

Newsletter Summer 2005

Hedging with the celebrities



As you may know I get to do a fair amount of radio for BBC Three Counties Radio (Saturday's between 9am-12noon), so when they asked me to report on the show as well as hob knob with celebrities on Press Day of this year's RHS Chelsea Flower Show I couldn't resist the challenge, says *Chris Day*.

Chris Beardshaw

Popular presenter and garden designer, he created a taste of paradise with his recycled Chelsea garden this year.

CD: "Your favourite hedging plant and flower?"

CB: "I would think it has to be the straight green *Fagus sylvatica* (beech). I would mix that with *Ilex aquifolium* (common holly). If you mix the two you get a wonderful tapestry with good foliage and, of course, it is semi evergreen. I really don't think we see enough tapestry hedges grown in this country.

As far as favourite plant, I'm easy tempted, but we have a 90-year old cloud-trained *Pinus sylvestris* on the garden here and pruned by the same man for the past 40 years. The buds are tipped out every spring and it is absolutely exquisite. That's my favourite, but ask me in 5 minutes time and it could well be something different!"

Diamuid Gavin

The TV gardener who made shark fins, decking and coloured balls popular in garden design exhibited at Chelsea for a second time and gained a well-deserved Silver Gilt Flora with his contemporary communal garden, complete with Hobbit-like work and relaxation spaces underground. Box and lavender were used to great effect in his garden.



Diamuid Gavin's Garden at Chelsea

Alan Titchmarsh

As well as presenting the Chelsea Flower Show coverage for the BBC, Alan also was honoured by having a rose named after him, courtesy of top rose grower, David Austin. Buckingham Garden Centre will be stocking the 'Alan Titchmarsh' rose in 2006.

In his *Avant Gardening* book, this is what Alan has to say, quite controversially (and tongue placed firmly in cheek) about some of the more popular hedging plants...

Laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*) "The Victorians loved it. The Elizabethans hate it; all except those in the know. It's vigorous, fresh and shiny, and



Chris on his award-winning garden and that beautifully trained pine tree in the background.

CD: "Your favourite plant and best loved hedging plant?"

DG: "I'm a great lavender fan – I just love the scent of it and the form they can bring into any garden is unique. As for hedging, I spotted a really dark holly hedge in the Australian garden. Hollies are just great, although slow growing they can bring so much into a garden space. I do think they have to be well-clipped for best effect."



Alan Titchmarsh holding the new rose named after him.



Left to Right: Alan Titchmarsh, Terry Wogan and Diamuid Gavin.

it will stand hardy pruning. Good in town and country.”

Forsythia “Far too colourful to be classy!”

Leylandii “Has made an excellent job of turning tiny suntrap gardens into dim grottoes in five years flat. For impatient troglodytes only.”

Box (*Buxus sempervirens*) “Superb for edging asparagus beds and herb gardens (for which you should use the dwarf variety ‘Suffruticosa’). Better at making balls than peacocks.”

Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) “A stalwart of town gardens. A little overdone but still acceptable.”

Terry Wogan

CD: “Are you a keen gardener?”

TW: “No, no I don’t. No, I pay people to do it for me but the present Mrs Wogan is the gardener of the family.”

CD: “Is there anything interesting you have seen at the show today?”

TW: “Alan Titchmarsh and Diamuid Gavin! They’ve brought me in to Chelsea, as I’m the only person who’ll speak to Diamuid!”

CD: “Did you like Diamuid’s garden?”

TW: “I think its lovely and a great idea and I love lavender anyway, but I don’t think it bloomed quite in time for the show and it perhaps needed another week to look its best.”

CD: “Do you have a favourite hedging plant?”

TW: “It has to be Yew. We use a lot of it at Wogan Towers!”

CD: “Thanks for your time and enjoy the rest of the show.”

TW: “Yes, I will and I’m off to look at Lupinus ‘Pauly’...”

Note: That’s the lupin named after Paul Walters, Terry’s radio producer of his hugely popular Wake Up To Wogan breakfast show, but if you are Radio 2 fan you’ll know all about it.

Chenies Manor

We are pleased to be exhibiting again at this year’s Chenies Manor Plant and Garden Fair, which is on Sunday, 17 July. This annual horticultural jamboree is perfect for those of you searching out the rare and exceptional plants, topiary and trees from a wide range of specialist nurseries. Best of all, admission includes entrance to the wonderful Manor Gardens, which are always a treat to view and walk around.



Our Chenies Manor display garden last year

The event is open from 10am to 5pm at The Manor House, Chenies, Rick-mansworth, Hertfordshire, WD3 6ER. Directions: From M25 Exit 18 follow A404 to Chenies (situated between Chorleywood and Little Chalfont). Lunch and refreshments available. Free car parking.

As far as our display this year, we have been influenced by the Manor Gardens amazing white garden, so we’ll be paying tribute to this as well as a whole host of unusual perennials you are likely to see in this stunning garden. If you have a spare few hours, do come along and say ‘Hello’!



Kid's get growin'

Just to let you know we have launched our annual Sunflower/squash competition with local schools in the Buckingham area. We have contacted the schools directly this season, and we've had some excellent response so far! We are hoping for even more entries, including new this season our largest squash category, which is bound to bring in some real heavyweights this autumn.



