

Minutes of the Darrington Garden Club held at the Kyte Hotel March 11th 2015.

Present:-

Chairman - Andy Tagger

Members:-

Jackie Giles
Anne Hutchinson
Hazel Crabtree
Barbara Abrey
Mike Wheatley
Margaret Maw
Phillip Maw
Vera Stones
Gail
Roy Cooke
Freda Cooke

Apologies:-

Kathleen Hirst
Allen Bentley
Wendy Armitage

- 1 Last months' minutes were read and commented on. A request was made that all members even if present at the meetings should receive a copy of the minutes - this was agreed on.

A report of the Garden Clubs Accounts were read out and accepted.

Topics raised from the February minutes:-

Item 1 The subject of Dahlias was raised by Vera and Mike, Mike gave guide lines on storing of tubers

Follow up:- Taking cuttings from Dahlia plants are best taken when shoots at 3 - 4" a good guide is found
on page 67 of the *RHS Gardening through the Year book*.

Item 6 Members were asked to recommend a good Garden Centre (Nursery) - Crown Green seemed the favourite local Nursery.

Follow up:- The Garden Stall (Plant stall) in Pontefract Market on a Saturday have some really good quality plants at very reasonable prices, and the staff are very helpful.

Item 8 Methods of getting rid of moss on drives / patios etc. Rock salt or bleach were recommended.

Barbara to inform members at the next meeting of the trade name of a solution which is very good.

Follow up:- *Patio Magic* available from stores like Wilko and Tesco though not necessarily Pontefract

Tesco as it is rather a small store.

Other matters raised:-

- 1 Ann offered Vera 2 fish for her garden pond which she accepted, Vera had also taken on the care of 2 frogs which had been disturbed in their hibernation.

- 2 A member had found out purely by chance that the plan by WMDC to scrap one of the recycle waste bins, has had to be put on hold. A vital part of the new machinery is held up due to ice round the frigate which is shipping the part to England.
A second member found out, also by chance, that the Ferrybridge Recycling site is not going to close on the date given by WMDC - it will eventually close and WMDC will inform, by letter, all rate payers of the new closing date. A lot of disappointment has been expressed by local people about this closure - and raised the worry about increased cases of flying tipping occurring. Moving slightly away from this topic, a pat on the back was given to the local refuse collectors for being very helpful with bin emptying.
- 3 Advice was sought about when and how to prune Hydrangeas' - Mike shared his expertise with the club members - Now or when all danger of frost has gone, as the old flower heads give some protection to the new shoots. Pruning back to just above the new growth seemed to be the most popular option.
- 4 Today there was a presentation outside St Giles Church Pontefract to celebrate the 800th year of the signing of the Magna Carta - other celebrations are planned for June 14 and 15th. Watch this space - or the local press for more details.
- 5 The manager of Wilsons Farm, Mr Peter Battie, reassured the Parish Council that they are doing all they can to combat the 'rather strong countrified smell' which pervades Darrington from time to time. They are making changes on the farm to try and lessen the smell and hope that the residents will get in touch with them if they find the smell is rather overbearing - but in a farming area it is sometimes impossible to eradicate all the smells all of the time. There used to be a law which stated that when slurry is spread it should be covered within the hour - the smell though usually comes in the time between the slurry leaving the spreader and reaching the ground. The chairperson stated that 'Farmers have too much to lose by not doing things correctly, and there are some things which are completely out of their control such as wind.
- 6 The verges in Darrington were discussed - especially the ones by the Ripon Farm Services, where the verges have become very messy due to heavy vehicles being driven / parked on them. Local retired farmer Mr Schofield, is reported to have said they could have some of his land to put hard standing down for the vehicles to be parked on - the problem there is that it is 'Green belt' and the Parish Council are very keen to protect all Green belt areas in the village.
The same problem to the verges is being caused along Estcourt Road - The Parish Council will be discussing both these items at their next meeting (12 03 15) and maybe looking at ways of deterring locals from parking their cars on the verges.
- 7 A member of the Garden club reported that warning has been given to all gardeners to expect a profusion of Spanish thugs in the form of slugs - the slugs are 4 - 5" long and bright orange (I am sure that we had some in our garden a few years ago) from this talk moved on to the best ways of killing off these slugs - for the faint hearted I will not give details of the quickest most expedient way of dealing with them, but one way is to invest in some **Nematoda** Worms which kill such pests very useful in green houses but can also be sprayed on open areas in the garden.

