

Saffron Walden Horticultural Society

NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2009

Daffodil Competitions

This year we have introduced a new junior show class for daffodils grown from bulbs supplied by the Society. A few bulbs have been supplied to past exhibitors and local school students for this year's competition but next year we hope to expand it further. Bulbs for juniors will be available from Kate Chambers in October and November – contact details in the handbook.

The existing competition for adults is continuing and bulbs will be available at evening meetings in October and November, as usual.

Membership Renewal

Membership is due for renewal on 1 March 2009. If you have not yet renewed and wish to be a member for the year to 28 February 2010, please fill in the membership renewal form at the back of the handbook. Subscriptions are £4 p.a. with a discounted rate of £7 p.a. where two members live at the same address. You can give your subscription to Annie Erdman at the March or April evening meetings or post it to her, in which case it would help the Society if you enclosed a stamped and addressed envelope. Annie is covering for John Bullen who is unavailable at present.

AGM 2008

The AGM was held for the first time in the Town Hall on Tuesday 2 December 2008 at 8pm. At the AGM it was reported that Molly Glover had retired from the Committee after 16 years' service, and had been presented with a garden planter filled with Narcissus *Sir Winston Churchill*.

Other important items were:

- membership had fallen to 256 (2007:323)
- there was a surplus for the year ended 29/2/08 of £375 (2007: £1,870)
- all committee members agreed to stand for re-election, apart from Molly Glover.

After the AGM members enjoyed the Sociable Evening, with food, wine and a very entertaining quiz devised by Doreen Townley.

Spring Show

The Spring Daffodil and Floral Show is on Saturday 18 April and will be held in the **Golden Acre Community Centre, Ross Close, Saffron Walden** (opposite Katherine Semar School). It will be open to members and the public from 2.00 p.m. We are always happy to welcome new exhibitors and hope you will find something to tempt you when you read the show schedule in the handbook. This is a very attractive show and much enjoyed by all who visit it, whether specialist growers, keen gardeners, domestic exhibitors or children.

Entry is free and forms should be sent to Yvonne Bishop **not later than the Thursday before the show**. Late entries may be accepted up to 9.00 a.m. on show day but will be charged at 20p per exhibit.

If you are growing a society daffodil for entry at the show, it is time to dig up the pot and bring it into the light in a cold but frost free place. By following the guidelines issued with the bulb, we hope you will be ready for the show.

Tips on Showing Daffodils

- Make sure there is water in your vases!
- Classes for single blooms (or stems) may have up to 2 daffodil leaves; for multi-bloom classes 3 would be sufficient, but foliage is always optional
- Leaves should have their tips just below the flower head
- Leaves and blooms should be as upright as possible and some form of packing is desirable; crumpled newspaper or directory pages is ideal. Top your vase with moss (there is often some available at the show)
- Try and ensure that your blooms are clean (a paintbrush or damp cotton bud can help), nick-free, and have 6 petals which are evenly overlapping
- Clean your vase before exhibiting and name your bloom (even if you only put "unknown variety")
- Remember good staging always impresses the judges
- Transporting your blooms to the show can be a problem. One way is to use plastic bottles in a carrying container
- Finally blooms intended for showing can be picked when they are just open, up to a week before the show, stood in a bucket of cold water in a cool dark place and brought into the light the day before the show

Outings

This year we are offering four outings as follows

- **Kirtling Tower (Sunday 5 April) – Depart Common 12.30pm £12.50**
The newly refurbished gardens of Kirtling Tower, owned by Lord and Lady Fairhaven, are situated just south of Newmarket. The gardens comprise several discreet areas, a walled Secret Garden, Victorian Garden, Cloister Garden, and Cutting Garden. There are carpets of spring flowering bulbs. The gardens were the subject of a talk to the Society by Richard Ayers in October 2008.
- **Savill & Valley Gardens (Sunday 10 May) – Depart Common 9.30am £22.00**
Wonderful national collections of Magnolia, Mahonia, Pertnettya, Pieris, Rhododendron, Ferns and Dwarf Conifers. Both gardens are in Windsor Great Park: the Savill (35 acres) comprises woodland, rock and water gardens with glasshouses, plant centre and tea rooms; the Valley Garden comprises 250 acres of gloriously scented woodland plants – a blaze of colour in spring.
- **Beth Chatto Gardens (Sunday 5 July) – Depart Common 11.30am £15.50**
A superb 7 acre plantsman's garden near Colchester, cultivated using the underlying principles of Ecological gardening. Comprising dry, water, and woodland gardens there is also a high quality nursery.
- **West Dean Gardens (Sunday 6 September) – Depart Common 9.00am £22.00**
A 90 acre garden in the grounds of a 17thC manor house near Chichester. The gardens comprise numerous Victorian glasshouses, walled gardens, arboretum, and herbaceous borders. At the time of the visit there will be a Tomato Show with over 150 varieties, cookery demos and tastings.

More details are given in the handbook and full descriptions of the gardens are available from Annie Erdman who will also take bookings on 01799 524347. It is essential that sufficient members book outings to ensure that they take place.