

# East Anglian Garden Group

Newsletter 110

Winter 2014



Asters

Liz Wells

<http://eastangliangardengroup.onesuffolk.net>

# EAST ANGLIAN GARDEN GROUP

Newsletter 110

Dec 2014

<b>President</b>	<b>Mrs Margaret Thorpe</b>
<b>Chairman</b>	<b>Mrs Elizabeth Wells</b>
<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Mr Matthew Long</b>
<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Miss Josephine Mitson</b>
<b>Committee</b>	Mrs Widget Finn Mr Bob Hardwick      Website Co-ordinator Mrs Jackie Rocker Miss Barbara Segall Mr John Dyter Mrs Isobel Ashton

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**Subscriptions for 2014/2015 were due on November 1 2014  
£12 p.p. payable by cheque to 'The East Anglian Garden Group**

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## WEBSITE

Don't forget to visit EAGG on the web  
<http://eastangliangardengroup.onesuffolk.net/>

Here we have the latest news and additional information about upcoming events. There are also articles written by members and monthly 'Seasonal Treasures' featuring articles on plants or groups of plants of seasonal interest.

# 2015 Spring PROGRAMME

**Saturday January 3**

**Car visit Winter Walk at Anglesey Abbey**

**Saturday February 7**

**GRAHAM GOUGH** of MARCHANTS HARDY PLANTS

As featured in *Feb 2015 The English Garden*

Talk: **'MARCHANTS AND ITS PLANTS'**

Graham Gough was introduced to plants at an early stage when confronted with fuschias and Superstar roses in his mum's flower garden. He abandoned a promising career in classical music as a tenor when a visit to Sissinghurst inspired him with the possibilities of the creative and artistic potential of gardening. After sixteen years working for Elizabeth Strangman's renowned Washfield Nursery in 1998 he established Marchants Hardy Plants. He grows all his own plants to breed, raises and selects new varieties, and travels to observe plants in their natural habitats in Armenia China and Turkey. He still finds time to warble the odd note. Graham will be bringing plants for sale. <http://www.marchantshardyplants.co.uk/>

**Saturday March 7**

**ALYS FOWLER**

Talk: **'HOW TO HAVE YOUR GARDEN AND EAT IT - growing flowers and vegetables together'**

Alys was head gardener at the BBC garden at Berryfields, and first appeared on television in 'Gardeners World.' She grew up in Gloucestershire, trained at Kew and was awarded a Smithsonian scholarship to study at the New York Botanical Gardens. While living in New York's ultra-urban environment she grew plants and vegetables on her apartment's fire escape. She is a presenter on BBC's 'Garden Revival', is the author of several gardening books including *The Thrifty Gardener* and *The Edible Garden* and writes a regular column for *The Guardian*. She describes herself as 'a gardener who loves food'.

**Note: This is a ticketed event - Member cost £5**

## **Thursday March 19**

### **Cambridge Botanical Gardens- Car visit**

Including a tour to include the frame yard with its national collections of European Fritillaria and species Tulips. There is an Orchid exhibition in the Glasshouses.

## **Saturday April 4**

### **CAROLE ADAMS**

Talk: **'CLEMATIS, THE QUEEN OF CLIMBERS'**

Carole Adams established her nursery in 1978 when she moved to Cambridgeshire with her husband and young children. She was working as a nurse so started in a small way, concentrating on summer bedding and hanging baskets on an acre of land. The business grew steadily, and ten years later Carole retired from nursing and decided to focus on clematis. She now has over 250 varieties of clematis as well as a range of hostas, shrubs and herbaceous plants. She will be bringing clematis for sale.

## **Saturday April 11**

### **Norfolk Gardens - Car visit**

#### **Gayton Hall PE32 1PL**

Viscount Marsham's rambling 20-acre water garden, with over 2 miles of paths, contains lawns, lakes, streams, bridges and woodland. In the traditional and waterside borders are primulas, astilbes, hostas, lysichiton and gunneras and a variety of unusual trees and shrubs.

