



NEWSLETTER V1114 February 1994.

It has been a long time since I ventured to the end of the garden. Not that it's very far ; it's just that I haven't felt the urge to do so ! A bit of pottering, then I dash quickly inside out of the wind and the rain, content to sit and watch the siskins on the peanuts, or the redwings gorging on the cotoneaster berries. It's been so much more cosy inside. Now things are on the move again, Jupiter, our camellia, bravely fighting scale insect- I must wash its leaves to help the battle- has produced its first glorious red flower, and on my winter honeysuckle leaf buds are taking over from the fragrant flowers- so to business!

JUDGES' COURSE.

It would have been heartening to start on an optimistic note but Bill Thomas of the Judging panel writes:

"The original Village Flower Show Judging Course that the Federation ran, in conjunction with Cannington College, was completed in the autumn of 1987. Since then the need to run another course has been repeatedly raised. On each occasion Cannington College have found the cost of the course prohibitive.

In the early autumn of 1993, your committee set up a sub-committee, known as the Judging Panel (composed of Fred Daw, Joyce Harding, Barbara Child and Bill Thomas) to produce and run a course for judges, in 1994. The Panel very promptly set about this task, within a month producing a course, duplicating the necessary documents, hiring a suitable village hall at very reasonable cost, and circulating the information to 110 clubs. All this work was completed by mid-October 1993. Three and a half months were allowed for member clubs to send in a list of proposed candidates for the course. At the end of this period it was found that the interest in the proposed course was very much smaller than the committee had been led to believe. Only about half the minimum number of candidates necessary to run a successful course came forward and fifty per cent of these were from one club, Sedgemoor)

Therefore, regrettably, the Judging Panel had no alternative but to cancel the proposed course, after all the time and hard work spent on setting it up. Well, it looks like we are bogged down on this one. Just like the gardening weather at the moment, knee deep in mud. But look on the bright side, sunshine must be just around the corner!"

A.G.M. 1994

The Annual General Meeting will be held at the Clifford Hall, Cannington College, Bridgwater on Tuesday, 17th May. Nick Rigden, Head of Horticulture, has kindly offered to conduct members round the gardens prior to the meeting. At that time of year the gardens will be delightful, so please make a note to send one or two delegates from your club. I am sure they will enjoy a pleasant summer's evening.

GARDENS OPEN SCHEME.

The booklet for 1994 is enclosed. All the gardens are worth visiting and we are delighted so many owners have agreed to open their gardens for club visits. John Starnes, our Chairman, is very anxious that all of the participating gardens receive visits from you, the clubs. Last year a number of garden owners did not have visits from clubs but in spite of their disappointment, agreed to participate this year. Would every club please ensure that small or large parties of their members do visit one or two of the gardens on the list. We must support the generosity of the garden owners. Please let me know your views on the gardens too.

INFORMATION TO MEMBERS.

Now here's what could be an embarrassing question. How much of the information in these newsletters is passed on to your members? Do feel free to photocopy, edit, bowdlerise or plagiarise any of the information you feel is particularly relevant to your club. Your members may like to have extra copies of the guidelines for exhibitors for instance. Two stamps would secure an individual copy, or £3.50 for 25-available from me. Again tell your members about the Garden Scheme—they might surprise you by organising their own visit for a change!

HESTERCOMBE UNDER THREAT.

As you may know Somerset County Council wish to re-house the Fire Brigade H.Q. at present at Hestercombe and sell both house and garden. Public access to this historic garden, a splendid example of Gertrude Jekyll's and Edwin Lutyen's work, must be maintained and the gardens preserved. As a result of pressure both from the public and from bodies such as N.C.C.P.G. and Somerset Gardens Trust a final decision has been postponed for further consultations. However, the garden's future is still in doubt. A group known as the Friends of Hestercombe has been formed. All who are interested in preserving this lovely garden for public enjoyment are asked to contact;

Mrs Michelle Pine, Cobbleside, North Street, Milverton, TA4  
tel; 0823-400404

Various ideas are emerging and the gardening clubs of Somerset have a part to play. One idea is that clubs could take turns to steward the gardens during weekends from June to September. If you or your members could help in any way please get in touch with the Friends of Hestercombe. Public pressure must be maintained.

GROWORGANIC FERTILISER.

Jim Searle informs us that the price of his fertiliser will remain unchanged from 1/5/94 to 30/4/95. This organic fertiliser is almost identical to that seen advertised at over £6 per bag and according to reports from many of our clubs buying it in bulk over the years it is excellent in every respect as a general garden fertiliser.

The prices are;

Ex-factory single bags	£3.00 plus V.A.T. per bag.
Minimum 15-24 bags	£2.80 " " "
25 bags or over	£2.60 " " "

both for free delivery to One address in the Federation area.

Contact Jim Searle, Organico Ltd., Hayes Road, Compton Dundon, Somerton TA11 6PF tel:0458 273337- note new phone number.

PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE.

The arrangements for transferring our insurance to the new company went through smoothly and all participating clubs will have received the new policy which was sent to Secretaries or Treasurers some weeks ago. Let us hope that we do not have the same problems next year though the 3% increase on insurance policies in the Budget will no doubt apply when we renew in November.

GARDENERS' WORLD.

The producers of Gardeners' World are looking for one or two outgoing, enthusiastic and knowledgeable members of clubs whose gardens may be of interest. Those who fit the bill (don't we all!) are asked to write to the address below giving details, photos and garden plan, with s.a.e. for return of photos. They are also keen to hear of spring and summer shows with thriving children's sections. Contact: Amanda Lowe, Asst. Producer, Gardeners' World, Catalyst Television Ltd., Brook Green Studios, 186, Shepherd's Bush Road, London W6 7LL.

SOUTH SOMERSET COMMUNITY COMPOSTING SCHEME.

The idea is to recycle garden waste for public benefit. The council would buy chippers/shredders which are lent to interested parties such as gardening clubs. The equipment is mobile, transported on a small trailer. Each club would be responsible for its use and operation. If any club is interested contact ;

Andrew Grant, Area Community Co-Ordinator, South Somerset District Council, Community Services Dept., Durstons, High St., Chard TA 20 1Q tel 0460- 62392.

EVENTS FOR YOUR DIARY.

Rare Plants Fair, Clapton Court Saturday April 23rd 10.30-4p.m.

West of England Cactus and Houseplant show, Weston-s-Mare  
Saturday 11th June 9-4p.m.

Evercreech Village Gardens Open. Sunday 17th July 2-5 p.m.

Cannington College, near Bridgwater;

1.Spring Flower Show- Saturday 5th March 1.30 onwards. A chance not only to see some excellent early spring flowers but also floral art, plant sales and the horticultural aspect of the college.

2.Open Day-Saturday 21 May. An opportunity to see the whole range of work carried out by the college- horticulture, farming, equestrian, engineering, countryside, food technology and a whole lot more!

3.R.H.S. out of London lecture- Saturday 22 October at 2.30 p.m. "Peat and Woodland Garden Plants" by Bill Tait, Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh.

4.A full range of gardening and floristry  $\frac{1}{2}$  day/day and evening classes are available this coming September onwards. Details will be sent to individual member clubs/societies as well as obtainable from the college direct.

FINALLY

Thank you to all members who have responded to previous exhortations and to those who have provided so much helpful information. I leave you with an aspiration for 1994 which I received from Stuart Chambers-"May all your Hemiptera be still born!" I looked them up- they're beastly little things!

Good gardening in 1994.

Pip Harwood.