



Newsletter No: 40

www.bhogg.org

Summer 2011

Garden Gadabout 2011

Saturday's and Sunday's, 25th & 26th June and 2nd & 3rd July



BHOOG Allotments

With more than 70 gardens and community spaces opening this year, the annual Sussex Beacon Garden Gadabout promises to be bigger and better than ever before. For two weekends in June and July, there will be gardens and allotments to visit all over Brighton, Hove and beyond to Lewes, Rodmell and Peacehaven. Organised in clusters or "trails" it should be possible to visit quite a few in an afternoon whilst helping to raise much needed funds for the Sussex Beacon.

Purchase a day ticket in advance from the Dome Box Office for just £7 and plan your day by picking up a copy of the Gadabout brochure. Tickets can also be bought at the gardens on the day.

This year the BHOOG allotment on the Weald site in Hove will be open for this event on Sunday 26th June along with Pat Bowen's plots which are conveniently very close by. Other BHOOG members who are taking part include Nick Fry who is also opening his allotment for the first time on the Craven Vale site and Gadabout regulars, John and Steve of Belton Close in the Roundhill area of town.

Full details of all the open gardens are in the Garden Gadabout brochure which is available to download from the website or pick up a copy at the Dome Box Office from late May. **www.gardengadabout.org.uk**

Brighton & Hove Organic Gardening Group

Email: info@bhogg.org

Now We Are 10

BHOGG was set up by some of us 10 years ago to meet a need for organic gardeners to come together to hold events, share experience and promote organic gardening. There have been many ups and a few downs, Ruth Urbanowicz talking, Bob Flowerdew speaking, Gay searching for an audience, some meetings with 6 of us, some with 60 of us buzzing like bees, seedling swaps, trips to Brogdale Apple Fest, Christmas parties, quizzes, summer socials, Harvest Festival dinners, and the ever green annual meetings.

BHOGG has a highly acclaimed newsletter and website, fortnightly Radio Reverb broadcasts and two of its own organic model allotments. Membership has been significant at around 150 and has covered basic costs whilst grants from other bodies such as the local council have funded extra projects. At times of public expenditure cuts, the financial independence of BHOGG supported by its many volunteers has been crucial.

It's easy to rest on our laurels, but like any good allotment or garden renewal and regeneration, an organisation needs new vitality and diversity to enjoy and celebrate. The BHOGG Committee has agreed that any organisation should review what it has done and what its future longer term plans should be. There have been some major successes to reflect upon and some things that did not work out as expected. We all agreed that the 10th anniversary is a very good occasion for this and although it needs to be coordinated by the Committee, they would like the review to involve others including the wider membership and related organisations.

This review should take stock of the changes locally and nationally on organic gardening, as well as what others are doing. There are challenging questions about what direction we want to go to in the future and here we need your good ideas interlaced with a practical commitment to help achieve them. At the end of the discussion it should be possible to ensure that BHOGG is relevant for the future and provide clarity on what we want to do, why we are doing it and how we are going to achieve it.

The BHOGG committee agreed to have a brain storming discussion in early July, but they want to involve as many members or potential members in this discussion as possible. They welcome your comments and your contributions to the process and have devised a questionnaire which will be posted online in the coming weeks or please just get in touch and tell us what you think.

Alan

The BHOGG Plots: Moving Forward

Our allotment project started up about six years ago to create a space for the group to work and socialise together whilst demonstrating to a wider public just how productive and beautiful an organic allotment can be. In that time, dozens of gardeners have worked the plots on the Weald site in Hove and many more have enjoyed the annual Open Days.

A regular group of volunteers has formed and, steered by Helen (not the knitting one), have helped to develop the site to its present state demonstrating a rich diversity of fruit and veg growing using strictly organic methods.

But, as all good things must come to an end, Helen has decided that now is the time for her to move on to pastures new which leaves the group thinking about how best to take the project forward. Options include finding another person to take on the role of project coordinator (and if you fancy this task contact Helen for her basic job description) or to think about a different set of aims and objectives for the allotments perhaps?

If you would like to be actively involved in the future direction of the BHOGG allotment project we would love to hear from you. You can contact us with your ideas or just to express an interest by emailing us at info@bhogg.org or just come along to one of our Sunday workdays to chat with Helen and the other volunteers over a cup of tea.

You can find out more about the allotment project on our website at www.bhogg.org. Just click your way to the "Our Allotment" pages.

