



West Bergholt Gardeners

February 4th 2022

Hello everyone and a Happy New Year to you all!

It is a bit of a while ago now but I hope you all had a very enjoyable (family) get-together at Christmas, at long last?! Our December meeting was a great fun evening and so good to get back together in a social way. We are very grateful to Roxy and Nigel for their Covid-friendly version of the Quiz so Big Thanks from us all. I think they made everyone feel that normality was just round the corner!

Due to the lovely sunny January days we had, its beginning to look like Spring is on its way which, for me, is one of the best times of the year! I'm sure I've told you before that I love Snowdrops and they're now coming through with the Aconites and my very close second favourite to Snowdrops, Hellebores, which are beginning to lift up their little heads! Lovely!

With the approach of Spring, its time for your Committee to get cracking and book Speakers for our next season from September plus this summer's garden trips. Bearing in mind it has been an extraordinary 2 years, that its the Queen's Jubilee celebrations, that we're running Open Gardens in June as well, we thought we would only do 2 summer trips this year:

by coach to **East Ruston Gardens on 12th July** and

a self-drive to **Ulting Wick on 13th September**

so please put these dates in your diaries NOW. More details later on!

BUT I would recommend you look at the NGS 2022 website and consider visiting some of the lovely not-too-far-away gardens, especially if you may not be thinking of going away this summer. If you'd like to make up a small group then you can always speak to me and we'll see what could be arranged!

I've just mentioned **Open Gardens** which will be on **12th June** and we would be grateful for everyone's support on that day. David will tell you more at our next meeting.

On to our meeting this month (21st), Neil Ludmon will be giving us the lowdown on the "History of the use of Herbaceous Perennials" and more good news, free tea/coffee and the Raffle will be back from now onwards! So please bring your money with you!

I'd also like to mention our exciting March meeting when our Speaker will be Steven Digby, who helped on Chris Beardshaw's Chelsea garden in 2019! He will be giving us some valuable ideas on "Current trends in garden design and how to apply them".

Now.....we do have one more surprise for you! Are you sitting comfortably?!

Following a recommendation from Mike Hart after his visit to the RHS Hyde Hall's GLOW Light Display and how good it was, the Committee have decided to organise a coach trip there on **Thursday 24th November**. We will be leaving approx. 4pm and returning approx. 9pm so, again, PLEASE put this in your diaries NOW! There are 2 routes round with one being a little shorter for people with walking difficulties. There will be plenty of opportunities to have warm drinks and some treats!

It wouldn't be right if I didn't finish with a few photos but I've also included quotes from some display boards at Hyde Hall which I thought you might find interesting!

See you all on the 21st!
Shirley
On behalf of your Committee

"The garden in winter is an exceptional experience. You think in terms of decay and disappearing and coming back. You feel the cycle of Nature."

Piet Oudolf

Winter has a bad reputation. Our Visitors often ask 'but what do you do in the winter?' and here lies the misconception that everything, including the gardeners, stops in winter - i.e. it's all death, darkness and decay. To an extent, it is, but clutched secretly within winter's cold fist, there are jewels to discover.

"Although loathed by many, the cold of winter is vital in the lifecycle of a garden"

Piet Oudolf

People often say 'the cold has got into my bones' and it does, with the bones of the earth! Icy tendrils snake their way into the soil and break apart clods of earth, with a ferociousness that takes far less effort than a fork or spade. When water in the soil freezes, it expands then breaks the soil apart into a finer, crumblier texture - perfect for next year's gardening. Pests and diseases are also less likely to survive a cold winter.

Many seeds need a period of cold before they can germinate. This is called 'dormancy', a protection mechanism that prevents seeds from germinating in unsuitable conditions. A cold snap 'tells them' winter has happened and when the warmth arrives, they can emerge and begin to grow! Cold winters will often foretell a bumper crop of fruit the following autumn; dormant buds of some plants need a cold period in order to initiate flowering and produce fruit, a process called vernalisation. So, perhaps next time you lament about the cold winter, think of a blackberry and apple pie!

