

The Grapevine



Newsletter of the Finchley Horticultural Society
Spring 2017

Committee News

There are only a few seats left for the FHS summer visit to RHS Hyde Hall and Beth Chatto Gardens, Essex, on June 24th. Tickets cost £33, which includes travel on an executive coach and entry fees. Contact Judy Woollett on finchleyhorticulturalsociety@gmail.com or 020 8346 5107.

Recently we had to call the Fire Brigade to put out a fire in one of the greenhouses on the Gordon Road site. It is not known how the fire started and the Fire Brigade officers were quick to put it out so that damage was contained although the greenhouse was completely destroyed. Gardeners and ploholders are reminded that it is not safe and thus against FHS rules to keep petrol in sheds on the allotment sites as it is a fire accelerant.

Annual Plant Sale

21st May 2017
10.00am to 1.00pm

28th May 2017
10.30am to 1.00pm



flowers - annuals and perennials



vegetable plants

honey from our own hives



herbs

refreshments served from our new accessible tea hut

free entry and raffle

Have your say

As part of the general discussion at the recent AGM it was decided that we should trial a regular face to face Open Forum for all Members of the Society where they can meet with the various Committee Members, air views, raise any concerns, exchange ideas and put forward suggestions for the enhancement of the Society. There would be no fixed Agenda but simple notes of what was discussed and any ideas arising would be published in the next Newsletter. All FHS members from the three sites are welcome to attend whether a ploholder or not. The hope is that the Forum will provide a constructive platform for exchanging views and ideas in an informal setting on a more frequent basis than waiting for the AGM.

The plan is to meet at Gordon Road in the Log Cabin (or outside if the weather is fine) about Midday and the suggested dates for 2017 are Sundays- 7th May, 9th July & 17th September.

We hope that as many members as possible will take up on this suggestion and come along to join in the discussion.

Tea Hut and Bug Hotels

All the hardstanding is in place now for our new accessible tea hut, thanks to our Bags of Help Tesco grant and Evolving Landscapes who did the work. They have done a great job making the path and the wall including the installation of bug hotels.

We will now need to plant the area to make it look more in keeping and to soften the hard edges.



The Philippines come to Finchley

There are some wonderful vegetables germinating on Gordon Road allotments at the moment. Jason and Rowena Bridge have been highly successful in growing a variety of plants that come from SE Asia and particularly from the Philippines where Rowena was born. Jason and Rowena grow four kinds of Pak Choi. In addition to the Pak Choi we are familiar with, they grow Choi Sum, Pechay and Gai Lan, also known as Chinese broccoli. Each variety has its own distinctive look, has a different flavour and grows well in the UK.

Jason grows two Choi Sum seeds per module in his greenhouse and when the seedling has two true leaves, he removes the weakest. The seedlings are ready to plant out in four to five days after this and are ready to harvest after two weeks. They can be grown from now until the end of August. Rowena even grows Pak Choi overwinter in the greenhouse and uses the leaves for salads and stir fries.

Rowena and Jason also grow bitter marrow, chow chow and angular sponge gourd. Chow chow produces a fruit the size of a fist and last

year Rowena got 100 from one plant! The chow chow fruit is generally cooked like summer squash. It should be lightly cooked to retain the crispy consistency and it is a good source of vitamin C. Like other members of the gourd family, chow chow has a



sprawling habit and should only be grown if there is plenty of room for it to spread.

Jason likes to grow the Philippine aubergine which is much longer and sweeter than the aubergines we grow in greenhouses in the UK.



The pair also grew Philippino White Corn last year - they like its sticky texture. The plants grew to twelve or fifteen feet and the cobs were the size of a forearm! White corn, or more properly maize, is a common food in the Philippines and, after rice, is a staple food for 20% of the population.



They have also managed to grow their own sweet potatoes from their own slips. They do this by suspending old sweet potatoes over water in a glass jar using cocktail sticks as it's not easy



to buy sweet potato slips in the UK. Rowena uses the leaves in soups which is a traditional use for them in Asia.

Jason says that the Bagiuo region in the Northern Philippines has a similar climate to the UK because of its high altitude and this is why many of their favourite vegetables grow so abundantly here in Finchley. That and their green fingers of course.

