

## SHAP GARDENING GROUP

**July 2020**

### **The View from my window - the Wreay Farm Garden**



Our garden has a fascinating history of development dating from the early eighties when Ivan first moved in. At that time, the main garden was little more than a few square yards across the front of the house, and the rest was an open field with some trees overlooking the park. His main focus at that stage was to make a small woodland of an interesting variety of trees in order to provide a windbreak for a future kitchen garden - at the time inhabited by hens and geese. He then set about creating a series of terraces to the front of the house, partly as a means of blocking out the railway line and partly to build a series of different levels of plants and bushes as homage to his time in Crete, all supplied from a hillside of abandoned stones! Over time, we have added a south west facing patio and conservatory, two lawns, a myriad of small flower beds and a flourishing, recently restored kitchen garden.



As you can see, the flowers are at their best in May and early June, providing a vivid mix of colour. I particularly love the lupins, - blue, pink, dark red - and the wonderful aquilegia, which again provide a palette of colour from pale lemon to the darkest burgundy, springing up year after year. They contrast well with the blue cornflowers, the orange geum and the pale pink of London pride, the latter a very useful form of ground cover. The terrace is lovely in the evening as it catches the last rays of the sun.



During the lockdown I have tried to tame an area of hillside beside the terrace which was covered in willow herb, nettles and jack-by-the-hedge, with horse tail poking up everywhere! Digging and removing weeds and roots around the stumps of trees while trying to balance uphill was quite exciting and this is a work still in progress! The photo on the right shows the results - a mixture of ferns, comfrey (a great spreader), geraniums, blue and white horned violets, foxgloves and valerian, all of which have been moved from other parts of the garden or seeded themselves in.



Ivan, on the other hand, has revived our kitchen garden, which had been sadly neglected over the last couple of years but is now thriving. The soil in this part of our field is excellent, deep and fertile, and is now producing a range of vegetables including potatoes, courgettes, broad beans, sugar snap peas, broccoli, leeks, garlic, savoy cabbage, beetroot and various salad leaves. Much to the delight of pigeons, voles and slugs.

Another love of Ivan's over the last thirty years is old roses including the multi-coloured Rosa Mundi (right) and the highly scented musk rose, Isfahan, which was formerly used for distilling rose water. He has made a strongly scented rose conserve made simply by grinding white sugar and the petals.





The two rambling roses beside this window are Dawn and Albertine which have a lovely perfume.



Finally to the south west of the house, with Irek's hard work, we have a lovely sunny patio with views over to the Shap fells.

The work involved in maintaining this garden has kept me sane over these last three months of lockdown, and it has certainly paid off.

*Gill Whitehead and Ivan Day*

### **Some thank you's**



Thank you for helping us to plant. We can't wait to see them grow. Love from Shap CE Primary School



This is a quick email to say how much the flowers you have planted outside the practice are loved by both staff and patients.

They look really cheerful next to the front door and make the practice look more welcoming.

Thank you so much for planting and up keeping them – we really do appreciate it.

Shap Medical Practice

**Plant Sale** Thank you to all who bought plants from the table over the last few days. We have hopefully raised enough to cover the costs of a couple of speakers to be booked once we are able to open again. *Sue Dawson*

(And thank you to Sue for organising this)



## Allotment News

The recent rain has brought on all our flagging vegetables and the plots are looking lush and green.



Produce is starting to ripen and Vera (left) has discovered that she does like cabbage after all! Bev (right) either likes marrows or forgot to harvest when they were still courgettes!



You may have noticed that we have some new “guests” in the parking field of the allotment site. Mark Chambers has brought the sheep on site for the next few months to keep the grass down – don’t forget to say “hello” when you’re passing!

Thanks to everyone for donating their spare plants to the shelves by the gate. Please could we ask you to label anything you leave, as some plants like cabbage and kale, look very similar at this time of year. Please help yourself to anything that’s there.

As we mentioned in the last newsletter, National Allotments Week runs from 10 – 16 August this year. We hope that a continuation of the easing of lockdown restrictions will mean that we can hold some events over the week. In the mean time, we have a competition for you:-

### **\*\*\* Name your plot \*\*\***

Think of an appropriate, possibly funny, name for your plot and win yourself a £10 National Gardening Voucher.

