



WAGS News

October 2015



Wallingford Allotments and Gardens Society
Affiliated Member of the Royal Horticultural Society No. 10572234

www.wags-wallingford.com

Trading Store at Centre 70 open to members only Every Saturday 10:00–12:00 (except August)
Annual subscription £4.00 (per household)

WAGS Store closed 12th, 19th, 26th December & 2nd January 2016. Re-opens 9th Jan. 2016

Madam Chairman's Piece

The Autumn Show is the last event of the WAGS 2015 calendar, and what a lovely sunny day we had (after the early drizzle that fell on those of us preparing our dahlias outside at 8am!). It was lovely to be able to sit out with tea & cake have the band playing in the sunshine, so British!

We hope to have the Dobie's catalogue in store in October, offering a great discount on seeds, as usual. If you have any ideas for WAGS 2015, I would love to hear from you.

Thank you to all WAGS members for supporting your society; don't forget to recommend us to your green-fingered friends. I would really like to see membership going up rather than down, so we can feel that all the work we do is worthwhile.

Sandra Halstead

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THE AUTUMN SHOW

We had a great show this year, with delicious looking veg and fruit, stunning floral art and crafts, amazing photos, lovely entries by the children and yummy cakes and jams (which I was not allowed to touch, never mind taste!). The warm sunny weather meant we could sit out in the sun with a cup of tea & a slice of cake and enjoy listening to the amazing Roke and Benson brass band who entertained us all afternoon.



A big THANK YOU to everyone who helped with the show, both 'front of house' in the show rooms and kitchen, and 'behind the scenes', as well as to all those who exhibited; numbers were slightly down on last year, which was a shame, but the standard was high, as commented on by the judges. I would like to thank all our judges who gave up their time to share their expertise, and to the Mayor Lynda Atkins for

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handing out the prizes, saying such nice things about our show and helping with the raffle.

Finally a huge thank you to our kind sponsors who support WAGS by covering some of the costs of staging the show; please give them your support:

Our Major Sponsor: Champions

Sponsor of the Floral Art Section: Keri Harvey The Florists

Sponsor of the Children's Prizes: Wallingford Bookshop

For giving us a discount on engraving for the trophies: Feet First

It was exhausting, but I thoroughly enjoyed the day and hope that all of you who took part, or came on the day, enjoyed yourselves too.

Picking out just a few of the highlights: The floral art always amazes me, and the photography & paintings were stunning this year. Tommy Buckingham goes from strength to strength on both veg and flowers, and Peter Willis grew some beautiful Chrysanthemums, and Antonio Tele's begonia was so perfect. Giles Whitehead must be well pleased with his "Best in Show Veg" which also won overall "Best in Show". I didn't do too badly myself and was delighted to win "WAGS Top Gardener". If the judges would let me eat the cakes & jams I could tell you how amazing they were as well!



My wish for next year is that all those who entered this year enjoyed themselves and come back with even more entries next year, and, as always, please encourage and help the children to enter; they do enjoy it so much and yet so few take part. There is a list of Trophy Winners in this newsletter and on the website.

For anyone who missed the show, there are some photographs at www.wags-wallingford.com, so do take a look. We didn't capture all the exhibits, so if you have any photos, particularly of winning entries, please email them to me. All you WAGS members out there, I look forward to seeing you on September 10th 2016.

P.S. If you have any ideas or suggestions regarding the show, please do get in touch with me, I would love to hear them.

Sandra Halstead
Show Secretary & Deputy

Store News

The Dobies catalogues should be available in store from mid-October. Remember the process is that the catalogue now contains a code that you need to put on your order form. This code identifies that you are a WAGS member. You then simply **send your order form and payment directly to Dobies** for processing and they deliver to your home address. You will still get your **30% on seeds and 10% on other items**, so come and collect a catalogue and place your order.

Potatoes will be available from Saturday 27th February 2016. The varieties are: Arran Pilot; Foremost; Rocket; Charlotte; International Kidney; Cara; Desiree; Picasso; Rooster

Unfortunately, Alec is no longer able to help us in the store. He is sorely missed and we all wish him a speedy recovery. And so we are currently in the process of pulling together a **rota of helpers**, as we do have to have a second person at all times — if you have a spare **Saturday morning 10-12 between now and December**, please contact Sandra or Colin to add your name to the list of potential helpers. If there are particular dates you can do, let us know.

WAGS is also still looking for someone to take over the role of Store Manager, if you think this might be of interest, please get in touch with the committee.

Colin Timmins
Store Manager



My wildlife-friendly allotment and some suggestions to attract pollinators and other beneficial wildlife: Part 2

A compost area with open-sided composters provides not only compost for improving the soil but also a home for all sorts of wildlife. From tiny springtails and mites to larger worms, beetles, earwigs and centipedes to the much bigger slow-worms, toads and even hedgehogs (I once had a whole hedgehog family living in a composter); all will find a home in a compost heap to either help with decomposition, to hide during the day and gobble up pest insects in the night or to keep warm in winter. I have four wooden composters which I have surrounded with comfrey (*Symphytum officinale*). The leaves of this plant can be used to make comfrey 'tea' which is a liquid fertiliser rich in potassium and nitrogen (the leaves are fermented in water and the resulting liquid is diluted 1:10 with water before being used). Comfrey flowers provide nectar for long-tongued bumblebees such as the Garden bumblebee (*Bombus hortorum*).