Garden Gnome

Bird song on the plot was stunning in April and May, and when I feel worn out with hefty stuff I just sit and listen and am glad to have my own little patch of the earth to be creative in. Now that summer is here we can prune any hedges and shrubs we didn't manage to do before the birds started nesting. (Also prune trained fruit trees).

The warmth of summer gives perfect conditions for creating the confection of compost; the micro-organisms thrive in moist heat: the combination of grass cuttings, the haulms of harvested spuds, as well as raw kitchen remains, will fill the bin in no time. It's important to have a balance of sappy greens: nitrogen and tougher browns: carbon, so pop in egg boxes, toilet roll cardboard and scrunched up newspaper to trap air and add carbon. The rough remains of old heaps will also help and the greens and browns can be layered lasagna style. Monty Don showed us his industrial-sized production (including cellulose packing materials which I never realised could be recycled) and mows his stuff to chop it up small. A good chopping with a spade will work for a smaller amount. He points out that most people don't put in enough 'browns' i.e. carbon. A full bin will rot down much faster, so spend a weekend gathering fading foliage (nitrogen) of spent spring flowers (like forget-me-nots, but only if you are happy to have beds full of seedling ones). Let's also trim those straggly shrubs and hedges and pop those in too. Activity in the bin can be accelerated by adding chicken manure pellets and the contents of the pee bucket, plus nettles and comfrey. Let these wilt a couple of days so that they don't sprout roots and start growing. Also any fresh horse, chicken or sheep droppings. Wood ash, spent hops and well-washed seaweed are also good additions. I've been dropping in to my local greengrocer to collect his green waste; I believe the activity in the bin will break down any pesticide residues. Any green manures, that didn't get dug into the beds in time, will also help to bulk it up. Try to layer different textures, so that the sappy nitrogen-rich ingredients intersperse with the carbon-rich dryer twiggy (and cardboard) bits. After a couple of weeks when it's about halved in volume, turn it all into another bin. It will probably only be about half of the original volume and needs remixing to let in more air. Also check for moisture: if it's too dry water it and add more diluted pee, if it's too wet add more cardboard tubes. This batch may be ready in three months, so can be used when planting autumn crops like Japanese onions, garlic and spring cabbage, or when autumn-sowing green manures

The importance of bulky organic matter cannot be over-emphasised. It truly is the life-blood of the soil and therefore that of the plants that we grow. It improves the structure of all soil types, providing a "well drained, moisture-retentive" medium, and 'buffers' (moderates) pH, the acid/alkaline balance, especially on chalky soil which is often too alkaline for some crops. It encourages a good population of soil micro-organisms which improve plant health and nutrient uptake. The final substance, when processed by worms and micro-organisms, is that precious humus gel which binds the mineral particles together into crumbs, allowing more drainage and air into the soil and holding moisture and nutrients in a stable compound, available to plant roots but not readily leached out by rain. This is why we make compost.



Vegetable growing is a human invention.

Its cycles are fast in the great scheme of things and use up the soil's resources much more quickly than a natural ecosystem.

Thus we have to speed up the return to the earth of the plant materials.

Top 10 Tasks For Summer:

Weed • Watch for pests, diseases & disorders • Harvest • Sow successional crops • Keep making compost • Sow green manure once a crop is lifted • Prune spring flowering shrubs • Plant out winter brassicas and leeks • Enjoy yourself - it's later than you think

The Andean Tuber

I have just eaten purple potatoes for supper, which made me ponder on the many types of potatoes now becoming available both for sale in the supermarket and to grow. My latest favourite is a white second early called "Vivaldi". Its glory, for a butter lover like me, is that it really does taste buttery so reducing the need for the real thing. A dollop of yoghurt and a splash of chilli sauce on a baked Vivaldi and food heaven is yours...or mine at least. Bred in Lincolnshire it is lower in carbs. and cal. than most potatoes. A winner indeed and an example of how plant breeding can provide different varieties to suit our wants and needs . There are about 5000 varieties of potato but only a handful of species (different taxonomic interpretations offer 4 to six). The International Potato Institute (CIP) in Lima, Peru, established in the 1970's enables the Andean farmers to continue to serve as guardians of the genetic treasure that some say will feed the world. (www.rootsforlife). Some potatoes are bred for a unique cultural purpose and valued by the local people who give them names like: "makes the daughter-in-law cry" or "like a woman with the colour of a condors neck" These 'gift' potatoes belong to the women and are prized but rarely sold and although they may be