#### **16 Witton Lane, Little Plumstead NR13 5DL**

Richard Hobbs Garden (he who took us around Raveninghamj Hall last year). An 'Aladdin's Cave' for the alpine and woodland plant enthusiast. Tiny garden with wide range of rare and unusual plants will be of great interest with its species tulips, daffodils, Scillas, dog's tooth violets, other bulbous plants and many Trilliums and wood anemones. A garden for the plant specialist. National Collection of Muscari (the day before his public open day)

**Thursday April 30th**

**Coach visit**

**Chenies Manor, Bucks.**

Elizabeth Macleod's well known garden with its numerous rooms and themes including their famous display of Tulips

**Myddleton House Gardens, Enfield Middx**

EA Bowles garden at Myddleton House, with its 150 year old Wisteria, restored Kitchen Garden, colourful Alpine Meadow, newly created Victorian Glasshouse with its four climatic zones, a vine house and a sunken glasshouse. National Collections of Dykes Medal Iris and Tanacetum and restored Victorian Glasshouses and carp lake

***June – to be advised***

***Summer Social / Coach trip to Staffordshire***

**Saturday July 18th Essex Gardens - Coach visit**

**Dene Court, near Chelmsford.**

Sheila Chapman's Immaculately maintained and designed, densely-planted compact garden. Owner is well-known RHS gold medal-winning exhibitor of Clematis. Circular lawn, long pergola and walls festooned with roses and climbers.

**Dragons**

Margot Grice's  $\frac{3}{4}$ -acre garden. Sumptuous colour-themed borders with striking plant combinations, featuring specimen plants, fernery, clematis, mature dwarf conifers and grasses. Meandering paths lead to ponds, patio, a scree garden and small vegetable garden.

**3rd garden to be advised**

**Dates for the Diary**

**August 19      RHS Hyde Hall Flower show**

**(free entry through EAGG's affiliation with the RHS).**

**October 3      Guest speaker**

**November 7    AGM and Guest speaker**

## Is Taxonomy Too Taxing?

Liz Wells

Since Theophrastus, man has been attempting to classify plants and put them into groups according to what they looked like. The scientific language for this was always Latin. Until Linneus came along, plant names were getting longer and more unwieldy.

Linneus created his 'Systema Naturae' which was an innovative attempt to classify living organisms in a scientific way. In 'Fundamenta Botanica' he laid out his sexual system of classification and it outraged people because he classified plants according to their reproductive organs. An interest in flowers had always been considered nice for ladies and now here it was turned into pornography. Most people refused to accept that plants behaved like that.

Binominal nomenclature.

What we really have to thank Linneus for is the system we have now, which is called Binominal nomenclature. It is a very good system which means that plants have two names; the first is the genus which is a bit like a surname. The next is called the specific epithet and is a descriptive word. The genus (plural genera) is always written with a capital letter and the specific epithet never is, even if it commemorates a name. Both words are written in italics. The name of the cultivar is in inverted commas and it is not italicised. For example: *Acer rubrum* 'October Glory'.

One of the great advantages of the binominal system is that the specific epithet often tells you something about the plant. It may tell you the colour. For example: *coccinea* = red, *lutea* = yellow etc. It may describe the leaves or the petals or the form of the plant. E.g. *foetida* = stinky, *horridus* = bristly, (not horrid). It may tell you where the plant grows and that is useful to know. For instance; *palustris* = marshy, *arvensis* = in the fields.

Maybe the specific epithet tells you where the plant comes from. But you have to be careful here. *Scilla peruviana* comes from the Mediterranean, not Peru. The name of the ship that brought it to the UK was called The Peru. Sometimes the name commemorates the

name of the person who found it, or the discoverer names it in someone else's honour. It is considered bad form to name a plant after yourself.

There is a great little book which is very helpful when you are trying to learn Latin names."Plant Names Simplified. Their Pronunciation Derivation and Meaning by A T Johnson and H. A. Smith. I love this book and refer to it all the time. Obviously if you never learnt Latin it is a bit of a challenge coming to grips with the fact that nouns can be masculine, feminine or neuter and the ending of the specific epithet must agree with the genus.

I don't understand why so many people have such a resistance to mastering the correct botanical name for plants. Is it because it is considered elitist, or showing off to know the correct name? Is it a fear of Latin? True, Latin is not taught so much in schools now, but my Latin 'O' level study of Virgil isn't much help in learning botanical names. It does take a little extra effort to learn them but it is worth it. If you know the correct name for a plant, it is international and you can discuss plants with anyone in the world who is interested in plants. How amazing to have an international language.

