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# NEWSLETTER – AUTUMN 2021

## *In this Issue*

- Study Day – October Speakers Announced
- AGM – A Chance to have your Say
- 2021/22 Membership Subscription Reminder
- Memories of our Summer Visits
- THEA Award for 2021
- Dates for your Diary
- How does your Garden Grow?

## **Editorial**

Welcome to our Autumn Newsletter. It's been a rather strange summer, weather-wise this year; hot then cold then hot again, very dry followed by a deluge then dry again. My garden hasn't been sure whether it was coming or going.

Fortunately, we were able to have our two planned garden visits this year and it was wonderful to see so many of our members again. We had good weather (though it was touch and go at Bridgewater). We have write-ups of our visits and some photographs further on in the newsletter.

In this edition we have excellent contributions from two of our much-loved THEA members – Anne Harrison and Harry Delaney. See the "How does your Garden Grow" section towards the end of the newsletter. It's a really interesting read.

Friday 29th October is our next Study Day at Reaseheath. The speakers and the programme for the day are announced below. We hope very much this event will go ahead in person at Reaseheath – at the moment things are looking promising so we hope to see you all there. Although Zoom worked quite well considering, you can't beat meeting up properly and partaking of the delights of the Reaseheath Canteen. We'll update you a little bit nearer the time.

In the AGM part of the Study Day, we will be asking for people to volunteer to join us on the committee. Please do give this some thought as we are a friendly bunch and our meetings are always enjoyable with many digressions on gardening and plants in addition to the normal committee business. There's almost always cake involved too – what more could you want!

Best wishes to you all

Debbie Holden, Chairman

**STUDY DAY PROGRAMME**  
**Friday 29th October 2021 – Main Lecture Theatre, Reaseheath College**

We are very much hoping that we will be able to hold our next study day at Reaseheath College in person – things are currently looking very promising this time round! If anything changes in the meantime, we will notify you.

We are planning to hold a plant sale, though we are planning to hold it outside rather than inside the lecture theatre; this will help avoid over-crowding and minimise any Covid risks. If you have been busy propagating over the summer, then please bring samples of your efforts along. 😊

From 10:00	<b>Sign in</b>
10:15	Coffee available in Restaurant
10:45	Lecture: <b>"Recent Developments in Hydroponics and Intensive Crop Production"</b> by <b>Dr Paul Challinor</b>
11.45	THEA Plant Sale
12:00	Lunch available in Restaurant Plant Sale – continued
13:00	Raffle Prize Draw
13:15	43rd Annual General Meeting
13:30	Lecture: <b>"Colour in the Leaf"</b> by <b>Anthony Norman</b> of Conquest Plants

We are always looking to find new and interesting topics for our study days. When we did a survey of members a few years ago, one thing requested by several people was to find out more about modern developments in horticulture; hopefully the talk by Dr Paul Challinor will be of interest in this respect.

***Dr Paul Challinor***



Paul is a professionally qualified consultant and Managing Director of May Barn Consultancy Ltd. His skills include wide-ranging agronomic and technical experience in the UK conventional and organic food crop production industry. He also has specialist knowledge of intensive hydroponics, glasshouse substrate culture and vertical farming systems including vegetable, fruit, flower and pharmaceutical crop production. Most recently, Paul was the Co-Founder and Chief Technology Officer of Jones Food Company Ltd, which developed a ground-breaking, high-care, fresh food, vertical crop production facility, utilising the latest innovations in intensive hydroponics, GE Current LED lighting and cropping system automation.

### **Anthony Norman**



Anthony and Susan Norman are specialist growers of variegated and coloured foliage hardy plants at the **Conquest Plants Nursery** near Macclesfield.

Anthony has a great knowledge of how get the most from this range of plants including shrubs, grasses, perennials and bulbs with variegated, silver, red or bronze leaves.

### **Arrangements on the day**

This event will take place in the **Main Lecture Theatre** adjacent to the Restaurant. Please assemble there from 10:00 a.m. onwards to sign in.

**Coffee** can be purchased in the Restaurant before the start of the meeting. **Lunch** will be available in the Restaurant from 12.00. Please use the area of the restaurant adjacent to the lecture theatre where tables are roped off.

Members are asked to park in the **Main Students Car Park** near the Worleston Road entrance (see Campus map). For members who are unable to walk far, the college reserves **six parking spaces** for us in front of the Old Hall which are accessed from the college entrance on the A51, almost opposite the Reaseheath Equestrian Centre. If the security bar is closed, simply drive up to it and it will open automatically.