eaten after careful and specific preparation. Did Andean farmers invent instant mash?! Using varieties that would be bitter and toxic unless processed, the farmers utilise the local climate (i.e. free energy) to freeze-dry the tubers by exposing them to the frost at night and the sun in the day. After a few days and crushing by foot, they have to be rinsed in running water for many days. The resultant dried and detoxified product is easily stored, light to transport and keeps for years. Called "Chuna" this important food has been eaten since the time of the Incas 7000 years ago. The processing increases the energy value to provide a staple food high in nutritional content. Amazing! It's worth looking (online) at images of the terraces constructed so long ago by the ancient Andean civilisations, not just to admire their beauty and skill, but to realise they were creating microclimates for plant growing and experimentation. Huge terraces like amphitheatres could protect plants from the wind and retain the sun's warmth and rainwater. The irrigation systems brought water from the mountains to the plains and paved roads provided avenues for distribution of resources. The highlands were able to increase soil fertility by the

seabird droppings brought from the coast by llama. It is said that the Inca civilisation would not have been so successful but for the potato.

All over the world the potato is becoming more important as a food crop and is proving how adaptable it can be. I always imagined that potatoes required a lot of water but surprisingly this is not so. Worth noting is that their peak water needs occur in the middle period of growth between the flower production and the tuber formation so irrigation can be planned and water conserved. Potatoes produce more food per unit of water than cereals, so are relatively water efficient. Even in Gujarat, one of the most arid areas of India a drought resistant variety is grown. Future water scarcity is speeding up research around the world for varieties suitable for specific climatic conditions and there are many research and breeding centres around the world. Remember that the potato is a tuber and reproduces itself from same so does not have the long term trial problems that seeds need to replicate themselves reliably. Simply, you plant a Pink Fir Apple spud as a tuber and you harvest the same thing, magic!

Caroline

Gooseberry Sawfly

The last few years, as I have reported, my gooseberry bushes have been stripped of leaf and struggling to survive. I thought this year I would make a final effort before giving the sad things up. So I have been experimenting once again and carefully observing. Won't bother to bore you with

unsuccessful methods involving tinfoil, bird imitation and a lot of time peering and picking, but will share what I think is a success: GOOSEGRASS!

A few strands about a foot long brushed from bottom to top of the branches and it seems to dislodge the caterpillars without disturbing

the goosegogs. If you put a piece of paper/card beneath you will see the results.

It also works for greenfly, at least it did on my cow parsley. Yes, Mother Nature will provide. Let me know your results if you try it.

Caroline

Chateau Whitehawk

Six years ago I read a really inspiring article in 'Kitchen Garden' magazine about growing grapes for wine and thought 'hmm... one day I'd like to try that', so tore out the article and put it aside in a safe place, never really forgetting how much it had first fired me up. Last year I was lucky enough to get my allotment and now having 'land' to experiment on, knew the time was right to put the article into practice.

And so, last November, I started by contacting the nursery recommended in the article – Sunnybanks Vine Nursery in Herefordshire. Not only do they have a really comprehensive website and huge stock of grape vine varieties, but they are really friendly, and I think, incredibly cheap. For a tenner, I got eight 1' bare rooted cuttings through the post: 4 Seyval Blanc and 4 Madeleine Angevine (the latter also suitable as an eating grape). The nursery provided growing

instructions and had even thrown in a couple of extra cuttings for free!

Following the instructions I potted them up and put them in a heated propagator (lid off) on a sunny windowsill. By January, all the vines were happily budding up and by March had rooted well and were growing away nicely. At the end of April I planted out the vines in two rows 1.5m apart, spacing about 1m between vines. It's a good idea to incorporate well-rotted manure and bone meal in the planting holes beforehand so as to encourage strong root growth.

In the first year, it's only necessary to train the vines up 8' bamboo canes, pinching out all side shoots to encourage upward growth. Only in the second year do you need to put up a series of posts and wires, to start training the vines for fruiting (pulling down either one or two laterals along the wires – the so-called Single or

Double Guyot method of training).

Of course, I haven't as yet got to this stage, but then why shouldn't they do well? Vines grow so easily and with so many sunny, free draining, chalky sites around the city why aren't more people 'growing their own wine' in Brighton & Hove! The author of the article that first inspired me was growing his vines on an allotment in Worthing and was harvesting up to 9 gallons of wine a year, so there is real potential. Why not give it a go too?

Nick's allotment at Craven Vale will be opening with two other plots in aid of the Sussex Beacon's Garden Gadabout on Saturday 25th and Sunday 26th June. Apart from his mini-vineyard, highlights include an edible hedge, wildlife ponds, a cornucopia of fruit and veg and stunning views over the marina, sea and the Whitehawk Estate.



