

Over The Fence

The West Malvern Garden & Nature Club News Letter



Autumn 2023

Hello and welcome to the Autumn edition of Over the Fence for 2023. It has been another year of hard work by members of the committee to not only keep the club running but to make sure that an interesting programme will be available for 23/24. There has been an increase in membership and some new and enthusiastic members of the committee. Please speak to David if you would like to join the committee as new members are most welcome. Ask your friends and neighbours to join.

This summer the activities included,

The Treasure Trail

Jenny Nisbet writes-

One of the highlights of our summer was the Garden Club Treasure Trail on 9th August. We all set off at 10am from the Dingle, travelling via Little Malvern, Eastnor, Dymock and Kempley to end up sharing a picnic in the orchard at Hellens, with donkeys nearby and hens scrabbling for crumbs round our feet. On the way we noted the answers to sometimes cryptic questions, which made us look more closely at things by the wayside and in the beautiful churches we visited. A lovely day, thanks to Chris Hall who devised and organised the whole thing; he has promised us another one next year. It is open to all club members, totally free, and a wonderful day out, so try to come next year!

And, An Open Garden,

Hilary Ward once again opened her garden for the club. The afternoon started with a thunderstorm but after sheltering in Hilary's house people were able to wander around and enjoy this lovely garden.

There were refreshments and the chance to chat and socialise on what turned out to be a delightful evening, thank you Hilary.

Hilary Ward has sent this very interesting contribution,

SNIPPETS FROM HARCOURT BARN

Firstly, an update on the Goat's-beard saga. This year we had no new hybrids (neither from seed that I'd saved from last year's plant nor self-sown) and last year's hybrid turned out not to be perennial. Disappointing but I will keep monitoring in future years.

The seed head of one of the Goat's-beard plants provided a temporary roof over the heads of a couple of Hairy Shield bugs. The following day there was no sign of either.



Some of our Foxgloves displayed the strange phenomenon of enlarged terminal flower buds ('terminal peloria'), a well-known floral genetic mutation that occurs spontaneously – but infrequently – in nature.



Some new (to me) wildlife that caught my attention included this striking Rose Sawfly (*Arge pagana*). It is fairly common but not one that I have noticed before. Its larvae eat rose leaves and can cause severe defoliation. Our Mermaid rose suffered mildly.



A Grass Snake laid eggs in the compost heap and in August I saw 2 young snakes - these had orange collars which become yellow as they mature.

Once again we had a Long-tailed Tit nest and as in 2021 they chose a Barberry bush as a protective site. Sadly, I think the nest was predated and I never saw any young.

A few different moths and their caterpillars turned up in the house and garden including:

Mullein moth whose distinctive caterpillars feed on Verbascum plants and Rosy Footman which frequent woodland habitats and their caterpillars eat lichens on trees.



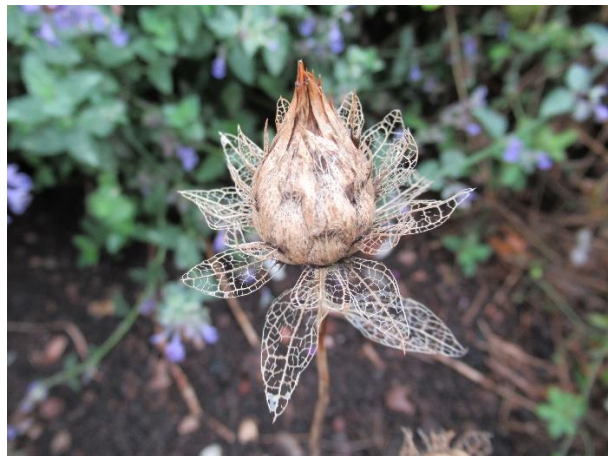
A couple of rather fierce looking caterpillars - Pale Tussock moth which can be a pest of hop plants and Grey Dagger moth whose larvae feed on a wide variety of deciduous trees including Hawthorn, Birch, Oak, and Elm.



A couple of wonderful exotic plants which I would love to grow, but sadly not likely to be hardy here, were *Impatiens tinctoria* at Bodnant Gardens, a relative of the invasive Himalayan Balsam, and, in the greenhouse at Lower Hope Garden near Ullingswick, a climbing vine of a S. American species of *Aristolochia*, a type of Dutchman's Pipe.



I did, for the first time, try Safflower which did not grow or flower well, but the seeds heads were very attractive.



Thanks to Hilary for her contributions to the magazine!

Autmn Show Creche

Chris and Jenny Hall have taken over planning the Autumn Show creche at the moment. It was an unexpected chance to run the creche as another group had had to withdraw. Not only is it a great chance for members to attend the show for free, but we also gain a little more income for the club. Thanks to Chris and Jenny and all the people who volunteered.

Annual Show

There was a low turnout for the show this year, especially considering the growing membership. Supporting the Show adds to the publicity for the club and the revenue. Hopefully membership is about supporting club activities, even if it isn't one of your main interests.

I know that the weather had been poor at times during the growing season, so people perhaps didn't have as much to enter; we clashed with West Fest so passing visitors were elsewhere; and our Show date was later than usual, again less growing in the garden at this time of the year. Those who did take part or visited had a lovely day, lots of good humour and enjoyed the refreshments. (Thank you to the people who supplied some delicious cakes) Thank you to the people who organised the Annual Show and gave up their time to volunteer on the day. We gained a new member and met some interesting people. Thank you for your support.

Here is a list of the trophy winners for 2023 and some presentation photographs taken by

The Anniversary Trophy	Carole Houghton
The John Deem Cup	Chantal Crawford
The John Deem Prize	James Bullett
The Members Plate	Margaret Cross
The Members Shield	Chantal Crawford
The Members Tankard	Carole Houghton
The Members Spoon	Carole Houghton
The Roslington Shield	Chantal Crawford



Thank you to the judges, David Butt, Lee Smith, Deirdre Drake. Jenny Hall and Chris Hall for your professionalism, encouraging comments and advice.

Don't forget the Christmas party which is on Tuesday 12th December. Everyone contributes to the buffet, and you will need to sign up to let us know that you are coming and what you will bring, contact David if you cannot get to a meeting and add your name to the list. There will be quizzes and party games!

I would be grateful for your contributions to this magazine. Hilary has contributed some very interesting articles and photos, and I am sure that each of you could contribute something. Here are some suggestions:-

Photos of your garden, wildlife; photos of visits with some notes about your experience; gardening and nature tips; your poems; recipes; anything that you think will improve the content of the magazine and not just be a review of meetings and my ramblings! I look forward to hearing from you. All items can be sent via David.

Future Meetings

October 10th Open Garden Scheme - David Morgan

November 14th Apples - Dr David Marshall of the Bright Space Foundation

December 12th Members Christmas Party

As from January we will be meeting at the Hereford Suite at the Elim Centre

9th January Helen Picton of Old Court Nurseries Colwall - Montana and beyond, the world of clematis

13th February Helen Mugridge - Wildlife on my doorstep

19th March AGM and talk by Johnny Birks

9th April John Medlock - Wildlife and conservation in Borneo

14th May. Not yet arranged, any ideas?

On behalf of the Committee, we wish you and yours a very Happy Christmas and a Healthy and Prosperous New Year!

Carole Houghton