

Newsletter - August 2026

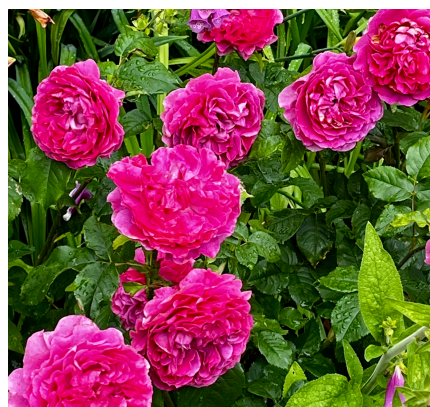
Letter from the Chair

Hello everyone

Well, what a summer it has been - and not an entirely happy one for gardeners sadly. In the last few weeks I have seen borders that I've taken many years lovingly developing shrivel into a mass of brown stalks. I expect that, like me, you have focused on watering your pots and maybe a few well loved specimens; unless you have a very small garden, there isn't really any other option. Thank goodness that at least we don't have a hosepipe ban.

I only hope that the plants have retreated into their roots, and will emerge restored next year. If not, since we gardeners are an optimistic and cheerful lot, I have decided that I will take the opportunity to dig it all up and look at replanting something new with an emphasis on resilience.

One thing that, I'm happy to say, hasn't suffered too much are the roses. I think that we forget that roses are on the northern edge of their happy place in the UK, and they thrive cheerfully in much hotter climates with a bit of care. I've given mine the occasional deep watering, and they've been pretty good. I have a big pot of Olivia Rose Austin outside my front door, and it has been my pride and joy this year.



Anyway, to happier thoughts, our Plant Sale was, as usual, a big success - despite, ironically, the weather doing its best to put a dampener on things - we've had some lovely visits to gardens, and a splendid Grand Day Out to Powis Castle.

Our special speaker this autumn is the well known gardener and author Tamsin Westhorpe of Stockton Bury Gardens. She will be lifting our spirits in getting us to look ahead and "Prepare for the Perfect Spring". As we have done in the past with major speakers, this event will be on a Friday - 4th September - and we will be serving wine and snacks. The talk is free to members; non members are welcome and tickets for them will be £10. I hope that I'll see lots of you there!

Alison

Our Programme for 2026



GROSMONT & DISTRICT GARDENING CLUB

PROGRAMME 2025/2026

Speaker meetings are held on
first Tuesday of the month at 7:30pm

2025

2nd December Christmas Social
Temple Bar Inn at Ewyas Harold

2026

3rd February Debbie Devauden
*A History of Botanical Illustration
from Cave Drawings to the Present*

3rd March Sarah Price
*Reframing the Wild Garden:
New Perspectives on Garden Making*

7th April Kevin Alviti
Diary of a Fruit Grower

May **Evening Visit - Venue TBC**
Details in newsletter

Saturday **Plant Sale - 10am to 12 noon**
6th June *Ewyas Harold Memorial Hall. HR2 0EL*

June **Day Trip - Venue TBC**
Details in newsletter

July **Summer Social - Venue TBC**
Details in newsletter

Friday Tamsin Westhorpe
4th September *Prepare for the Perfect Spring*

6th October Duncan Coombs
*Winter Colour and Interest
in the Garden*

3rd November AGM and Fran Phillips
of La-Di Dardy Flowers
Demonstration of a Winter Wreath

1st December Christmas Social
Details in newsletter

Our Next Speaker

Grosmont & District Gardening Club

welcomes

horticultural journalist and gardener,

Tamsin Westhorpe

to tell us how to

Prepare for the Perfect Spring

Friday 4th September

7.00 for 7.30pm

at Ewyas Harold Memorial Hall

<https://grosmont.wales/grosmont-district-gardening-club/>



Non-Member Tickets £10
(includes refreshments)

To book contact Barbara Rees:
barbararees549@btinternet.com
07801 193971 before 31st August

Grosmont & District Gardening Club
Sort Code: 30-99-50
Account: 34619268

Tamsin is a well known gardener and writer who works who is based at Stockton Bury Gardens near Leominster. She is a very experienced horticulturist and has judged at the Chelsea Flower Show.

She says: 'My aim is to demystify gardening and help people gain in confidence whilst having jolly good fun'

Her talk will be held on **Friday 4th September** at Ewyas Harold Memorial Hall 7.00 for 7.30.

We will be serving wine, soft drinks and snacks.

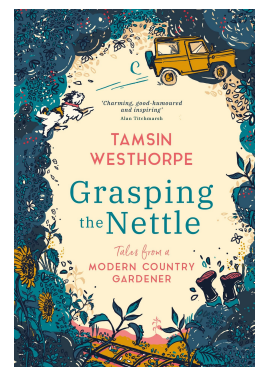
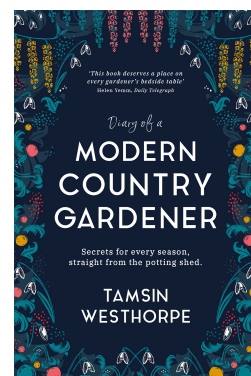
The event is free to members; guests are welcome, and tickets are £10.