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#### **43<sup>rd</sup> Annual General Meeting Nominations to THEA Committee**

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Our Annual General Meeting will be held in the Main Lecture Hall after lunch at the Study Day. We try to keep it as short as possible by sending out information for your scrutiny prior to the meeting. However, we are aware that it is important that we leave enough time for you to question the committee and for you to get your ideas and opinions across. If you are unable to attend, please contact any committee member and leave your apologies.

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#### **Annual Subscriptions for 2021/22 Now Due**

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Annual Subscriptions for 2021/22 became due on 1<sup>st</sup> September; it remains at £10.00 for both members and associate members. A renewal notice with details of how to pay has been sent out via email.

New members who joined between June and August this year do not need to renew until 01/09/22.

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#### **Memories of our Summer Visits**

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This year we only arranged two visits – fewer than normal due to a late start due to lockdowns and the reluctance of some of our chosen gardens to commit to group visits this year. There was no coach trip this year; after canvassing members it was clear that there was a strong preference to self-drive to any gardens for the time being.

That said, this year's visits to RHS Bridgewater and Wildegoose Nursery were enjoyable and were well attended; and it was lovely to see so many familiar faces again! Reports on our two visits are included below, with thanks to Helen Gardiner and Alison Kinsella for both organising the trips and writing them up.

### Visit to RHS Bridgewater on 28th July 2021 by Helen Gardiner

I'd looked forward to visiting this new RHS garden for some time and it didn't disappoint. Although this is very much a garden in progress, there was plenty to see and there is some lovely planting.

For those of you who watched the BBC programme "The Great Northern Garden Build" it was clear that the RHS had taken on a huge project and we were keen to see how things had progressed since then.

We had a good turn-out for this visit with 48 members joining us. Once our group had gathered together and been ushered through the side gate where we were given an introductory talk by one of the RHS team who also happens to be a THEA member, Claire Preston-Pollitt. We all went our separate ways to explore the different areas.

Debbie and I headed straight for the Walled Garden. This is the only part of the garden that has survived from when it was part of Worsley Old Hall – the hall was demolished in the 1940s. The Walled Garden now incorporates the Kitchen Garden and the Paradise Garden.

The Kitchen Garden has not been fully planted up, but the plan for this is to incorporate a forest garden, a formal vegetable garden, a herbal garden, and fruit trees against the walls. The fruit and vegetables grown here will supply the Bridgewater Café. One of the interesting features is a set of metal towers, designed to match the old chimney. The chimney, which is still standing, was part of the original heating system for the greenhouses when exotic fruit was grown for the hall.

The Paradise Garden has more established planting and is a beautiful tranquil space. At the centre is a 70-sq m lily pond, which is fed by two rills extending either side. The planting in this garden blends species from around the world – when we visited, plants such as echinacea, salvias and euphorbias were looking spectacular. Pleached parotias (Persian ironwood) and clipped beech columns provide height.



Echinaceas looking fabulous in the Paradise Garden



The water lilies in the lily pond have yet to put on some growth.



Outside the Walled Garden, the Welcome Garden with its irregular shaped beds allows you to meander through the planting, and yew domes provide an interesting architectural feature. Beyond this area is the Chinese Streamside Garden, which connects Ellesmere Lake to the Moon Bridge Water – a new lake created for the garden and which can be seen from the Welcome Building. The Chinese Streamside Garden is a work in progress but already there is some lovely planting, including acers, hydrangeas and magnolias, and the path takes you over several bridges, pools and rock features. The idea behind this garden is to celebrate how Chinese planting techniques and plant species have enriched British horticulture.



One of the rills leading from the lily pond.



The Chinese Streamside Garden is in its early stages.

By lunchtime, a thunderstorm, which had been rumbling in the distance for most of our visit, finally arrived and had us running to the Welcome Building! But we were lucky that it stayed dry long enough for us to see most of the garden's interesting features. The site is massive – 154 acres in total, so there is a lot still to be developed. It will be interesting to visit the garden regularly over the next few years and see the plans materialise.

#### **Visit to Wildegoose Nursery on 24th August 2021 by Alison Kinsella**

Thirty members and friends of THEA made the journey into deepest Shropshire to visit the nursery of Jack and Laura Willgoss. This was a follow up visit to the wonderful talk that Jack delivered to us at our last study day in 2019 – seems like years ago. His enthusiasm had whetted our appetite for the visit and we were not disappointed.