Last year's winning entries

If you want further information on the schools competition, please speak to the Plant Information Office on 01280 827909.

That tropical touch

Global warming seems to be the new buzz term us gardeners have to deal with. Milder winters, drier spring and summers, coupled with increased average day and night time temperatures means, in effect, we are able to grow far more diverse plant material in our plots.

Olive trees are a great example of this with many of our customers reporting how well their plants have survived the winter and have continued to grow late into the season.

This is a good time to establish a host of so-called tender plants into the garden or perhaps pots – consider palms (*Phoenix canariensis* and *Trachycarpus*), cannas, tree ferns as well as green and purple cordylines. Make sure if you are planting directly into the garden that the soil is well improved with horticultural grit (to ensure rapid drainage). If pots are to be used, again make sure good drainage is available in the pot and a gritty compost mixture is used.

Summer Offers

Most seeds are currently at half price – so make the most of this and stock up on seeds for next season!

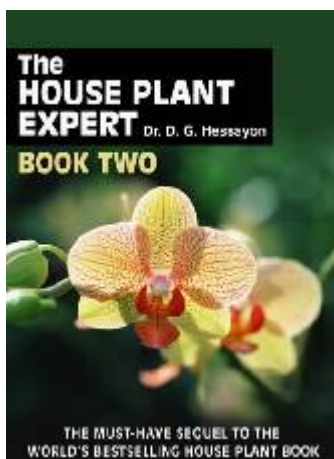
We have **20% off all in-stock Alexander Rose Teak furniture**

We've plenty of **fuchsias**, including basket, bush and hardy varieties still available for that splash of late summer colour. The deal is any three 10cm potted fuchsia for just a fiver!

We have also some **asparagus** plants to move to make space for our autumn batch. The 2 litre plants were £3.99, they are now half-price at £1.99, plus the more you buy, the more you save!



20% Off Teak Furniture – like this Cleveland Round Table Set



Competition Winners

CONGRATULATIONS to the following five lucky winners of our *Houseplant Expert Book Two* competition we ran in our last newsletter. Thank you for all your entries but well done to our five winners, Gillian Dickinson from Maids Moreton; Terry Middle, Tingewick; Mrs P Gorman from Hethe near Bicester; Mrs B. North, Waddesdon, near Aylesbury and Mr R Underhill from Quainton. A copy of the latest Expert Book will be with you shortly and the answer to the competition was (C) Swiss Cheese Plant is the common name for *Monstera deliciosa*.

And finally - JOBS FOR JULY

TIME to enjoy your garden! Time to sit back and reap the benefits of all your hard work. Use your garden for outdoor entertaining – don't forget the all-important BBQ and extend your evenings outdoors with low-voltage lighting and supplementary heating when the sun has gone down and it gets a bit nippy!

CONTINUE to watch for insect or disease damage throughout the garden, and take the necessary steps to control any problems.

KEEP the weeds pulled, before they have a chance to flower and go to seed. Otherwise you will be fighting newly germinated weed seeds for several years.

HOUSE PLANTS can be moved outside to a shady, protected spot until September.

Warmer and drier weather means it will be necessary to water and mist your houseplants more often.

RAISE the cutting height of the mower. Taller grass cools the roots and helps to keep the moisture in the soil longer. Continue to protect your fruit from the birds with netting.

SUMMER blooming shrubs should be pruned for shape after they have finished flowering. Remove any dead or diseased branches.

Verbenas, euonymus, pachysandra, ivy, and climbing roses are some of plants that will root fairly quickly by layering them into the warm soil. Fasten a section of the stem containing one or more 'eyes' down onto cultivated soil with a horseshoe shaped piece of wire and cover it with additional soil. By summer's end, the stem should be rooted sufficiently to sever it from the parent plant and replant into another area of the garden.

CONTINUE to dead head (remove dead flowers) your annuals to encourage continued blooming. If your annuals have died off, pull them out and add them to the compost heap. Replant that spot with hardy annuals or perennials, such as pansies, calendulas, or armeria. Get a second bloom from faded annuals by cutting them back by one half their height, then fertilise them with liquid Tomorite fertiliser.

EFFICIENT WATERING The primary rule of summer watering is to water thoroughly and deeply each time and to allow the soil dry out between waterings. Deep watering will allow the plant's roots to grow deeper, where they are less likely to dry out, as well as the added benefit of anchoring the plant into the ground better. Light, surface watering actually wastes water, because the water never actually reaches the root zone of the plant, and the moisture rapidly evaporates from the top inch of soil. The best way to tell if your plants are receiving enough water is to take a trowel or shovel and dig down a few inches. The soil should be moist at least 3 or 4 inches deep to ensure that the water is reaching the root zone of the plants. Of course, if you planted drought resistant plants in your garden, you won't have to water as often, but the principal of deep watering still applies. Try to do your watering during the morning hours so that the leaves can dry off a bit before the hot sun hits them. Evening watering is sometimes acceptable if the temperatures are warm enough to ensure that foliage dries before the temperature drops at night. (Wet foliage makes plants more susceptible to fungus and disease.)

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SPRING & SUMMER OPENING HOURS

Mon-Thurs: 8:30am to 6pm, Fri-Sat: 8:30am to 7:00pm

Sunday: 10:30am to 4:30pm (open 10am for viewing)