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Charlton & Blackheath  
Amateur Horticultural Society  
Founded 1950

[www.cabahs.wordpress.com](http://www.cabahs.wordpress.com)

**NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2021**  
*Grow Friends, Grow Fit ... Grow a Garden!*

After a particularly gloomy August many of us were hoping for a glorious Indian summer to ease us into the winter months – it doesn't quite look like we have achieved that yet!

This month it is another opportunity for us to meet in person for our annual Autumn Show. We are lucky to have Joe Woodcock back with us, who will be master of ceremonies for the evening and who will be talking us through the entries.

Pat and I once again took to the road, this time to Great Dixter for an afternoon event titled 'Behind the Scenes'. Even without access to some of the areas normally closed to visitors and a guided talk (even half an hour spent with the indomitable Fergus Garrett talking about hedge trimming!), this was a fabulous opportunity to enjoy the gardens in virtual isolation, as they were closed to the general public! The pot displays were lovely as ever and Graham, who talked us round, explained how they use these almost as a training ground for students in terms of plant arrangement.



**Anna writes:**

Wisley Gardens have been looking fabulous for the last few years due to the input of various talented designers. Now the RHS has gone one step further by creating the World Food Garden and the Wildlife Garden: both show-stoppers! Situated on higher ground, the newly built RHS Hilton educational building divides these two gardens. A ground-floor cafe/restaurant extends into the vegetable garden, with tables and seating arranged between the beds closest to the building. Hundreds of vegetable varieties are on display and the whole garden can be seen from the Sky Garden roof terrace.

The Wildlife Garden can also be appreciated from this point, which is very stylish, especially the serene ponds.

Various squashes/pumpkins can be seen hanging from vines.



A variety of cucumber!



### Asian Hornets

There have been a number of alerts recently for the Asian Hornet. The British Beekeepers Association is calling on all to keep an eye out for Asian Hornets (during the week of 6<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> September) and to report sightings. Nests and sightings can become apparent as the leaves fall off the trees in autumn and successful projects have tracked hornets back to their nests and they have then been eradicated. Asian Hornets are an alien species that could decimate our pollinators and are already established in France and the Channel Islands and honey bees are their favourite food. Their nests can be the size of a football or larger and can be sited at the top of a tall tree or the eaves of a house. If you find a nest **do not approach** and stay at least 20 metres away and take a photograph then download the Asian Hornet Watch app to identify and send to the non-native species authority. Look out for the wide orange stripe on the fourth segment of the abdomen and yellow legs. Be careful, but help save our honeybees.



Illustration by Sarah Bunker



Animal &  
Plant Health  
Agency

Non Native Species of the UK

The **yellow** legged hornet

**September Plant of the Month chosen by Anna: Begonia**

Begonia 'sutherlandii' in Margaret T's garden. Originally from Tanzania and known as the Sutherland Begonia Delicate, soft orange colouring. Lift in late autumn.



Begonia 'Firecracker' A stunning variety that looks good planted in a large container or pedestal container for height. Corms should be lifted in late autumn.



Begonia 'Grandis Evansiana'. A hardy species from Japan, so corms do not need to be lifted.



## Begonia Odorata 'Angelique'

A slightly scented variety that produces both single and double flowers. Very beautiful. Lift corms in late autumn



### Gardening notes

- **The Garden Museum** is holding a Houseplant Festival 23-24 October, £6.00 per ticket, booking essential.
- **Great Dixter** is hosting its 20<sup>th</sup> Plant Fair on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> October 11.00 - 4.00. Entrance fee £11.50 which includes the gardens. Check out the Great Dixter website - there are some lovely events coming up. They are also repeating the online talks which Fergus gave this year - I found these very informative and he is an excellent teacher.
- Keep an eye on the lectures (in person and online and free!) offered by **Gresham College**. There is one in early 2022 on 'Averting the Insect Apocalypse'.
- **The Swing Bridge** in Crystal Palace Park provides access to Dinosaur Island, but has been designed in the shape of a bony fish skeleton. When not in use it becomes a sculptural work of art.
- For an autumn display, it is difficult to beat a visit to the **Sussex Prairie Garden**. Free entry to individuals who have an RHS card through September and October.
- **The Sodshow** - if you love staying up to date with the latest news from the gardening world and listening to top designers and head gardeners chat about their work, then this is the podcast for you! Link: [sodshow.com](http://sodshow.com).
- For those of you who don't know this already, on the **Great Comp** website there are a few instructional videos, for example taking salvia cuttings. There's also a gallery of photographs of what is in flower and of interest each month. Worth a look, especially if you cannot get there.

### Pat's 10 jobs for September:

1. Start planting spring flowering bulbs this month such as crocus, daffodils, hyacinths and muscari but don't plant tulips until November to avoid risk of tulip fire and virus.
2. Leave heads on mophead and lacecap hydrangeas to provide winter frost protection for newly emerging buds.
3. Divide established perennials now to avoid overcrowding next year and for new plants either for your garden or for our plant sale at the Hornfair and plant sale table at future meetings. If your soil is wet and heavy best to leave to spring but make notes now of what needs doing.

4. Control powdery mildew now by removing affected leaves and destroying but also keep plants well-watered and make a note to improve air circulation around the plant next year.
5. Keep cutting dahlias to keep their flowers going and remember to deadhead regularly too.
6. Sow hardy annuals now such as Cornflowers, Nigella, California poppies and Limnantes (poached egg plant) to provide cheap and easy colour for next year. Remember to mark where you sow them.
7. Lift maincrop potatoes now before slugs can damage the tubers. Don't forget your King Edwards in a pot for the competition at the Autumn show on Monday, whatever the size of the yield!
8. Harvest pumpkin and squash before frost once they are an even colour all over and cure in a sunny dry place for at least 7 to 10 days. After proper curing they can be stored for the winter. Some varieties store longer than others.
9. For winter use, divide herbs such as varieties of mint and pot up and keep on a sunny windowsill for use during the darker days.
10. Net ponds now to protect from leaves and other debris and avoid the pond from silting up. Use the leaves to make leafmould.

### **The Horn Fair**

And finally, yet another reminder for the **Horn Fair at Charlton House, October 17<sup>th</sup>, 10.00 - 4.00.** Come and buy, but also help us by potting up your good plants for us to sell on our plant stall.

Happy gardening all!

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