



Epsom Garden Society: February 2025

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Dear Member, if you have any news or garden related small ads that you would like to be included in the Newsletter, please phone me, 07761 976764, or email me, margarethaslam6@gmail.com

Up-coming attractions! Cathy has been busy making arrangements for meetings this year, and writes: One of the problems of having to book speakers up to 18 months in advance is that they often had to cancel/change their minds before we get even close. However, I am thrilled to say that we have a really interesting selection of speakers for the coming membership year and I very much hope that you will not only agree but attend! For reference, all meetings are held at the Epsom Sports Club and commence at 10.30am. Whereas we do love to see you for a chat in advance, please take pity on your poor committee and try not to be too early, or we are struggling to get teas, coffees and of course, cake, to everyone! Also, please do check your newsletter or **Steve's** 'advance warning' emails as to whether we are holding a raffle or not.

So, exciting plans are afoot for 2025 and I look forward to seeing you at all or at least some of the following meetings.

19th February – *'The Magic of Houseplants'* with **Sarah Foss**. Very much an 'on trend' topic, **Sarah** is a local lecturer with a wealth of knowledge on this subject. A raffle will be held at this meeting.

19th March – *'Film and Television Plants'* with **Jacqueline Aviolet**. **Jacqueline** runs a super nursery in Kent and is a witty and entertaining speaker with an intriguing title! A raffle will be held at this meeting.

23rd April – *'Spring Display and Plant Sale'*. Yes, this is a glorified coffee morning, but always lots of fun. Please do consider planting extra seeds or taking extra cuttings to donate, and of course we do need items to display – a pot of bulbs maybe or maybe some spring flowering shrubs for everyone to enjoy.

No raffle this time.

22nd May – *'A History of Allotments'* with **Dr Judith Hill**. Yes, I can see some raised eyebrows, but this lady is a really entertaining speaker [the WI love her!] and it should be a really enjoyable morning learning all sorts of useless but interesting facts. A raffle will be held at this meeting.

June – I hope you already have the 14th June in your diaries as we will not be holding a meeting this month due to our annual *Garden and Craft Show*. Yours truly is working her way through the schedule with lots of [hopefully] interesting categories for you to enter.

16th July – *'Fuchsias'* with **Carol Gubler**. **Carol** has run a hugely successful fuchsia nursery for many years and we will be taking advantage of her 'down time' for her to visit and talk about all things fuchsia. She will have lots of plants for sale so NO raffle on this occasion.

20th August – Unfortunately the speaker I had booked is now not in a position to speak so watch this space! There will be something happening on the 20th, just not sure what!

17th September – *'Autumn Display and Plant Sale'*. Another 'coffee morning' with a difference. Please do bring lovely things from your garden to display for the first part and cuttings etc. to sell for the second part – in return we will promise some of **Margaret's** wonderful cake! No raffle this time.

15th October – *'Seasonal Flower Arranging'*. I am delighted to welcome **Lynn Sleet** [a very experienced flower arranger and demonstrator] to offer up some ideas on some 'Autumnal' flower designs. NO raffle this time as her designs will be raffled.

19th November – This will be our *AGM* – an important and necessary evil. Please do support your committee and attend. Otherwise we don't know what is important to you and what you want from our Society! No raffle as we are being very grown-up!

10th December – *'Christmas Arrangements' workshop* with **Elizabeth Barralet**. Unfortunately due to circumstances beyond anyone's control, we had a somewhat abbreviated presentation from **Elizabeth** in December 24. This year she returns with a workshop to inspire us all for Christmas. Mulled wine and mince pies a must! No raffle as someone will be wanting my dodgy designs. I do have meetings booked for

January/February and March but will keep you in suspense for now! Very much looking forward to seeing you all in 2025. Happy New Year! *Cathy*.

One of our reps has resigned so we are looking for someone to take over her **round in West Hill Avenue**. It has 16 members, but only one paper newsletter, so most of the work is collecting subs and delivering membership cards in April and May. Please contact Steve epsomgarden1932@gmail.com, 0208394 2168, if you could take it on or just want to know more about it.

Seed Swap at Wisley on 1st February, 10am-3pm, The Garden Room, Hilltop. Join us for the biggest collection of seeds we have ever had in one place! Seeds collected from our gardens, rare and unusual Plant Heritage seeds, specialist seed from plant societies and hundreds of packets from our plant centre. Also free talks about seed related things throughout the day:

10.30 *The Wonderful World of Seed*

11.30 *How to Collect, Prepare and Store your own seed.*

12.30 *How to successfully sow and grow on from seed*

13.30 *Growing veg from seed, how to grow your own produce at home*

14.30 *The Wonderful World of Seed* Normal garden entry price applies.

From 10- 2 the Seed Workroom will be open for a behind-the-scenes tour.

If you have seed to swap, collected, or half used packets, sow by dates no older than 2022, in a sealed bag or envelope, bring to the registration table to be checked and labelled before reaching the swap tables. Then you are ready to browse the tables and choose. If you have no seed to swap, go straight to the swap tables. There is no restriction on the number of packets you can take, but they are intended for your personal use, so please only take what you can grow this year to avoid waste, and leave plenty of choice for others. Donations welcome.

Seedy Sunday: At the Open Market in Brighton, Marshalls Row, BN1 4JU, on Sunday 2nd February 2025, from 10 – 4pm.

