



## Epsom Garden Society: May 2023

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*Dear Member, if you have any news or garden related small ads that you would like to be included in the Newsletter, please phone me, 01372 724138, or email me, [margarethaslam6@gmail.com](mailto:margarethaslam6@gmail.com)*

Thank you very much to everyone who has paid their subscription promptly, but if you still haven't, please do. It is £5 for the year. If you have a road rep they will knock for it. Alternatively you can pay by bank transfer: S J Roebuck, Halifax Bank, account 00114786, sort code 11-02-91. Please add your name as reference. Or you can send cash or a cheque for £5 payable to 'Epsom Garden Society' to Steve at 21 Higher Green, Epsom KT17 3BB. Your new card will be delivered by a road rep or posted. Please note that some dates & times have changed since the cards were printed.

Looking forward to our visit to **Ramster gardens, Chiddingfold, GU8 4SN** on Tuesday May 9<sup>th</sup>. Please let **Sue Glover** know your phone number and email address if she doesn't already have them, in case of problems on the day. [outings.egs@gmail.com](mailto:outings.egs@gmail.com) or 02083938019.

We are invited to **Keith and Elizabeth Lewis'** garden at **41 Shelveys Way, Tadworth KT20 5QJ**, on 11<sup>th</sup> August, at 2.30pm. Teas to be provided by TWOAT. There will be choice perennials together with colourful annuals. **Keith** was our Chairman for several years, and a judge at our Shows, often a prize winner with his beautifully grown daffodils and tulips, and it will be lovely to see his immaculate garden. The cost will be £8, please have the right change and pay on arrival.

**Dobies** are offering us a 40% discount on seeds in their on-line catalogue, and a discount on other items, look on line and make a list of what you would like, and then on the payment page it will ask for any discount vouchers to be applied, and at that point tell them **our Society's code SUGD104K**.

A '**Spring Display Coffee Morning**' was held on Wednesday March 15<sup>th</sup> 10-12.00 at Epsom Sports Club, Woodcote Road, Epsom. It was a pleasure to see all the Spring flowers and arrangements that people brought, and we all enjoyed having longer to talk to each other than we usually manage at the tea break at our evening meetings. The Sports Club have a lovely Hall, and it was so nice looking out at the grass and sunshine. We are also planning a **Summer version** on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> June, 10 – 12 (Different to the morning meeting times) . There will be a small **Plant Sale** outside, so please bring anything you can spare for this, and bags in case you find a treasure! Hoping to see lots of members there.

On the 17<sup>th</sup> May at this same venue at 10.15 for 10.30am start **Keith Hine** is coming to give us a talk about '**Plants for Free**', then you will all be over-flowing with plants for our next plant sale! Also, on 21<sup>st</sup> June at 10.15 **Barry Newman** will give us a talk about '**Vegetable Growing – ideas and advice.**' Change of date and time from your printed membership card. £2 for members, £3 for visitors.

**Marian Oliver** and **Sue Glover** have organised an outing to **Hampton Court** to see the greenhouses behind the scenes where all their plants for the Palace are propagated. This will be on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> June, at 10.30 am. The Head Gardener, **Martin**, will meet us at the main gate and take us through. The cost will be £15, which he would like us to pay directly to '**Perennial**', the gardeners' charity. The best way to do this would be to pay the money into our bank account, with your surname as a reference, with HAM after that, so we know what it is for. The Bank details are Lloyds Bank, 30-93-08, 00359728. Please let **Sue** know you have done this on [outings.egs@gmail.com](mailto:outings.egs@gmail.com). There is parking on site but with a charge, and the cafe will be open for fortifying ourselves later.

**Pam Davis** has been working very hard on our behalf organising discounts for us at garden centres and getting companies to sponsor us so that we can continue all the things that we do. After some negotiation **Chessington Nursery** are going to offer us a whopping 20% discount on full priced items! Final details are still being ironed out but **before you pay** they do want us to register at the till: speak to the till supervisor and take your membership card with your surname filled in and some photo ID.

**Rainbow Gardening** at Farm Lane are going to invite us round in September to see what they are doing in their new site at the old Farm Lane nursery in Ashted, and will have a display table at our Show on 2<sup>nd</sup> September. **Jolyon Brooks** from *Brooks Gardening* is also keen to have a table at our Show, and intends to bring his stump grinding machine as people are always interested to see what it is like. He is also happy to answer any gardening questions, particularly about roses, his speciality.

The **RHS** have come up trumps and given us a card that lets two people visit one of their gardens for the price of one. If you would like to use this, ask **Pam Davis** as she is minding it, 07772 896177, and please be sure to take it back to her afterwards.