If you would like guest tickets, please email our Treasurer Barbara by 31st August at:

barbararees549@btinternet.com

And make payment to:

Grosmont & District Gardening Club
30-99-50
34619268



Auntie Rosemary and Uncle Basil's *Problem Corner*



Your Garden Conundrums: Rosemary and Basil to the Rescue !

Rosemary and Basil between them have decades of gardening experience and we are delighted they have agreed to help our Gardening Club by looking at our readers' gardening queries



I know that this is the inevitable question, given the summer weather that we've had, but what plants can I put in my garden that will be resilient in hot dry weather?



It is a difficult thing to think about isn't it? Personally, I'm not going to give up on the beautiful staples of the British herbaceous border, such as lupins and delphiniums, but we need to mix them in with things are likely to give continued interest in the garden if the late summer is very dry.

Anything with silver leaves is likely to do well - I've had success this year with globe thistle (echinops) and also sea holly (eryngium). Their flowers are popular with bees and other pollinators when there is so little else about; and also the seed heads are attractive and good for birds. Also think about the perennial cornflower (centaurea), artemisia and lychnis coronaria, which has white or neon pink varieties, and santolina or cotton lavender. Most lavenders will cope up to a point, but they do need watering from time to time.

Things that thrive in a gravel garden need relatively little by way of moisture at the roots - the verbenas of course (the much loved favourite bonariensis, but also the very pretty verbenam bampton), knautia macedonica (food plant of the lovely six spot burnet moth) or the yellow scabious (scabiosa columbaria).

Don't forget the majority of herbs, whose natural habitats are hot Mediterranean countries. Many of them have pretty flowers as well as scented leaves. Why not make a virtue of necessity and have a fragrant herb garden close to the house?



Can you give me some advice about establishing an asparagus bed?

I'd love to be able to harvest a crop of my own in early summer instead of buying it from a supermarket



There are few things nicer than freshly cut asparagus - the caviar of the vegetable garden - but it requires patience and care to get to that point. It takes at least two years from starting the bed to the first harvest, but a well tended asparagus bed will keep going for twenty years once established.

Asparagus needs space to grow, and it's not advisable to mix it with other crops. Well-drained soil is a must, and either full sun or lightly dappled shade. You'll need to keep the bed free of weeds; so, when you choose your spot for them, keep accessibility for weeding in mind. A loose sandy soil with lots of organic matter works best; so a large, raised bed is the best option in our local heavy clay. Give protection from slugs and snails in early spring.

You can grow asparagus from seed or speed the process along with 1-year-old crowns. Your asparagus will be established after two years, if planted from a crown, or three years if grown from seed.

Crowns are dormant plants, that you can order online as bare-root-plugs, that go straight into your vegetable patch, usually in March. To plant, make a trench about 20cm deep, and layer in well-rotted manure or compost into the bottom of it. Place the crowns with the tip facing up, and then fill in with excavated soil. Give the crowns plenty of room, spacing them about 30-45 cm apart.

If you're growing asparagus from seed, you can start them in your greenhouse in February, in modular seed trays or small pots. Sow one seed in each pot, keep them sheltered and warm, well-watered and in a bright location. They can be hardened off when the frosts have passed, and transplanted in June.

In their first summer, keep your asparagus plants well-watered. Once they are established, they are tolerant of dry spells, and will only need watering if the summer is particularly dry.

The time to harvest the succulent shoots is from the second half of April, through May, and into early June. When the shoots come through and get to about the thickness of a finger, you can snip them with a sharp knife just below the soil line. This will then encourage another shoot to pop up within just a few days. Be ready to harvest regularly during this short growing season. How many shoots each plant has will vary depending on variety, and stems will re-shoot around ten times each growing season.

Asparagus are relatively easy to care for the rest of the year. Over the summer, they will grow into a tall, fern-like plant. Their stems turn woody, and their leaves feathery. The protective measure you need to take is supporting the plants, so that a snapped stem doesn't damage the crown. Otherwise, let them flourish and thrive, and when the foliage turns yellow at the end of the summer, cut them down to the base to regrow next year.



Gardening Jobs for autumn



Sow spinach in trays or shallow drills



Move citrus trees back indoors



Harvest apples and store in a cool dark place



Lift tender bulbs and tubers



Make bug shelters



Take cuttings from tender perennials



Start off forced bulbs in time for Christmas flowering



Sow sweet peas in September for robust plants and early flowering



Plant naturalising bulbs in grassy areas



Start off onion sets

Committee Members



Sarah Bell

Paula Crawford

Chrissy Collingwood

Barbara Rees

Gilli Urch

Christine Williams

Charlotte Wilson

Alison Ward (Chair)

If you have any questions or ideas, if for any reason you no longer want to receive our monthly newsletter, or if there's anything you'd like included in future editions, then please email Alison Ward at:

alison.marlborough@btinternet.com

or phone Alison on 07542 800815