 species). One is quite vigorous, in a pot, the other is a small round "cushion" in the Alpine bed – the Alpine variety has exquisite tiny white flowers; it's very likely Arenaria Tetraquetra (RHS again!) – great fun and apparently, I'm relieved to read, very hardy.*

*One thing I got badly wrong - in the winter of 2019 I gave our three little apple trees a severe haircut and now there seems to be very little fruit on them, while I gather other folk are enjoying a bumper crop; still, the redcurrants are amazing.*

*I don't know about anyone else, but I'm really looking forward to when we can get back to our meetings in the Village Hall, for some professional advice – and to pick the brains of my fellow members.*

*Stay well and good gardening!*

*David M July 2020*



*Arenaria Tetraquetra*

We would have been gearing up for the Annual Show now, would you have won first prize for your veg? Why not send me some photos of your prize-winning entries. Vic Frampton has sent some photos and a piece about his prize alstroemeria (my opinion) I wish that I had been able to see them in his garden.

The answers to Rosemary's quiz are at the end of the newsletter. I hope you enjoyed doing it as much as I did. I am hoping that we'll get another quiz, in the near future. Just a quick question for all you naturalists out there, what are the fungi on the front cover, no prizes just my curiosity? Are they Dryad's Saddle fungi? Hopefully, someone, will know, and I bow to a better knowledge of fungi than me! Please let me know.

We had some sad news during lockdown. Tony Tintern a long time stalwart of the club has died. Chan has written a piece about him.

*It was with great sadness that we heard of the death of Tony Tinton on the 16<sup>th</sup> of April 2020. Tony had been in Court House Nursing Home. He died peacefully in his sleep at the age of 91. Tony was a carpenter and loved working with wood after his retirement and was always making beautiful turned wooden objects. Tony's other love was his beekeeping.*

*Chantal Crawford*

If you have been a club member for a long time you may remember him. I have also included one of a series of articles that he wrote for the Over the Fence reflecting his love of bees and bee keeping.

*Tony and Lena Tintern on their 50th Wedding Anniversary*





## Bee Keeping Tony Tintern

I always fancied keeping a hive of bees and one day (quite a few years ago now!) I saw both hives and bees for sale in a well-known catalogue. I thought the hive seemed most expensive so, being a carpenter, I decided to make my own after borrowing an empty hive to use as a pattern.

It was explained to me that the internal dimensions were most critical, so that it would take the manufactured frames which held the comb; these frames are machine made to a very precise size. The frames do not fit the hive perfectly; there has to be what we call a 'bee-space', that is, a gap of exactly  $\frac{1}{4}$  of an inch everywhere so that the bees may move about inside with the minimum hindrance. If the gap is less than a  $\frac{1}{4}$  of an inch the bees gum it up with a sticky resin called Propolis.

The 'National' pattern hive is of single wall construction and is one of the most popular hives in present use. The National consists of a floorboard, usually with legs attached to keep it off the ground. Directly on the floorboards sits a topless, bottomless box 9 inches deep by 18 and  $\frac{1}{8}$ <sup>th</sup> inches square. This is known as the brood chamber and it just sits on the floorboard without any means of fixing. It is the most important part of the hive – it is where the queen lays her eggs and where the young bees are reared.

Laid on top of the brood chamber is a flat, perforated sheet of thin metal known as the 'Queen Excluder', with perforations which will let the worker bees through but keep the queen below. On top of the Queen Excluder sits another box of the same diameter but only six inches deep, known as the Super. This will, we hope, contain the honey, in a comb, that it will be extracted from later. As this Super is filled another will be added and so on until harvest time. There is a loose board laid on top, known as the 'Crown Board' or 'Inner Cover'. This is topped by the Roof, which overhangs and is covered with zinc, or similar to keep the occupants dry and snug. Bees can put up with low temperatures but will not tolerate damp conditions at any price.

After coating my hive with creosote to repel the weather I was ready to start beekeeping ...

*To be continued*

This was the start of a series of articles Tony wrote for the 'Over the Fence' starting in in the summer of 2001. I will include further article in future editions of 'Lockdown'.



As well as Tony, John Deem has passed away. For many years he came and judged our fruit and vegetables at the Annual Show, and, kindly donated some trophies. You may not have met him, as he did his judging and then often had another show to go to, but your entry would have passed his scrutiny and one of his trophies may have lived in your home for a year. He was a friendly and sociable man who always had time to come and judge our show. He also looked forward to trying out the cakes, in the refreshments and the entries! Our next show will not be the same without him.

Here is the promised article about Alstroemeria.

