

Q4 2023

LHS Newsletter

Our Show

The Summer Show

The Society's September show was another great success, with over 220 entries covering flowers, fruit and

vegetables and also some wonderful arts, crafts and cookery items. Best in show was in fact won by an intricately knitted jumper and not by a delicately patterned Dahlia, as you might expect – though there were plenty of those too.



A huge range of flowers and vegetables were on display, a testament to the year's work in gardens and allotments in and around Leatherhead. Growing your own is still unmatched for boosting your physical and mental health, it has its ups and downs, but seeing the best of what everyone has produced is a fabulous way to round off the season.

In the competition between 3 local allotments Leatherhead Poors came out as this year's winner, but it was extremely close, with Highlands Road and Ashted allotments also showing excellent displays of fruit and veg from their sites.

The prize giving was held at the end of the afternoon with a range of cups handed out, some of which are now over 100 years old and still presented each year.

If you've never showed entries are free and small cash prizes are given for those winning 1st, 2nd, 3rd or being Highly Commended. Entry to view the shows is also free, with the chance to buy some refreshments and a range of gardening items normally stocked at the society's store.





Charity Plant Sales

A record amount was raised this year by the Plant sale at the Stores and our thanks go to all those who contribute growing and selling the superb plants we sold, as well as countless others for donating horticultural items which helped us raise £1,650, which was distributed to four local charities as follows:

£425 to the Conservatory Club that supports people with dementia and operates from the Fairfield Centre in Leatherhead;

£425 to the Leatherhead Youth Project which provides after school support to local young people to be safe, happy and make a positive change to their lives;

£400 to MyTime4YoungCarers which supports children who are themselves carers for parents or siblings;

£400 to LeatherHEAD START which provides emergency, direct access, short-term accommodation for homeless men and women over 18 with a priority given to those with a local connection to Mole Valley.

These amounts will be detailed in LHS's annual accounts to 31 December 2023.

These accounts will be presented for approval at the **LHS AGM (and Spring Show) on Wednesday 3rd April 2024. Please reserve this evening in your diary now!**



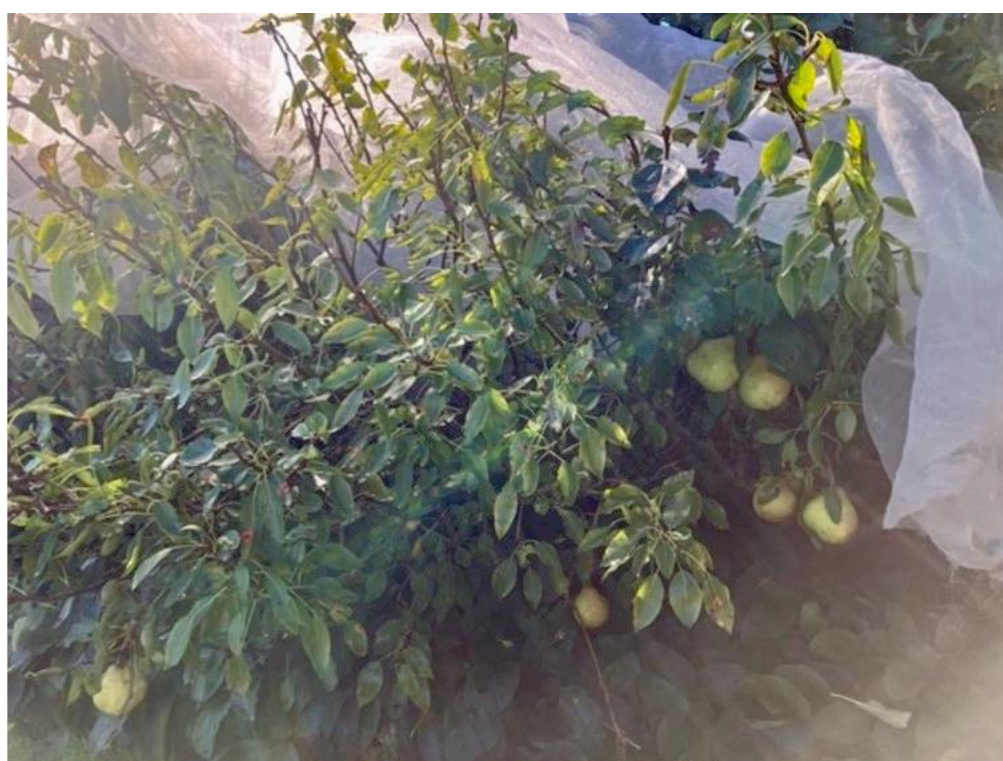
Chairman's Update

Phil's Report

Hello everyone,

As we head towards the end of the year, I'm sure that you, like me, are reflecting on what went well and what you plan to do differently next year - that's gardening!

My personal gardening year has been heavily influenced by the fact that we had four weeks away in May/June and five weeks away in September/October, so planning what to sow and when, to ensure that we were here to enjoy the harvest, has been quite a challenge.



We've got lots of peas, beans and tomatoes frozen for winter use and we are enjoying our stored Apple crop nearly every day - they keep really well in a fridge in our outside shed.

I am just harvesting our last cordon pears 'Josephine de Malines', which provides a lovely late crop (providing you protect them with Enviromesh!)

We've also still have a bit of colour from fuchsias and one of the stars of this time of the year, Nerines.



Bloom Color



H. macrophylla

What makes the flowers pink, blue, or something in between?

The color of *H. macrophylla* blossoms—and to a lesser degree, those of *H. serrata*—are affected primarily by the soil conditions. Aluminum is the key ingredient in bloom color adjustment. Combined with aluminum, acidic soil (below 5.5 pH) will favor blue flowers. 'Sweeter' soils (pH above 6.0) will produce pink blossoms. Without aluminum, blue flowers are unattainable. Knowing your soil pH is important as aluminum can only be added to acidic soil.