After a scenic and, at times, frustrating drive to the Nursery (due to traffic accidents etc) we started the day with a very welcome hot drink and a choice of amazing cakes. Always a good start to any day out.

If like me you had looked at the forecast, we should have been in for a warm and dry late summer day out. Most of us had dressed accordingly but it was in fact a bit on the chilly side, however it did stay dry and it did warm up later in the morning. Good fortune was on our side.

It felt good to be together again with lots of catching up to do following our enforced period of lockdown.

Laura gave us a very interesting introduction to the Nursery and we were then free to wander at will. It is surprising how far and how quickly 30 keen gardeners can spread themselves out when let loose in such an amazing nursery.

There was a lot to see including the hot borders, the grass borders, the colourful perennials, all set against the backdrop of the Shropshire hills. I certainly enjoyed the naturalistic feel to the whole garden and this belied the amount of work such a style takes to achieve.



Borders with a backdrop of the Shropshire hills



Nectar-rich feast for insects

The garden was buzzing with bees and butterflies, clearly enjoying their nectar-rich feast.

We had the opportunity to see the amazing curvilinear glasshouse first hand; those of you who attended Jack's Wildegoose talk will remember the challenges its restoration required. It was an amazing sight and it was interesting to hear that its design does cause it to overheat in the summer; the lack of openings reduces the amount of ventilation possible.

As you would expect, very few of us managed to resist the plant sales area and people were seen carrying their bounty back to their cars with great satisfaction and a reminder of their visit. I wonder how many of the plants have made it into their various new spots as yet. Mine have been planted and are looking spectacular.





Colourful borders and curving paths, looking towards the glasshouse



Inside the glasshouse – an amazing sight made up of thousands of postcard-sized pieces of glass

Those of us who stayed on for lunch enjoyed a very tasty bowl of soup or a sandwich, sustenance for the return journey.



Interesting focal points



Plenty of colour and interest

### The Horticultural Enthusiasts' Association Awards 2021

Each year THEA makes an award (in the form of book tokens) to two outstanding students from the RHS courses at Reaseheath – The Horticultural Enthusiasts' Association Award for Endeavour and The Horticultural Enthusiasts' Association Award for Best Practical Student. Sadly, again this year, no award has been presented as all award ceremonies were cancelled as a result of Covid.

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### Other Dates for your 2021/22 Diary

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- Next Study Day – Friday 25th February 2022
- Super Summer Study Day (starring Chris Beardshaw) – **Thursday** 7th July 2022

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### How Does Your Garden Grow?

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Last Autumn we included an article telling you about the committee members' gardens. That proved popular with our readers so we invited Anne Harrison and Harry Delaney to tell us about their gardens – many of us have heard so much about their gardens and their pests and diseases over the years while we were studying at Reaseheath, so it's nice to hear more about the gardens themselves.

Just a thought – why don't you tell us about your garden too – we'd love to hear from you. If you would like us to include your garden in a future newsletter, please email your article to horticultural.enthusiasts@gmail.com. Ideally, if you could use the same question & answer format as above that would be wonderful.

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### My Garden by Anne Harrison

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**Location** – My garden is in Whitewell, which is a small hamlet just inside the Welsh Border two miles from Whitchurch, Shropshire.

**Time at Reaseheath** – I worked at Reaseheath from 1980 to 2017

**Favourite Gardens** – My favourites are Bodnant, Wollerton Old Hall, and RBG Kew (of course!)

**My top 6 favourite plants** (in my garden):

1. *Cercidiphyllum japonicum*, it has purple new growth, fabulous Autumn colour, and scented Autumn leaves.
2. *Acer palmatum 'Senkaki'*, coral red stems for winter colour, golden leaves all summer and great Autumn colour.
3. *Daphne bholua 'Jacqueline Postill'*, beautiful scented flower from January to March, given to me by my students! (Happy memories)
4. *Helleborus 'Anna's Red'*, produces masses of flowers and has attractive marbled foliage.
5. *Ginkgo biloba*, striking leaf shape, beautiful Autumn colour.
6. *Rosa 'Sally Holmes'*, flowers all summer with lovely big white flowers, apricot in the bud.

