

# Newsletter July 2020

21st July 2020

In this month's news:

- NEW WEBSITE
- VISIT TO BOLTERS FARM GARDEN, CHILSON
- VIRTUAL GARDEN SHOW
- CHARLBURY GARDENERS FACEBOOK PAGE
- LOVE YOUR NETTLES
- A HOME FOR HEDGEHOGS?
- JOBS FOR JULY



## **NEW WEBSITE**

The Garden Society has an amazing new website! Explore the beginnings of an excellent source of information and news, along with some amazing photographs and videos.

Take a look at this years Charlbury Open Gardens, which have become virtual, and are one of the first events to be captured on the website with films and photographs of some very splendid local gardens.

Many thanks to Helen (website creator), Georgia (designer) and Harriet (on-going maintenance) for making this a reality.



## **VISIT TO BOLTERS FARM GARDEN, CHILSON**

By kind invitation of Amanda and Robert Cooper  
'A cherished old cottage garden. Tumbly walls and sloping lawns down to a stream with natural planting and character' (NGS Yellow Book)

**Wednesday 29th July at 2pm, 3pm, 4pm.**

Please reply with preferred timings and contact details to [membership@charlburygardensociety.org.uk](mailto:membership@charlburygardensociety.org.uk)

Donations at the gate to SongBird Survival.

Further details will be sent to visitors nearer the time.



## **VIRTUAL GARDEN SHOW**

### **Charlbury Garden Society's Virtual Show - REMINDER**

Time is passing. Sunflowers are getting tall and vegetables are getting big, so don't forget to get out your phone or camera and record the result for the Virtual Show.

The solution is to go virtual, like so many other organisations. Here's how it works:

There are 6 categories:

1. The tallest sunflower
2. The largest vegetable
3. The longest vegetable
4. The funniest/oddest shaped vegetable
5. A perfect flower
6. The tallest hollyhock

Take a full resolution photograph and send it **as an email attachment** to [showsecretary@charlburygardensociety.org.uk](mailto:showsecretary@charlburygardensociety.org.uk) . The deadline is September 12th, the scheduled date of the Annual Show. This is open to all ages. Don't forget to add any measuring devices in the photo, or state the measurements taken, plus your own name and location in the email. While you may have to wait for the vegetables, there are flowers now that are begging to have their picture taken. There will be no prizes, but we'll post the photos so everyone can enjoy the results.

Kathy Broughton  
Charlbury Garden Society



### **CHARLBURY GARDENERS FACEBOOK PAGE**

Don't forget to check out the Charlbury Gardeners group. It's at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/charlburygardeners/>, its public, and it's got 152 members. It's a place for chatting and sharing.



## **LOVE YOUR NETTLES**

### **From an old article 'Be Nice to Nettles'**

Stingers are a vital part of growing up, giving us one of the most painful early memories of close contact with nature.

It is much later in life that most of us realise just how valuable they are, especially for some of our most beautiful wild creatures.

Without stinging nettles, peacock, small tortoiseshell and red admiral butterflies would have nowhere to lay their eggs, so do please find a space for nettles somewhere in your neighbourhood."

Professor Chris Baines  
Environmentalist and Broadcaster

### **Nettle Leaf Plant Food**

Nettle leaves can be used to make an easy to use, if somewhat smelly, plant food. Best of all it's free!

To make your nettle fertiliser you will need only four things:

1. Nettles! - obviously.
2. A watertight container - a large bucket is adequate.
3. Water, and
4. A wait, sorry a weight. Not essential but makes the process easier as I will explain.

**First take your nettles.** These are best as young stems but can be taken at any time. Quicker results are obtained if the nettle stems and leaves are bruised.

**Then crush them.** This can be done by *scrunching* the stems in gloved hands or by placing the stems on a freshly mown lawn and using your mower to chop and collect the nettles at the same time. The addition of a few grass clippings that results from using this method does not affect the quality of the finished product.

**Immerse in water.** Stuff the crushed stems into your bucket. Place your *weight* on top of the stems. *You may have to use a little ingenuity here - I have used a broken paving slab in the past. A brick and a piece of wire mesh cut to suit the container serves equally well.* Fill the container with water sufficient to cover the nettles and...

**Leave to brew.** This is where the original *wait* comes in. You may also consider placing the bucket away from the areas in the garden that you use most as the *soup* tends to get rather smelly.

**Dilute to taste.** After around three or four weeks the liquid should be ready for use. The mixture should be diluted until it is *tea* coloured - usually around 1 part liquid to 10 parts water. Water liberally around or on the plants and see the benefits.

**Repeat until winter.** Continue to top up your container with more leaves and water through the year. As autumn sets in put the remainder of the feed and the sludge in your compost heap. Give your container a rinse and store for next year!  
Happy gardening.



## **A HOME FOR WILDLIFE, A HOME FOR HEDGEHOGS?**

I've just joined the Charlbury Garden Society. I love my garden and its plants, and equally I love to see what wildlife visits the garden. I haven't seen a hedgehog lately and have talked to quite a few people around Charlbury who haven't had hedgehog visitors recently either. Have you?

The situation is very dire for hedgehogs, they are a part of the collapsing ecosystem. In the 1950s it was estimated there were 36.5 million hedgehogs in Britain. In 1995 it was estimated the figure was 1,550,000, and numbers have been declining since then – especially in rural areas. And that, it seems, includes Charlbury.

I have a feeling that if we want to see hedgehogs in Charlbury in the future we need to do something. They travel up to 2 km a night and importantly need access to our gardens. Kirtlington have connected 55 gardens across 16 acres, to make them hedgehog friendly. I wonder would we do something similar here in Charlbury? I am connecting my garden to as many of my neighbours' gardens as I can.

I am also drawing up biodiversity maps of Charlbury starting with one for hedgehogs so we can see where we think the hedgehogs are. I would be very grateful if you let me know if you see one or signs of one!

Thank you !

Flora Gregory [fgregory@dircon.co.uk](mailto:fgregory@dircon.co.uk)

## **JOBS FOR JULY**

Feed your borders

Give the lawn a quick acting summer feed

Stake plants before they fall over

Clear algae and debris from ponds and keep them topped up

Deadhead bedding plants and repeat-flowering perennials, to ensure continuous flowering

## **CONTRIBUTIONS**

If you would like to contribute anything to the newsletter for the next month, please contact us. Photographs and short written articles would be welcomed.