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I have also left some nettles to grow around the compost area for Small Tortoiseshells and Peacock butterflies to lay their eggs on. At least the Small Tortoiseshells seem to like my nettles as every year I have hundreds of caterpillars munching through the nettle leaves until hardly any are left.



Adding water to your plot is probably one of the most important things you can do for the wildlife in your area. It will not only give frogs, toads, newts, dragonflies, damselflies and other water-dependent animals a home but will also attract birds and mammals which will come to drink, bath or hunt for food. You do not need to build a huge pond: Any watertight container sunken into the ground and filled with rainwater will do. You just need to make sure (especially if the container has steep walls) that you always

have a safe exit (such as stones or a wooden plank) for animals so they can get out again if they have fallen into the water. If you add plants such as marsh marigold (*Caltha palustris*) and Water forget-me-not (*Myosotis scorpioides*), your little pond will be even more attractive to wildlife. Also try to surround your pond at least on 3 sides with flowers to provide shelter, food and somewhere to hide for your pond wildlife.



Last but not least, if you have a shed, you can provide bee nesting boxes (also called bee hotels) for solitary bees. You can buy them or make your own by cutting bamboo canes to 10-15 cm long pieces and stuff them tight into a watertight container such as half a plastic water bottle or a tin. The bee hotel should be positioned in a sunny, sheltered place. It may take some time for the solitary bees to find the nesting box, but after about a year the bees should flock to your bee hotel, provided that you have surrounded the

area with lots of pollinator-friendly plants. Solitary bees do not sting and are completely harmless, and thus the bee hotel can even be sited next to the shed door or a sitting area.

Attracting wildlife to your plot is not difficult and does not cost much. If you avoid spraying pesticides, plant some pretty pollinator-friendly plants in between your rows of vegetables, have a herb bed and a compost area and let some of the green manure flower, you are already doing a good deal for wildlife. You will also realise that you get less pest damage and a better pollination of your crops.

You can also have a look at my allotment plots (plot number 69 and 70b) to get some more ideas, and to see if this less traditional planting style would suit you.

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Results from the Wallingford Allotments and Gardens Society Autumn Show 2015

Description	Trophy	Exhibitor
WAGS Top Gardener	The Bill Stickley Trophy	Sandra Halstead
WAGS Novice Top Gardener	The Talbot Trophy	<i>No entries</i>
Vegetables - Members Only	The President's Cup	Sandra Halstead
Best in Show - Vegetables	The Albert Reed Memorial Trophy	Giles Whitehead
Flowers - Open	The Slade Memorial Bowl	Edward Hodgson
Flowers - Members Only	The Vice President's Cup	Tom Buckingham
Best in Show - Flowers	The Gniadek Cup	Sandra Halstead
Pot Plants Members Only	The W.A.G.S. Cup	Sandra Halstead
Fruit - Members Only	The Members Trophy	Tom Buckingham
Best in Show - Fruit	The Peter Hallett Memorial Bowl	Giles Whitehead
Specialities - Open	The Arthur Shepherd Trophy	Brenda Crocker
Wine - Open	The Johnstone Cup	<i>No entries</i>
Length, Weight & Odd - Members Only	The Bob Burrell Memorial Trophy	Richard Guppy
Heaviest Four Onions	The Macmower Trophy	Jean Teles
Children - Aged 5 to 8 years	The Audrey Bosley Trophy	Mabel Whitehead
Children - Aged 9 to 12 years	The Lillian & William Wells Memorial Trophy	Amy Cole
Container Gardening - Open	The Mayoress' Trophy	Mel Belgrove-Jones
Floral Art - Open	The Floral Art Cup	Alison Broadbridge
Tastiest Tomato	Commemorative Plaque	Fir Tree School
Most Scented Rose	Commemorative Plaque	Richard Guppy
Art and Craft - Open	The Craft Cup	Sandra Halstead
Photography - Open	The Latter Trophy	Nadine Mitschunas
Best in Show - Best Effort	The Founders Cup	Tom Buckingham
Best in Show - Family	The Mayor's Trophy	The Cole Family
RHS Banksian Medal	The RHS Banksian Medal & Certificate	Sandra Halstead
Highest No. of Points in the show	Ben Buckingham Memorial Cup	Sandra Halstead
Best in Show - Members Only	Eddie Small Shield	Giles Whitehead

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Apple Day in Brightwell cum Sotwell

Brightwell cum Sotwell are holding their 6th Apple Day on Sunday 11th October at the Red Lion pub from 11am when you can see a spectacular display of heritage varieties of apple; many you might not have heard of and you will never see in supermarkets. There will be a Popup Food Market where you can taste and buy over 10 varieties of apple; jams and chutneys made from village fruit; and this season's juice. The ever popular cake tasting and judging returns, as well as the children's games such as apple bobbing and more.

You can follow preparations for the day on the Brightwell Village Orchard Group Website:

<http://brightwellorchards.blogspot.co.uk>

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### ***Tables for Hire***

WAGS owns 10 trestle tables which are available for hire at £5 per table, or £30 for all 10. Each table is 6ft by 2ft 6" (LxWxH 180x75x74cm) and folds in half to 3 x 2ft 6". So remember if you are having a party this Summer, or a garage sale, and need some tables for the day, please contact George:

*georgesmall68@yahoo.co.uk*