A cut and paste from a website:

Nematodes; the environmentally friendly method of slug control. A method used extensively by professional growers for years, but only recently made available to the general public. These naturally occurring micro-organisms are already present in your garden soil, although in insufficient numbers to effectively control the average slug population unaided. Backup troops are needed, via the purchase of [specially bred nematodes](#).

How nematodes work



Nematodes (*Phasmarhabditis hermaphrodita*)

There are thousands of species of nematode, and some are parasites; meaning they infest and infect a host plant or animal, living off it in some way. Parasitic nematodes adapt to a specific host, and *Phasmarhabditis hermaphrodita* has evolved into a slug parasite.

Solely targeting slugs, these nematodes are perfectly harmless to children, pets, and other wildlife, and pose no hazard to food crops. In fact there are millions of them living quite happily in your garden right now.



Infected Field Slug – note the swollen mantle

Dwelling in the soil, *Phasmarhabditis hermaphrodita* enters the slug while it's below ground; infecting it with bacteria. The slug stops eating (your plants) within a few days, and dies within a week. The nematodes feed off the decomposing slug and reproduce, creating a new generation to move on and infect more slugs.

ALSO

Much preferred to those horrid little **blue pellets**, nematodes have a lot going for them when it comes to environmentally friendly slug control. Benefits include:

- Totally organic and environmentally friendly.
- Completely harmless to children, pets, birds, and wildlife.
- Perfectly safe to use around food crops.
- The slug retreats underground before it dies, so you aren't left with an abundance of dead slugs on the surface.
- Dead slugs eaten by other creatures are non-toxic.
- Impossible to over-apply.
- Works well in wet weather; exactly the conditions where slugs are most active and destructive, and exactly the conditions that render poison pellets less effective.
- Compatible with most garden chemicals – including fertilisers – although it's best to apply them at different times.
- You're not introducing foreign entities into your garden; simply 'topping up' the good microbes that are already there.
- You get the same benefits that commercial growers have been enjoying for over twenty years.

Nemaslug – nematode slug killer



Nemaslug – Slug Killer

Nematodes are living organisms that need careful storage, which is why you don't see them on the shelves at the garden centre. Instead, you need to order them direct from an approved supplier like [Harrod Horticultural](#), who incidentally offer a good range of other garden products too.

[Nemaslug](#) is the brand you'll find in the UK, and it's available in two pack sizes:

- **Small Pack** – Up to 40m² (50yd²)

8 Jobs for this month –

- A Dead head early flowering daffodils.
- B Prune roses, ensure the rose bush is not suffering from rocking due to the high winds blowing it and loosening the soil.
- C Prune Dog wood.
- D Check mortar in steps / path edges / garden slopes – it may have become loosened by frost and therefore unsafe.
- E As seed time is getting nearer a hint for marking out patterns in your seed bed is to use a bottle filled with dry silver sand and 'draw' your design on the soil before sowing, that way you will see quite clearly where to sow your seeds.
- F Lifting splitting clumps of Primroses and replanting.
- G Lifting and splitting up large clumps of snowdrops and replanting them 'in the green'

9 There was general talk about compost, buying it from Council recycle plants, cost and availability to the small garden, gardeners. Talk about road works and swimming pools.

10 Sharing of plants:-



Vera brought some Oxalis



Margaret brought some Hellebores



Mr and Mrs Cook brought some Parrot Tulips

Cream buns were enjoyed in celebration of Darrington Garden Club 6th Birthday

The next Darrington Garden Club meal was booked for the 10th of April 5 – 30 for 6pm

The meeting closed at 7pm.

£10 tea / coffee money was handed over to The Kyte staff