



THE DONHEADS GARDENING CLUB

SPRING NEWSLETTER February 2024

After the past cold, and sometimes relentlessly wet months, it feels exciting to be putting together a few words for the 'Spring' newsletter. There is no doubt that the dark days of winter are gradually receding now as the daylight hours noticeably increase. The birdsong and soft pink skies of some mornings is so uplifting, and somehow even seeing the hedge-cutters out again reminds us that practical measures need to be taken before the nesting season is underway. The snowdrops and crocuses are already bringing joy, and of course the daffodils will faithfully follow to lead us towards the Easter weekend at the end of March.

Our next meeting on **Monday 11th March** will be our AGM, followed by a gardening Q & A session. There will be a complimentary glass of Prosecco on offer to 'water in' the start of another Gardening Club Year, and the usual tea, coffee and biscuits will also be available. Following on from the brief formalities of the meeting, we will be holding a very relaxed Gardening Q & A session, when we can pool any ideas or suggestions that might help to solve any particular garden problems, try to decipher peculiar garden mysteries, or offer advice or inspiration for any potential garden projects you may have. The AGM is the time for existing members to renew their annual subscription of £17.50, and is the perfect time to join as a new member in order to take full advantage of the club discounts and benefits* and calendar fixtures across the year. We hope you will be able to come to this meeting as it gives the committee an excellent opportunity to address any questions you may have about the running of the club, or to note any suggestions of speakers or visits that you would like included in our calendar where possible.

We are very pleased to have recently gained an additional member to the committee. Humphrey Miller has kindly agreed to team up with us, and he will I'm sure be a great asset and bring a positive boost to the table with some new thinking and no doubt good humour! Thank you very much for coming aboard Humphrey.

Our April meeting on **Monday 8th April** will be a talk from Dave Usher, who was Head Gardener at Hestercombe for eighteen years; this will give us a firsthand account of the development and management of the gardens over the years and will whet our appetites and set the scene for our visit to Hestercombe Gardens on Thursday 12th June.

Also in April, we have our annual discount evening at Castle Gardens in Sherborne. This will be on **Monday 29th April**, and usually starts around 6.00pm, but we will confirm the start time at a later date. As I'm sure you all know, this is a very popular evening when we have the entire garden centre to ourselves to browse and shop, and we are given a discount of 25% off everything apart from garden

furniture or items that are already discounted. Castle Gardens offer free delivery on any of our purchases as well.

On **Monday May 13th** we can look forward to what promises to be an inspirational illustrated talk from Ian Condon about The Gardens of Tresco, including the stunning tropical garden of Tresco Abbey.

Our planned coach trip to Hestercombe Gardens on **Thursday June 13th**, will be a perfect month to see the gardens, probably at their very best, and will make for a lovely day out with an opportunity to catch up over lunch or tea and cake, or even a picnic and enjoy a wander through the glorious gardens. Please find attached a booking form for this visit. Numbers are limited and priority booking for members will run until the AGM on Monday 11th March, after which time any guests wishing to come along will also be added to the list.

Just a reminder while we think of summer, that the **FOUR VILLAGES SPRING FETE will be held on Sunday 19th May**. Any plants or divisions from your gardens that you can offer Penny Short for the ever-popular Plant Stall would be gratefully received. Penny can be contacted on 01747 828062 or by email pennysshort2@gmail.com. Details of when and where to deliver the plants will be in the spring edition of the Donhead Digest.

Should any of you be planning a visit to one of the RHS gardens, please remember that one of the bonuses of our Club affiliation with the RHS, is that we have an RHS 'Garden Entry Discount Card'. This card is for sharing amongst all our members, and offers two adults (DGC members only) a 50% discount off the entry fee to any RHS Garden - Bridgewater, Harlow Carr, Hyde hall, Rosemoor and Wisley, with unlimited use until it expires on 31st January 2025, with the exception of Flower Shows and Glow events. If you would like to use this card over the coming months, please get in touch with me for further details at vdaniell66@gmail.com or 01747 828161.

***Club membership benefits include the following discounts from -**

Castle Gardens - 25% with seasonal vouchers and an annual discount evening.

Plantworld, Gillingham and The Potting Shed, Shaftesbury - 10% with your membership card.

J Parkers, mail order - 15% off everything + free P&P, www.jparkers.co.uk use code DGS15

Suttons www.suttons.co.uk - 50% off seeds & 15% off live plants with code SUGS157X

And lastly, it was with great sadness that we learned that one of our long time members and friend to many, Roseanne Corlett, passed away earlier this year. Roseanne will be fondly remembered by so many of us, for her kindness, warmth and generosity, and of course also for her joyful and unique paintings, lovely postcards etc. Some of her paintings hang in the village hall. A very special and talented lady she was, and she will be much missed.

We look forward to seeing many of you at the AGM on 11th March, and full details of all future talks and garden visits will be sent to you by email nearer the time;

lists for those of you wanting to join garden visits are being circulated at our monthly meetings.

MARCH 11th AGM and Gardening Q&A session

Future Club Calendar dates for 2024 are -

APRIL 8th Dave Usher, an illustrated talk on 'The Restoration of Hestercombe Gardens'

APRIL 29th Castle Gardens Discount evening

MAY 13th Ian Condon, an illustrated talk on 'The Gardens of Tresco'

JUNE 13th Coach trip to visit Hestercombe Gardens in Somerset

JULY 8th Sally Nex, a talk on 'Sustainable Gardening'

AUGUST no meeting - annual holiday

SEPT 9th A talk about 'Low Maintenance Gardening' from a member of Castle Gardens

OCT 9th A visit to Andy McIndoe's naturalistic garden near Romsey in Hampshire

NOV 11th Dahlia expert Christina Andelucci gives a talk on Dahlias

DEC Annual Christmas Party (date to be confirmed)