Vic writes

*I guess we have all been out doing more gardening than usual because of the lockdown and as a result of some glorious weather (ignoring those occasional rainy bits). Of course, this means that all our gardens are looking their best ever – aren't they? One of my favourite plants has done exceptionally well this year, and that is the Alstroemeria (aka the Peruvian lily or lily of the Incas), they are native to South America although some have become naturalized in the United States, Mexico, Australia, New Zealand, Madeira and the Canary Islands.*

*The plants grow from a cluster of rhizomes and the leaves are alternately arranged and are resupinate, that is, the leaf stalk does a 180° twist whilst it develops, so that the back of the leaf ends up being on top.*

*Many hybrids and at least 190 cultivars have been developed, featuring many different markings and colours, including white, yellow, orange, apricot, pink, red, purple, and lavender. The most popular and showy hybrids commonly grown today result from crosses between species from Chile (winter-growing) with species from Brazil (summer-growing). They are sometimes mistaken for miniature lilies, but the Alstroemeria can be easily recognised by the dark markings in their trumpet shaped heads and yellow throats. In height they vary between the miniature (15 cm) and the tallest at over 1.2m.*

*Boasting 6-8 flowers per stem, Alstroemeria add a burst of colour to any garden and will flower all summer long (May to November). When picked the flowers last for about three weeks and just two or three stems will provide a mass of vivid colour that will brighten up any room. Incidentally, the stems should not be cut directly from the plant, it should be pulled away from the base as you would if pulling rhubarb.*

*The roots are hardy to a temperature of 23 F (−5 C) and the plant requires at least six hours of morning sunlight, regular water, and well-drained soil. The only downside is that Alstroemeria can cause an allergic reaction in some people.*



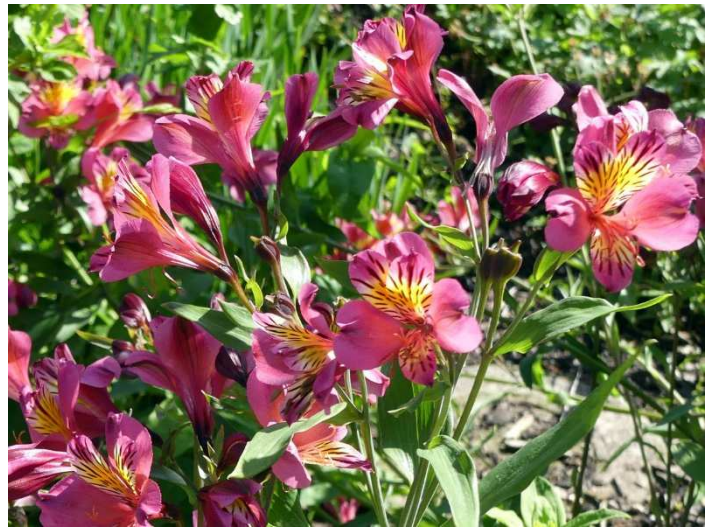
‘Little Eleanor’



Not sure about this. It’s a ‘Pink One’



- “Indian Summer” Alstroemeria.



“Rock and Roll” Alstroemeria.





*Example of Resupinate leaves*

*These are photos are of plants in our garden*

*Vic Frampton*



(From the 2015 show, are they yours?)

At this point I was going to add a recipe for courgette fritters, we've had quite a good harvest this year and it's good to have various recipes to use them up.

Unfortunately, there has been a problem with some courgettes, not just here in West Malvern, but nationally with many people suffering from curcubitacin poisoning. This is a naturally occurring poison produced by the plants of the squash family as a defence against herbivores. It is usually present in small amounts but according to Mr Fothergill Seeds a small number may be affected by cross-pollination in the seed production cycle and is untraceable until harvested. There has been a product recall by Mr Fothergill Seeds but other seed companies, including, T & M, Wilco and Kings, have also been affected. Mr Fothergill's website refers to a batch number but from responses to this article many other batches are affected too. It can also occur if the flowers are pollinated by wild curcubit flowers or from a decorative squash plant, so may not be caused by a particular batch of seeds.

Plants grown from these seeds and sold on at garden centres or passed on to friends, may well be affected too.

The courgettes taste bitter and even the smallest piece can cause vomiting, diarrhoea and in one case was fatal.

Mr Fothergills state that they have not had a batch like this for 40+ years. They have traced the problem to one grower, which is why they recalled a particular batch number. If you are worried about your courgette, cut the end off and lick it, if it is bitter wash your mouth out and destroy the fruits and the plant. Do not compost, which may spread the problem. It is also recommended not to collect seed from your courgettes to plant next year. I believe that there was an article about this in 'Gardeners' World' in 2014 (for those of you who keep back copies.) I hope that this has been useful and that no one has been severely affected.

On a brighter note – the answers to Rosemary's Quiz.

1. Westonbury Mill Water Gardens
2. Sudeley Castle Gardens
3. King Jesus' Garden
4. Witley Court
5. Berrington Hall Garden
6. West Malvern Garden and Nature Club
7. Hidcote
8. Madresfield Court
9. The Secret Garden
10. Kiftsgate Court Garden
11. Spetchley Park
12. The Glory of the Garden. Rudyard Kipling

How did you get on?

Thanks again to Rosemary for contributing this quiz. I would be very grateful to receive photos, articles, quizzes, gardening tips etc. so please send me your contributions for the Autumn edition of Over the Fence ,which I hope to put out later in the year. I would like to continue with the newsletter in the hope that next year I can report on club activities. I hope that it helps to keep the club interest going and eventually we can meet again and enjoy entertaining evenings together.

*Carole Houghton*