This is certainly not the case if you use common names for plants. Where I grew up the local name for *Caltha palustris* was May Blobs. When I came to live in Suffolk nobody knew what I was talking about if I mentioned May Blobs. You may call the flower Marsh Marigold or King Cups. Or you may call it something else because there are 31 different local names for the plant. So really, pretty as it may be, a vernacular name is useless for discussing plants.



The case is made worse by the fact that there are, for instance, many, many so-called lilies which aren't lilies at all. And what about Harebells and black-eyed Susies? There are quite a few totally unrelated plants masquerading under these names. Some nurseries

add to the confusion by making up nice sounding names for plants which they think will sell better if they don't have those awkward Latin names. Nobody finds *Rhododendro*, *Penstemon*, *Forsythia* or *Delphinium* difficult. People use the name *Geranium* quite happily (very often blithely ignoring the fact that this word hasn't been used to describe the *Pelargonium* since 1738.) Probably the same people insist on calling the *Hippeastrum* an *Amaryllis*. Still at least they are using the Latin.

But I guess the real problem in confusion in plant names is the ever increasing number of plants which are being reclassified. It is wearying for us all, expensive for nurseries and quickly puts books out of date.

There is an International Code of Botanical Nomenclature and there are rules, which is a good thing because it does help to avoid confusion. For instance no plant is allowed more than one name. If in the past more than one name has been assigned to a plant then the first name is the correct one. Another rule which I think is a bit of a spoilsport is that tautology (tautonyms) is not allowed. In zoology you have such delights as 'Bufo bufo' or a toad.

The most usual reason for plants being reclassified is the fact that we now have DNA testing which reveals the relationships between plants far more efficiently than just looking at them ever did. The new model is called cladistics. Basically this means that there is only one line of



parentage for every species and you cannot have two species in the same genus which are not related. Of course this has led to a great shake up of the plant world and a lot of reorganisation. It is unfortunate, but it is inevitable really. It is not the result of sudden capricious whims of taxonomists, it is really necessary to sort things out in the light of new understanding. For example the huge family of *Aster* has been split up because it was discovered that American



asters were not related in any way to the ones elsewhere in the world. The Chrysanthemum family was split up but garden growers were allowed to keep the name for their showy perennials.

Of course there is often disagreement in the way that plants are classified. Taxonomists are divided between the 'lumpers' and the 'splitters'. But this has been the case since the time of Darwin. The most frustrating thing is when a plant is changed as when Veronica became a Hebe in the 1929 and then after DNA analysis it recently became a Veronica again.

It is difficult for us to keep up because these changes have traditionally only been reported in peer-reviewed scientific journals which we probably don't have access to. Things have changed though because new plants no longer have to be described in Latin and they can be published on line. Anyway, it seems that we will just have to grit our teeth and learn the new names. Here are some recent ones.



The tall Sedums have been renamed Hylotelephium after a study at Tokyo University realised that they should not be classified in the same family as creeping stonecrops. Hang on though; I think this change is still being thrashed out.

Aster, Michaelmas Daisy is now a Symphyotrichum. That's a tricky one.

The good news is that when the genus changes, the name usually keeps its specific epithet. The lovely Cimicifuga simplex 'Atropurpurea' has become Actaea simplex 'Atropurpurea'.



Dicentra is now Lamprocapnos which sounds more like somebody with an obsessive need to wear lampshades on their head than a plant.

# Chairman's report

## What have we been doing?

### July - Trip

#### **Kiftsgate Court and Hidcote Manor**

Quite a journey, but a very worthwhile opportunity to see two of the outstanding Cotswold Gardens. Kiftsgate Court privately run by Anne Chambers, and very much loved



and Hidcote one of the National Trusts Crown Jewels and Lawrence Johnston's influential Arts and Crafts masterpiece before he went on to create the Serre de la Madone. It may be suffering a little from the 160,000 visitors that walk through it every year, it nevertheless has a

wealth of inspiration in its many vistas and themed rooms



### **September - Trip**

#### **Great Dixter and Marchants Hardy plants**

Unfortunately this trip had to be cancelled, as it only attracted 8. A post-mortem identified a number of things that put members off participating. Distance / time and cost featured heavily, and perhaps timing, not only it being September when many members are on holiday, but also its proximity to the early October Great Dixter Plant Fair to which a number of members went.