Q. Is there an organic alternative to glyphosate for dealing with deep-rooted weeds such as dandelions? I've got them growing in tarmac so simply digging out the root isn't an option. Is there an organic option that will kill them?

A. You could try a mixture of salt and vinegar! The recipe is 1 litre of white vinegar, 60g salt plus a dash of washing up liquid. An old washing up bottle is useful to apply the solution accurately to weeds in cracks of paving stones etc. Wouldn't recommend it on your beds though and apply during periods of dry weather.

Q. Recent press coverage highlighted toxic mineral oils in recycled (and other) cardboard finding their way into soils and veg through composting. How do we know if cardboard contains mineral oils, and should we stop putting cardboard into compost bins altogether?

A. (from Garden Organic)
The research findings you mention are very interesting and raise questions about the wider effects of mineral oils residues in our packaging and the impact of this on the environment. At present the caution and risk applies only to food that is stored in recycled paper, not the general use of recycled paper or the recycling or composting of paper. Until there is research to support the idea that composting recycled paper poses any risk then our advice would be to continue to add it to

the compost heap. We are not aware of any research that has investigated this risk in home composting, but given these findings we feel research into this should be carried out.

Despite these research findings, we are keen to emphasise the processing power of composting, for example this can be seen in rhubarb leaves, which are poisonous to eat but are entirely safe once they have been processed by the compost heap.

The issue at the heart of these findings is most definitely not about the use of recycled paper but rather about the printing inks used, which are responsible for the mineral oils present. The ideal solution would be to remove mineral oils from printing inks altogether, leaving paper, which can be recycled many times safe for a range of uses.

BHOGG Events In Spring



There was a flurry of BHOGG events in May when we held a Dawn Chorus walk, Seedling Swap, BHOGG birthday party and a remembrance of our dear friend Pam Bean all in one weekend! Thanks must go to everyone who supported these events either by coming along to enjoy them or helping to organise and run them on the day.

For the Seedling Swap we would especially like to thank Alan for hosting this on his lovely allotment space in Hove. We are always grateful for the warm welcome he affords us all. This year we had a particularly memorable time as we also used the occasion to celebrate our tenth birthday. Julie Mack made us an enormous and delicious cake, which we did manage somehow to eat our way through during the day. It was shared amongst many with just a few crumbs left out for a hungry crow.

It was great to see a few founder members at this event, notably John Smyth (pictured left) without whom our group may never have been created in the first place. John continues to support the work we do at BHOGG and his contributions are very much appreciated.

It was also lovely to meet so many of Pam's family and friends down on the BHOGG allotment as we marked the installation of the Bean Bench. If you haven't yet seen this lovely carved seat by local artist, Sue Nunn, why not come along to our next Open Day on Sunday June 26th when we shall be helping to raise funds for the Sussex Beacon in the Garden Gadabout.

There are more photos from the BHOGG seedling swap/Birthday bash on our website at www.bhogg.org



Question Time for Gardeners

THURSDAY JUNE 2ND, 7.30-9.30PM

The Great Hall, Brighton College
The panel includes Ruth Urbanowicz from BHOGG!

Tickets £6/£4.50 conc from the Dome box office

In aid of The Sussex Beacon

www.gardengadabout.org.uk

Moulsecomb Forest Garden Woodland Open Day

SATURDAY JUNE 4TH, 12 NOON – 5PM

Tours of the garden • woodland walks • learn how to make string from tree bark and nettles • wood carving demonstrations • basket weaving • cook your own customized pizza in our outdoor clay oven • bee talks • compost doctors • children's activities • pond dipping • herbal workshops • bike powered electricity demonstrations • snacks and light refreshments • This event is FREE – although donations are welcome!

Springwatch Festival

**SUNDAY JUNE 5TH, STANMER PARK
10-5PM FREE ENTRY**

A family day out with lots of activities and info about nature.

The theme for this year is "Sense of Place" to celebrate the new South Downs National Park. Demonstration "Grow Your Own" gardens also feature.

Earthy Women & Kids Summer Solstice Celebration

**SUNDAY JUNE 19TH 11-4PM,
STANMER PARK**

Create a garment with beautiful material, kids workshops, communal womens make peace happen quilt as well as open fire. Bring food to share. Geodesic dome making, fencing and digging.

Tickets must be booked in advance and deposit sent. Cost £4 benefits income, £8 or £12 depending on income. Send £4 deposit to Frances Ocean, Garden Flat, 44 Herbert Road Brighton BN1 6PB and we will send you ticket which is map numbered.