Psst! Want to know why we sent you a survey? by Lesley Ludlow

Surveys are a great way to find out what people are thinking and what interests them. In February we sent all our members a survey, either by post or by email, and we are delighted to say that a great many of you took the time to respond. We wanted to know what was working well, what needs a bit more attention and what you liked getting involved with. The results of the survey are provoking discussion about our society and giving us ideas for the future. Here's what we found out.

74% of you are allotment holders and 26% garden at home.

50% of you use some form of social media and 50% of you don't use it all.

88% of you know about the Grapevine newsletter and 12% know about our new Twitter feed. But 12% didn't know about any of the ways we have of keeping in touch.

49% of you have visited our website, 88% of you have received the Grapevine newsletter but only 30% admit to having read it.

12% of you are family allotment gardeners.

The annual plant sale is our most popular event with 93% of you having attended one, and 43% of you have been to a garden visit organised by the society.

57% of you use the Gordon Road Sunday Shop at least once a month.

There was an enthusiastic offering of help and our members have many skills. We thank you all for all your help in the past, for the new offers of help and for your great commitment to the Society. We will be looking at ways to offer more to members who have an interest in flowers and gardening as a family.

Newsletter

If you received a paper copy of this newsletter and are now able to receive it by e-mail, please inform Christine Williams, chrysw@hotmail.co.uk. This saves us time

We will look at how we can make the Grapevine a regular read for you all and how we can attract even more of you to the Sunday Shop and to come along to our garden visits. Please let us know if you have more ideas.

Gardening in a small space

As a dungaree clad child I had a blue grass plant in the bottom corner of the garden and Mum and I grew vegetables over the hedge in next doors' unkempt jungle. We had half term trips to Crews Hill garden centres and in the summer I shelled peas on my Grandma's swing seat. Last summer, at the ripe old age of 24, I flew the nest and acquired my own bit of outside space for the first



time. Moving day came and with the boxes came two tomato plants, a courgette plant, three weathered hanging baskets and a green tube packed with petunias that Mum had picked up at the FHS allotment shop in Gordon Road. Within weeks of hanging it up on my roof terrace wall it was bursting with colour, brightening up the whole row of terraces. So much so that my neighbour called over one day to tell me how my vibrant wall hanging plants had inspired her to purchase her own! My hanging petunias were just what my small space and busy life needed; easy to manage, reliably bright and cheerful and the perfect way to kick start my own green fingered habit. I've kept the bag and am looking forward to filling the terrace with colour again this summer!
By Clare Ludlow

This issue of the Grapevine has been generously sponsored by Winkworth Estate Agents.

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Member of the
Barnet Federation of Allotment
and Horticultural Societies

Affiliated to the Royal Horticultural
Society



Events Diary

April - July 2017

RHS on Tour - Free

The RHS is hitting the road and teaming up with other organisations to hold a number of events in 2017. Visitors can expect to find stands offering gardening advice, quality plants and informative talks.

29 - 30 April Flowers and Flea, Flat Iron Sq., London SE1 1TD

16 - 17 June Bloom and Grow, Canary Wharf

15 - 16 July Lambeth Country Show, Brockwell Park, SE24 9BJ



7 May 2017

Have Your Say

Log Cabin, Gordon Road Allotments
All FHS members welcome



21st and 28th May 2017

FHS Plant Sale

Sunday 21st May from 10.00 am to 1.00pm

Sunday 28th May from 10.30 am to 1.00pm



23 - 27 May 2017

RHS Chelsea Flower Show

Royal Hospital Chelsea, SW3 4SL

Tuesday - Friday 8.00am until
8.00pm

Saturday 8.00am until 5.30pm

tickets are selling fast



11 - 13 July 2017

RHS London Summer Urban
Garden Show

RHS Lindley Hall, SW1P 2QW

free to RHS members, £6 in advance,
£9 on the day



24 June 2017

FHS visit to RHS Hyde Hall and
Beth Chatto Gardens in Essex, £33



4- 9 July 2017

RHS Hampton Court Palace
Flower Show

10.00am until 7.30pm



**To book tickets to RHS shows, visit
rhs.org.uk/shows or call 0844 338 7539**

Finchley Nurseries Garden Centre offers a 10% discount on plants to all Finchley Horticultural Society members. It now has a new tea room which is open from 9.00 to 5.30 on Mondays to Saturdays and 10.30 to 4.30 on Sundays.

Next Grapevine July 2017