So in the absence of a great clamour, the committee has decided not to organise trips for the month of September. It maybe that a trip in early October is organised in conjunction with a village gardening club to defray the costs and fill seats.

### **October - Talk**

Will Giles, had to cancel his talk on Exotic Gardening, at very short notice, due to illness, and it remains to be seen whether he will be in a position to welcome us to the Exotic Garden in Norwich later this year. Harry Brickwood valiantly stood in to talk on his subject of growing lilies, and from the Gardeners World Video and other pictures it is clear that his garden is a riot of colour in June and July from the vast numbers of lilies, daylilies and his wife's hanging baskets that pack their suburban plot. It is the deadheading to maintain such a show that frightens me. With regret, and after many years of opening for the NGS in July, Harry is no longer opening his garden in Rayleigh, Essex. So we will not be able to see it in all its glory for ourselves.

## **November – AGM and Talk**

The business of the day was over in record time, with Oswald Simpson stepping down from committee, but still offering his sterling support. And new committee members John Dyter (ex Nottcutts, Suffolk Show Head Flower Show Steward, Suffolk Gardens Trust, Woodbridge Garden Club etc) and Isobel Ashton (Bury Hidden Gardens etc) joining us and bringing considerable horticultural and organisational expertise.

We were fortunate then to have Jim Marshall and Sarah Cook entertaining us with their double act, and talking on aspects of Suffolk's plants and plantsmen heritage, garden plant conservation through national collections and Plant Heritage, and the establishment of the Suffolk Heritage Garden at the Suffolk Punch Trust's site at Hollesey Bay. A very enjoyable afternoon. See <http://suffolkpunchtrust.org/things-to-do/heritage-garden>

## Other things to do.

Jan 31 Sat	Harveys – Snowdrops 10-2 Thurston IP31 3SJ
Feb 1 Sun	Blacksmith Cottage – Snowdrops. Langmere IP21 4QA
Feb 14 Sat	Cambridge PH Euphorbias Don Witton CB22 5JT
Feb 15 Sun	Gable House Snowdrops, 1-4 Redisham NR34 8NE
Feb 28 Sat	AGS Early Spring Show Harlow CM17 9LR
Mar 14 Sat	Monksilver Nursery 'Spring Thing Cottenham CB24 8TW
Mar 21 Sat	Suffolk PH Chris Lane 'Witch Hazels' Stowupland
Mar 22 Sun	Chippenham Park Open Day
Mar 28/29	Alan Shipp Hyacinth Open Days, Waterbeach, CB25 9NB
Mar 28/29	Great Dixter Spring Event
Mar 29 Sun	CGS Timothy Walker, 14.00 Broome NR35 2RR
April 12 Sun	R Hobbs Witton Lane Muscari Collection Open Day
April 18/19	Essex PH Plant Fair Hyde Hall
April 19 Sun	Suffolk Wildlife Trust Plant Fair Lopham Fen
April 24-26	Plant Finders Fair Kew
April 25 Sat	Felbrigg Hall Plant Lovers Day
April 26 Sun	Stanton WWAG Plant & Craft Fair, Wyken Hall
May 2 Sat	AGS East Anglia Show
May 2 Sat	Blacksmiths Cottage Spring Plant Fair IP21 4QA
May 3 Sun	Wootens Spring Plant Fair
May 3 Sun	Norfolk Plant Heritage Spring Plant Fair Hethersett
May 4 Mon	Bank Holiday Sudbury Quay Theatre Plant Fair
May 16 Sat	Hadleigh Show
May 16 sat	Cambridge Botanical Gardens 'Festival of Plants'
May 23 Sat	Fairhaven Water Gardens Spring Plant Fair
May 24 Sun	Suffolk Plant Heritage Helmingham
May 25 Mon	Bury Whitsun Fair
May 27/28	Suffolk Show
May 30 Sat	Creake Abbey Plant Lovers
June 7 Sun	Boxford OG / Lavenham OG / Nayland OG
June 13 Sat	East Ruston OV Plant Fair
June 14 Sun	Bury Hidden Gardens
June 28 Sun	Chelsworth Open Gardens
June 30 Sat	Little Bentley Hall Garden Show CO7 8SD

## **PLANT and BOOK stall**

### **at Hitcham Meetings**

**Plant and book sales contribute greatly to keeping the membership fees low and enabling the group to book more costly speakers without additional charges to members**

**So donations are to be welcomed**