**Gardens that have influenced me** – Wollerton Old Hall for its mixture of formal design mixed with soft informal planting. Also, Beth Chatto's gravel garden which showed me that it is possible to grow plants on a poor dry soil.

**Garden size, soil, and aspect** – The total plot (including the house) is 1/3rd of an acre, it is largely South facing, very sandy soil with a pH of 6 and it is also a frost pocket. Not an easy garden!







*Acer 'Senkaki'*



*Cercidiphyllum japonicum*

**History, Development or interesting facts about my garden** – Back in the 70s -80s it was cultivated, had greenhouses on it and some sort of animals (chickens or pig?) on the bottom third. The next owners knocked down the greenhouses then completely neglected it. When I arrived, it was chest high in weeds and skip loads of rubble had to be removed. I split it into 'rooms' using beech hedges and trellis, so that you cannot see it all at once. I planted lots of trees and grasses, in recent years the grasses have been reduced and the borders are constantly changing. Woody plants do best as herbaceous mostly shrivel up in the dry soil.



*Helleborus 'Anna's Red'*



*Daphne bholua 'Jacqueline Postill'*

I share my neighbour's East facing wall, initially I covered it with fruit, but the Kiwi plant became an enormous trifid-like thing and had to be removed, the peach tree fell foul of peach leaf curl, and the plum tree got canker! It now looks much better covered with *Garrya elliptica*, *Azara serrata*, *Rosa 'Star Performer'* and *Ceanothus 'Yankee Point'*.

**My worst mistake?** – Planting a golden stemmed bamboo which spread everywhere it shouldn't, including into my septic tank!

**My weakness?** – I love garden sculptures, big or small!



**Location** – Haughton, Stafford

**Time at Reaseheath and Before** – Lectured at Reaseheath from 5th September 2014. I enjoyed every minute of it, working with excellent supportive colleagues and teaching many wonderful students. This was a return to lecturing after having previously lectured at Askham Bryan College near York for 2.5 years from 1968 to 1970.

Lecturing was my first love and I returned to it after a very successful career in the Government's Horticultural Advisory Service to farmers and growers and when it was moving rapidly to privatisation. In my advisory career I worked for 3 years in West Yorkshire, then spent 6 years as an experimental officer at Stockbridge House Experimental Station in Yorkshire. I was promoted to County Horticultural Advisor for Staffordshire and after 5 years became Regional Horticultural Advisor for the South West based in Bristol. Reorganisation brought changes and I moved to Worcester as the Team Leader. I left the service at the end of 1993, and spent 22 months looking for a job. Reaseheath offered me a lecturing post and the rest as they say is history! I had come back to my first love – teaching – and was no longer ambitious to climb the career ladder.



Harry with *Rhododendron yakushimanum*

### **On Gardens**

During my lecturing job back in the late 1960s I came across a quote by that famous writer Reginald Arkell (1872-1959) who, reflecting on his gardening experiences said, 'A garden should be rather small or you will have no fun at all'. Wise words.

Gardens, particularly the larger ones, can so easily become our task master and not our servant. We enjoy working in them, but fail to relax in them. I'm as guilty as the rest on this one, but when I do, the insect life, bird activity, the enveloping scents of Oriental Lilies, sweet peas and Brugmansia take over and all is well with the world. I find myself thinking about what matters most to me in my life.



### **On Summer and Winter Garden Interest**

Gardening for many starts at Easter and ends after the first frost in late Autumn, we neglect the winter garden at our peril! We are often hesitant because of wet and cold to venture too far into the depths of our gardens in winter. My advice to students would be to give equal consideration to planning for winter as you do for summer interest. Consider planting winter interest plants closer to your house where you can easily access them. Several of my favourites would include *Daphne bholua* 'Jacqueline Postill', *Hamamelis x intermedia* 'Pallida' and *Lonicera x purpusii* 'Winter Beauty'; all flower for long periods and are very reliable.

### **On Trees in your Garden**

Think about the height and width the trees you plant will grow to. When we moved into our house, we inherited two large oak trees and a small-leaved lime, *Tilia cordata*, the latter had been pollarded a year or two earlier and has since grown into a very large tree. Although beautiful it casts quite a bit of shade causing shrubs and other plants to grow lopsided towards the light. The tree produces masses of flowers in early summer with associated bracts. When the flower goes over the leafy bracts turn brown and start to fall, akin to early leaf fall. This means two lots of leaf gathering! Take note if you are thinking of planting lime trees.