I have been reading an American book about plants, '*Fifty Plants that changed the course of History*,' by **Bill Laws**, and once you get over the idea that all discoveries and innovations are produced by Americans, it is very interesting. Indigo comes from a two metre tall shrub that grows in Southern Asia and has been a popular dye for over 4,000 years. The dye is extracted by soaking the leaves in liquid, and this can be very smelly as urine is used, and makes social outcasts of the dyers. Pack horses carried the bags of precious dye along the silk road route out of northern India, risking bandits and bad weather. Blue represented wealth, and still does to the Tuareg nomadic tribesmen, the 'blue people', with their indigo blue robes and turbans. It suggested truth, it hinted at human mortality, and as the calming colour of sky and sea in some holistic treatments it is used to lower blood pressure and respiration.

It was also seen as a working colour. War was very good for the indigo trade, making uniforms, and the labouring class wanted strong tough fabrics to protect them from sparks, dung, barley bristles and blood. The demand for bib and brace overalls, boiler suits, dungarees, [named after India's Dongri Killa, the fort of Bombay], and above all, jeans, just mushroomed. The average American now owns at least seven pairs. Demand was outstripping the natural supply of Indigo and chemists were searching for a synthetic source of blue dye. Although it did not match the quality of Indigo tinctoria, its closest rival was Woad, Isatis tinctoria. Here Pictish warriors would daub themselves with woad before attacks to alarm and frighten the enemy. **Julius Caesar** noticed this and reported back to Rome.

Actually I grew this a few years ago intending to try dying wool, but the whole enterprise came to nothing as a squirrel pulled out the plant label and I couldn't remember what the rather scrubby looking plants were. Pity really, as **Audrey Bellenger** told me she was very amused at the thought of me and my husband sitting around of an evening daubed with blue dye.

French dyers in the Languedoc region mastered the craft of turning woad into a blue dye to colour working clothes. In Germany in the early 1700s a chemical dye, Prussian Blue, was discovered, made from alum and animal bones. Then in 1856 a young Englishman, **William Henry Perkin** set up a laboratory to search for a synthetic version of Quinine using Coal Tars, but instead discovered the synthetic dye Mauveine. This was a tremendous success, and all the fashionable ladies wanted to wear mauve coloured dresses. Despite the fame and riches **Sir William Perkin** decided to retire from dye making at age 36 and concentrated for the rest of his career on research into organic acids.

At last, in the 1860s a German chemist **Adolf von Baeyer** discovered how to make synthetic indigo dye. This achievement earned him the Nobel Prize for Chemistry in 1905.

When industrial substitutes hit the indigo markets in the 1870s it had a catastrophic effect on the Indian economy, combined with the development of cotton mills in Lancashire. Raw cotton was exported here rather than being dyed and woven in India, and they were forced to buy back the finished cloth.

In the 1900s demand for natural indigo fell to an all-time low, feeding demands for Indian independence and bringing the rule of the British Raj to an end less than fifty years later. The expansion of the chemical dye industry continued in Germany, which by 1900 had cornered the market. The profits generated helped fund Germany's entry into World War 1.

The hunt was on for red dyes. Henna leaves, *Lawsonia inermis*, were used in India, Austrians used *Carthamus tinctoria* for scarlet, pink and rose, and before the nineteenth century revolution in chemical colours, Irish women collected lichens and carrageen moss for red tones. Madder, *Rubia tinctorum*, grew in Holland where they produced a good deep red dye.

**Small Ads:** For Sale: **Van Haus Garden Cart** – collapsible trolley, steel frame with lining, hardly used. Price £50 or nearest offer. Phone 01372 721937, or cartvine@gmail.com.

Lots of **Plants for sale** for charity, behind the hedge at 22 Manor Green Road. Please put the money through the letter box.

*Best wishes Margaret*

P.S. Below are some adverts for some more of our kind sponsors. Please support them.



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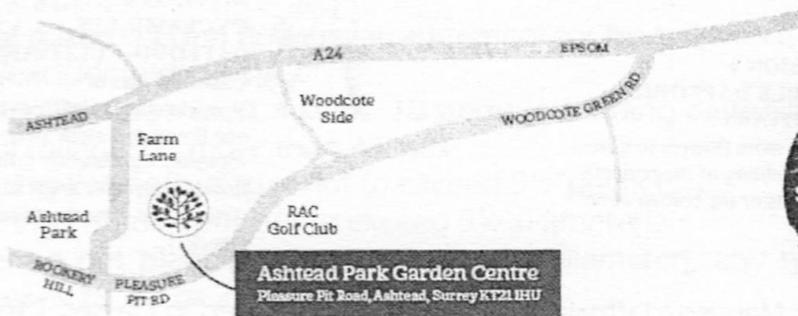
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