H. serrata

Aluminum sulphate is a readily available product traditionally used for color 'correction.' While it buffers the aluminum level and acidifies the soil, it can also be toxic to the plant. Less is better and the safest application is simply drenching the base of the plant with a very low concentration of 1 tablespoon of aluminum sulfate per gallon of water. If plant soil is dry, water well before applying the drench solution. Limit applications to just two per growing season: April 15 and May 15.

If you wish to favor pinks and reds, apply a cup of garden lime (powder form) to the plant base in April and October. Lime is slow acting but in time will raise the pH of the immediate soil and inhibit the plant's ability to utilize aluminum.

On our recent trip to the USA, we visited the Botanic Gardens in Sandwich on Cape Cod that contains The North America Hydrangea Test Garden.

There was a wide variety of colour on show including this very attractive bloom.



The final week of our trip was a truly memorable drive through the Autumn foliage of Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine.



Thank you everyone for supporting LHS this year.

The Society has had another excellent year and that's all down to the contribution that you, the members, put into making it so!

Sales at The Stores are up on last year and I would like to thank every one of you who volunteered during the year as Cashiers and Helpers because without you the LHS Stores couldn't exist.

If you weren't able to volunteer this year, please do so in 2024. If everyone were to put their name down for just one Sunday, we would have an "embarrassment of riches".

A very big thank you to Mike Herrity, Nick Rule, Roger Sinclair and others for helping to unload the Friday morning deliveries of bags of compost, grit and topsoil. Without this help we would be unable to keep the store running.

Plant sales at the store have just topped £1500, a similar level to last year and your purchases will enable significant contributions to be made to local charities in December. Thank you Pam, Becky Sampson, Pat Marshall and all those who help in this endeavour.

We've had two successful shows this year, one in the Spring and more recently, our Annual Show early in September. A special thank you to Stephen Williams for stepping forward to become Show Secretary and lead the organisation of these Shows for us.

Someone else who stepped forward this year was David Leach who kindly volunteered to join your committee and help with Treasurer-related activities. David has already suggested revisions to our GDPR documentation and is working on updating our website to attract more members.

Who is going to step forward in 2024? - what about you?

Any organisation needs new blood to survive and half the committee (including me!) are over the age of 70. We'd love to be welcoming someone new to the committee when we have the AGM on Wednesday 4th April.

Please have a word with someone you know on the Committee if you're prepared to join us in ensuring the continuing success of our Society.

So thank you to all the committee who work with me to ensure that your LHS continues to thrive and prosper: Euan Niven, David Wells, Stephen Williams, Alan Bulley, Mike Herrity, David Leach, our ever-efficient Hon. Secretary Lynda Tarling and President Roly Edwards.

Happy Christmas everyone!

Phil Smith
Chairman



Stores News

The Stores

The Stores re-open on Sunday 28th of January 2024, fully stocked with:

Composts – Peat free or with Peat, Topsoil, Stable Compost, Vermiculite, Perlite,
Liquid Fertilisers and Garden Chemicals,
Protective Fleece, Enviromesh,
Mypex and Black Mulch,
Bamboo Canes,
3 different types of Grass seed,
Plastic Pots, Seed trays,
Gardening Gloves

and almost everything else an allotment holder or gardener needs.

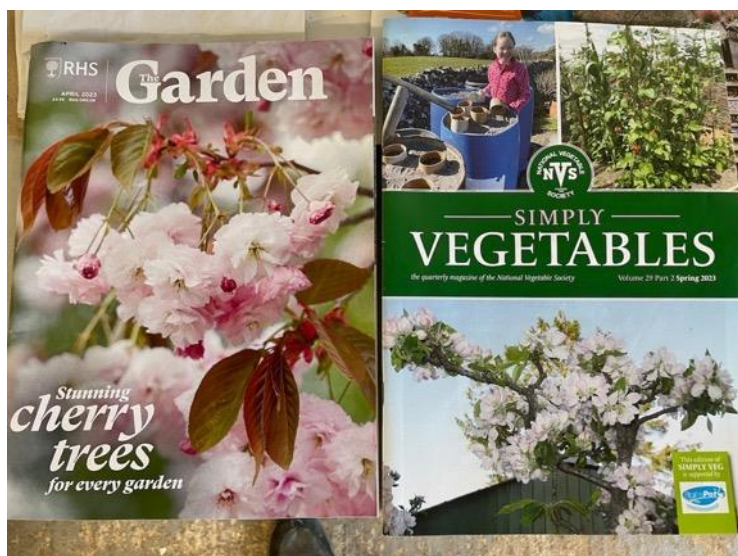
We will also be stocking:

Onion and Shallot sets – White and Red Onions and Red Sun Shallots.

Top quality Scottish Seed Potatoes – 12 different varieties – 1st and 2nd Early, Salad and Maincrop, all priced by weight so you can buy as few or as many as you want.

LHS enables you to buy exactly the quantity you need, so you don't have to buy a just one variety in a 2.5kg potato net that garden centres sell.

Don't forget...



The Store Rota always needs volunteers. The volunteer list is available at the Store, or you can email or phone Euan with the dates you can help at: euan.niven@btinternet.com or 07966 522 534.

We keep our prices low by running the Stores with volunteers. This benefits all our members and it's a sociable and worthwhile way to spend one or two Sunday mornings each year.

Also,

The RHS and NVS (National Vegetable Society) magazines are available to read or borrow in the Store, so grab them next time you are there.