**Favourite Gardens** – Locally I have to include **Wollerton Old Hall**, a ‘room’ themed garden ‘par excellence’ created in the 1980s. Beautiful, exciting displays of colour, texture, shape and contrast, and excellent use of topiary, pleaching, vistas and surprises.

Another brilliant ‘room’ themed garden is **Biddulph Grange** in Staffordshire, dating back to the 1840s. That’s right, ‘room’ themed gardens are not new! Here within an hour or two you can move from America to a Scottish Glen, through a rock tunnel with an ice house into China, then Egypt, through a lovely Arboretum and then walk between Giant Redwoods from California forming a perfect vista. Thank goodness the National Trust and local people saved and restored this jewel!

Finally, I must include **Hodnet Hall** Garden in Shropshire which combines fine landscaping and large water features, superb trees, (some quite old) shrubs, and herbaceous plantings and a well-maintained wall garden. Everything is maintained to the highest standard. Go in May-mid June to see the good specimens of *Davidia involucrata* (handkerchief tree), *Cercis siliquastrum* (Judas tree) and large plantings of *Maianthemum* (*Smilacina*) *racemosa* (False Spikenard); the creamy white flowers and scent will blow you away!

#### **My top 6 favourite plants:**

1. ***Abelia x grandiflora*** is so reliable and beautiful, it produces arching shoots bearing small dark green glossy leaves, flowering from July to early winter. The flowers are white with a pink tinge, with a slight scent. No pests or diseases. Grow it in full sun.
2. ***Aster x frikartii* ‘Monch’**. See right – very reliable herbaceous plant, easy to grow, reaching 60-90 cm, it flowers freely from July until the frosts. It has blue flowers in profusion, preferring a sunny position and moist soil. No pest or disease troubles.
3. ***Helenium* ‘Sahin’s Early Flowerer’** – Early flowerer refers to it starting to flower early but it continues to flower straight through into late Autumn. I observed its performance at Reaseheath and found it to be totally reliable and lacking any pest or disease problem.
4. ***Rhododendron yakushimanum***. This reaches just over a metre in height so is ideal for the small garden or confined spaces. It forms an attractive dome-shaped bush with downward-bending dark glossy green leaves. The flowers are rose coloured at the bud stage opening to rose then white when mature. What a beautiful plant. Again, has no pest or disease problems. It is happy in dappled shade and would require acid soil conditions and moisture.
5. ***Jasminum nudiflorum***. This winter flowering shrub needs growing against a wall or fence to give some protection. It starts to produce its yellow flowers in late September and continues until late March. The flowers are damaged by hard frosts but new buds open to continue flowering. In late March prune back all the flowered shoots to near their base.
6. ***Daphne bholua* ‘Jacqueline Postill’**. This is an evergreen to semi-evergreen shrub which starts flowering in late January and continues until late March. It has pinkish mauve flowers which are highly scented. Plant it near to the house to enjoy its scent every day. It will stand some light shade, grow it amongst other shrubs, or against a house wall. I have two plants both about 2 metres high in large containers which can be moved easily to the best place for viewing. Remember Daphnes do not like being lifted or transplanted. The plants grow fairly upright and sucker, but not aggressively. Suckers can be lifted and grown on to produce new plants!



#### **Gardens that have influenced or inspired me:**

This is evolutionary and continually developing. My biggest early influencer has been the five years that I spent as a ‘gardener’s boy’ and later an indentured apprentice at Denton Urban District Council parks department. I learnt how to raise bedding plants, plant up public displays beds, maintain turf through working on lawns and bowling greens, plant trees, everyday production nursery work, and tropical plant



care. This taught me to look at a plant and assess it for water and nutrient needs. Today I appreciate good formal bedding plant displays but I am very critical when the soil in those beds is below the level of the surrounding lawns. The soil should be higher so that the plants are displayed to a better advantage.

My 3 years as a horticultural student in the Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh was revolutionary for me, it taught me about landscaping rock gardens, creating peat walls, woodland gardens, herbaceous borders, the care and management of trees and shrubs, glasshouse growing, and managing plants from all parts of the world. My knowledge of plants, their names and their uses blossomed. I still use this knowledge today.

### **Garden Size, Soil and Aspect.**

We live in a detached house in the countryside and I suppose comparing it to houses in urban areas we have a very large garden. The garden surrounds the house on all sides and is surrounded by farm hedges (hawthorn, holly etc.)