Please get your ideas to Bev (plot 3) by Monday 10<sup>th</sup> August and we will send out a list of names to everyone for voting during National Allotment Week. The winner will be announced on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> August.

And finally, if you need any inspiration or advice about any aspects of allotmenting, take a look at the National Allotment Society Website at [www.nsalg.org.uk](http://www.nsalg.org.uk)

If you want to access the Member Section of NSALG our membership number is: s20609 and password: 1135783

Happy growing!



## Offer



Four of these for edging borders, each approx. 6 ft long and 5ins tall. Also several bits of carpet – useful for covering compost heaps.

Phone Liz 01931 716244 or email [liz.amos68@gmail.com](mailto:liz.amos68@gmail.com)

## Posts!



Using cut up plastic bottles to defend the greens against mice and rabbits, or is it the pigeons. And does this work? Any ideas?  
*Gill, Wreay Farm*



Beautifully made, the start of a wasp's nest - but Harry didn't want it in his mower shed so it had to go.

## July in the garden

Now that we are able to share our gardens more with friends and family, July is a wonderful time in the garden, with many flowers at their peak. That means there's ample pickings for the house, from a dedicated flower patch, or your borders.



Roses - many, such as Rosa Edward's Rose are still looking good in July.  
Bupleurum (Hare's ear) - the acid green flowers make a great filler in flower arrangements and look wonderful with a range of colours, including red, orange, white and blue. Ammi majus (Laceflower, left), Sweetpeas (right), Phlox, Pot marigold, Delphinium and Hydrangeas.





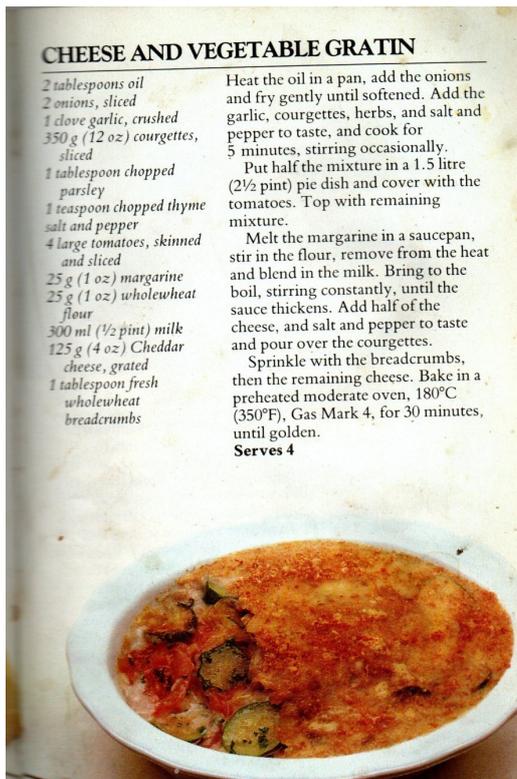
There's still time to plant summer bulbs for very late flowers. Try gladioli with deep colours including dark purple Gladiolus 'Espresso' or the beautiful Gladiolus communis subsp. byzantinus with its magenta flowers.

July is also the ideal time to sow spring-flowering perennial seeds in trays filled with good quality compost. Try Aquilegia (columbine), Bellis (perennial daisy), delphinium and lupin. Sow summer-flowering perennials such as Scabiosa (scabious), Echinacea (coneflower) and Geranium. Prepare for winter containers by sowing winter-flowering pansies in the greenhouse.

This is the first year I have grown Sunflowers, planted on the allotment. They are real sun lovers, and their heads follow the sun during the day making sure they get every bit of sunshine they can. At night the head turns to the east ready for the next morning's sunrise. This is known as 'heliotropism'.

Vera

## Finally - From Plot to Plate



Seeing Bev's photo of her giant courgettes reminded me of a recipe I used a lot 30 years ago when one of my then teenagers decided to become vegetarian. From Vegetarian Cooking by Carole Handslip - you could buy these little books for £1 in Sainsburys.

Liz

**Happy gardening, stay safe, and enjoy this beautiful month in the garden.**

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For enquiries and advice

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For contributions to next month's newsletter.