Sue Glover has been very busy arranging gardens for us to visit, and the first is on Friday 21st February to **Gatton Park**, Reigate RH2 0TW to admire their snowdrops and aconites, 10-12.30, £12 to include refreshments. This is an historic 260 acre estate in the Surrey Hills AONB. A Capability Brown parkland with ancient oaks. Also a Japanese Garden, Victorian Parterre and views over the lake. We will have a guided walk and talk and refreshments in Gatton Hall. Dogs welcome, mobility vehicle available if booked ahead.

To follow during the year will be trips to **Sheiling**, Kingswood, **Chauffeur's Flat**, Tandridge, **Bridge End Cottage** Ockham, **Wren's Nest Cottage**, Cobham and **Titsey Gardens**, Oxted.

If you would like to come, please contact **Sue Glover**, suegreenfingers51@gmail.com or phone 07810117140.

On 20th November we held our **AGM**,

The minutes are at e-voice.org.uk/epsomgardensociety/assets/documents/agm-2024-minutes-2, or if you need a paper copy please email **Steve** epsomgarden1932@gmail.com.

On the 11th December we had a **festive Flower Arranging** morning with mince pies and gingerbread and mulled wine. **Elizabeth Barralet** was having a very stressful time, as she had moved to Hawkhurst in Kent only two weeks before, but didn't want to cancel coming to us, although it was now a two hour drive. She had had to manage the move by herself as her poor husband was ill in hospital with pneumonia, and condensing a four bedroom house into a one bedroom barn conversion was a lot of work. Now the hospital want her to bring in her husband's sturdy walking shoes, and she doesn't know which of fifty unpacked boxes they could be in! She also doesn't know where the good flower shops in Kent are yet, so bought some supermarket ones.

Oasis is not very ecologically friendly, but the alternatives are not very good either, so she is using up what she has got. We were intrigued by the coloured lilies, and told this could be done by putting them in dye and the colour will change as they suck it up. Quink ink makes a lovely blue. Feathers can be sprayed. The first arrangement was a basic outline of green leaves with sparkly copper sprayed stems of leaves and twisty spirals of gold and the coloured lilies, set off with some red stems of dogwood.

Elizabeth had had some trouble finding her equipment as she used to have a huge shed full of flower arranging vases and such, and now has to downsize, so was happy for us to keep the vases if we won one of the arrangements in the raffle.

The second arrangement was of white roses, with the leaves removed to look stark and icy. Roses can last 2/3 weeks, take off 2" of stem first. If a flower droops, try cutting off more stem, and perhaps moving it to the

centre so other flowers will support it. Maybe even a paper collar to hold it straight. Have your flowers at different heights, but don't get stressed about having odd numbers, if it looks right that's it! These were set off with silver sprayed fir cones, blue baubles and laurel stems which had been wired either side of the stem and bent into loops. A wired white ribbon bow completed the look.

The third arrangement was a low level one planned for the centre of a table. This had a shallow dish with conifer stems out sideways in a circle, variegated stems in the centre. Cut stems back to a leaf joint so there are no jagged edges. Then pink carnations filled the centre, you will need to keep changing the water, and some Roses chocs attached to wire nestled amongst the leaves. The shiny wrappings looked very festive, but watch out, some sweets have changed to dull wrapping and wouldn't look as good.

The final arrangement was of two sets of different coloured roses, one set taller, linked with fir cones between the two, and set off by fake tiny bright red fly agaric mushrooms with their jolly white spots.

Lots of ideas to think about, and very kind of her to donate the flowers.

Membership of the Tendershoots online gardening club is included in your Epsom Garden Society membership, however there is a cost to the society in offering this benefit and we wonder if there is enough interest in Tendershoots to justify the cost, as so far, only a few members have signed up for this. If you do want this as part of your membership please email kimshros@gmail.com and let **Kim** know. The benefits are good- this year Tendershoots will continue to run online talks during autumn and winter, to provide maps of open gardens [classified by which ones need memberships to gain free entry, and which allow dogs and so on] and offer discounts on buying seeds from **Suttons**, 50% off seeds, code SUGS189M, and 20% off plants, also **Plantworld** who will give us 20% off seeds with the code GM20. There are three talks in February, on the 7th at 8pm **Guy Deakins** will tell us about '*Shrodinger's Garden*', on the 12th **Katherine Crouch** will talk about '*Grow the Food that you can't buy*' at 7.15, and on 20th February **Catherine Howood** will talk about '*Exotic Gardening*,' also at 7.15. The link and password for talks are on Tendershoots homepage at www.tendershoots.uk.

Personally I have found it very useful, and have three talks from November and December to tell you about whenever we have an empty space. It will save you being told about books that I have been reading! Nothing horticultural over Christmas either, only weighty tomes about a time travelling lady who ended up at the Battle of Culloden and met bonnie Prince Charlie.

What we should be doing in the garden if we can get out there:

Remove dead leaves and flowers to prevent grey mould in the greenhouse.

Recut lawn edges for a neat finish.


Pull off yellowing leaves from brassicas to reduce food for slugs.

Weed bare soil and mulch with your lovely home-made compost.

Cut out a third of the darker stemmed wood in blackcurrants at the base, they fruit on new branches.

Happy New! Best wishes Margaret

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