The back garden faces east and gets the morning sun whilst the front garden is in full sun from about mid-day. The North end gets the late afternoon sun, but my very large *Tilia cordata* (lime) tree blocks out much of the sunshine causing plants to lean towards the North East.

Our soil is a medium to heavy clay with some sand content. The last pH test I did indicated pH 6.5, so it is generally fine for most plants. There is little fall in the land so drainage can be slow in the winter, the water table rises quite high in the winter but falls slowly moving into summer. We have a very large apple tree (possibly Reverend Wilks) in the back garden which may date back to the 1930s when the house was built. It is very happy with its growing conditions, but we also inherited a well-established but rather small Victoria plum which, although it survives, is no larger than when we moved in during 1986! Maybe the high water table is the cause?

### **History, Development, Design or Interesting Facts about your Garden**

Students at Reaseheath often said to me that I must have a wonderful garden! I took a deep breath and said 'Actually no, I haven't' and words to the effect that I could not risk students coming to see it! I have to say that it has improved since retirement but it is still not where I want it to be.

### **In the Greenhouse**

I grow up to a dozen tomato plants in our lean-to greenhouse each year. It is unheated but I try to get the plants in by mid-April (safe in a cold greenhouse). They are best grown in large containers (10" pots). The plant goes into the bottom of the pot and is surrounded by compost. After 2-3 weeks put in another 2" of compost surrounding the growing stem and repeat this until the compost reaches the water mark. I find this gives good results; the compost-covered green stem soon produces new tiers of roots. Always remember to water tomatoes early in the morning, not in the evening, this avoids burst tomato fruits. On very hot sunny days spray the tomato plants with water to aid pollination and cool the plants. You will not scorch the plants!



### **Strawberries**

I grow four short rows of strawberries which I keep as individual plants by cutting off all the runners. Row spacing is 30", plant spacing 18". I have about 30 plants which keeps 4 people well supplied for the whole of July. I do use an aphicide prior to flowering to stop a large attack of aphids later on. When all the strawberries are picked, I run my rotary lawn mower over them to remove all the leaves and debris. About 2" of leaf stem is left behind, I apply 1.5 oz of sulphate of Ammonia per square yard and water it in to stimulate new leaf growth. Removal of old leaf growth gets rid of many pests and diseases; the new growth is important as it responds to declining day length by forming embryonic flower buds to develop in the

crown ready for next year's season. Better and more abundant flowers are produced as a result of de-leafing, try it!



Strawberries after leaf removal



The new growth

### ***Rootstocks and Grafting***



I have a row of apple rootstocks comprising half of MM106 (semi vigorous) and half of M25 (most vigorous). I grow these in a 'stool bed' method which means new growing stems are earthed up (like potato ridges) to encourage the stems to root out. In winter the ridges are broken down, the rooted stems are cut off and planted in lines 18" apart ready for budding or grafting with selected cultivars. I have also two rows of Mountain Ash (*Sorbus aucuparia*) which I have either chip budded in July or grafted in February/March time with two separate cultivars.

### ***Vegetables***

If I grow potatoes, it is usually 'first earlies' planted early March and ready early June onwards. I grow in bags and in the soil but prefer soil growing with earthing up. I found 'Winston' to be a very good high yielding cultivar. Only lift what you need, earlies keep better in the soil or compost, lifted they have a very short shelf life.

Climbing French beans are a favourite of mine and 'Blue Lake' is my usual choice. Sown in early May they will emerge when frost risk has passed. I let mine scramble up a chain link fence about 5.5 ft high. I sow on either side of the support fence 6" apart and 2" deep. Picking can commence after 10 weeks. It crops profusely and can be frozen.

### ***And finally . . .***

I must stop now, I started with a reference to Reginald Arkell and so I should close with another reference to him . . .

When I retired from Reaseheath one of my students, Nina Garrett, gave me a lovely little thank you book entitled 'Old Herbaceous – A Novel of the Garden' by Reginald Arkell. She said she had recently been to a stage play based upon this book at Church Minshull Village Hall and during the performance it somehow reminded her of myself and so the gift. What a lovely book for the gardener to read, I can relate to so much of it, not least the Head Gardener's first steps into show judging. What an insight into a gardening world now gone and what a lovely story. I recommend the book, it is still available, reprinted in the USA with an introduction by Penelope Hobhouse. ISBN number is 978-0-8129-6738-8. The price in 2019 was £13.99.