Women & kids environmental network. Men welcome to support day

Tablehurst Farm Open Day

SUNDAY JUNE 19TH, 11 – 4PM

Forest Row

www.tablehurstandplawhatch.co.uk

Garden Gadabout

TWO WEEKENDS 25TH AND 26TH

JUNE, 2ND AND 3RD JULY

£2 entry to each garden or £7 for a day ticket.

In aid of Sussex Beacon

www.gardengadabout.org.uk

Open Gardens

SUNDAY JULY 31ST, 12-5PM

BHOGG members, John and Steve are opening their garden for the National Garden Scheme

1 Belton Close, Brighton

www.roundhillgardens.co.uk

(They are also open during the Garden Gadabout)

Courses

Check out the following websites for full listings of local workshops on all things related to gardening and sustainable living:

HARVEST BRIGHTON & HOVE

www.harvest-bh.org.uk

BRIGHTON PERMACULTURE TRUST

www.brightonpermaculture.org.uk

THE NATURAL BEEKEEPING TRUST

www.naturalbeekeepingtrust.org

THE GARDEN HOUSE

www.gardenhousebrighton.co.uk

SUSSEX WILDLIFE TRUST

www.sussexwt.org.uk

Blogs

Alan Phillips' Argus blog "Life With Lottie" www.theargus.co.uk/blogs/blogs/alan_phillips/

Plant histories and other stories from Teresa Cairns

www.hortusludi.wordpress.com/

Sarah Waters will keep you up to date with the planting and growing in the Preston Park demonstration plot www.harvest-bh.org.uk/blogs

Notice Board



The Knitted Allotment

is on tour and can be seen in Hove Library until the end of June.

Organic gardening tips for the month ahead are broadcast on the first tuesday of the month at 5pm and 11pm. Listen live or podcast.

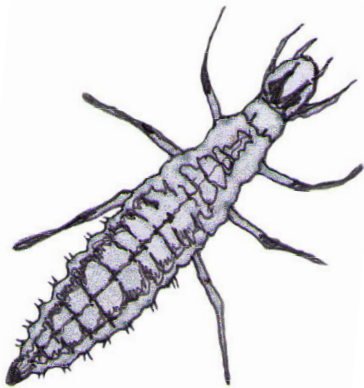
BHOGG have a monthly slot on the Environment Show on Radio Reverb, Brighton's local community radio station.

Presenter Donald Shier chats with Ruth and Mouse about the latest news on the organic gardening front, upcoming BHOGG events and organic gardening tips for the month ahead.

Radio Reverb is on 97.2FM

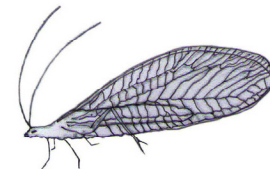
www.radioreverb.com





BHOGG Newsletter Copy

Write something for the newsletter – all contributions welcome. Write about your expertise, or advertise your event. Seasonal recipes and gardening tips all welcome. We shall do our best to include them. Thank you to all our contributors to this newsletter.



Next copy deadline will be August 2nd 2011

Send copy by email to hemgee@ntlworld.com
or by snail mail to Helen at 60 Southall Avenue, Brighton, BN2 4BB

This newsletter is published by BHOGG and printed on 100% recycled paper at the Resource Centre, Brighton. www.resourcecentre.org.uk

BHOGG Committee

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Ruth Urbanowicz	681120
Treasurer	
Miriam Harper	673697
Secretary	
Steve Birch	278638
Newsletter/Membership	
Helen Gibbs	239540
Other members	
Mouse Dismore	561104
Caroline Woodroffe	602470
Neil Smith	

BHOGG Membership

To join BHOGG please complete a membership form and send to:

**BHOGG, Community Base,
113 Queens Road,
Brighton, BN1 3XG.**

Membership forms are available on our website at www.bhogg.org or phone Helen (01273 239540) and she will post you one.

Annual membership rates are £10 full rate, £3.50 concession or £15 for two people at same address.

BHOGG members receive a quarterly newsletter with details of our monthly events including talks, visits and social gatherings. Most of our events are free to BHOGG members.

BHOGG Summer Events

BHOGG Allotment Open Day 2011

SUNDAY JUNE 26TH, 11AM - 5PM

PLOTS 238 & 239, WEALD ALLOTMENTS, HOVE 

COST £2 IN AID OF THE SUSSEX BEACON

More info at www.gardengadabout.org.uk

It would be great if BHOGG members could support this event by donating plants and cakes to sell or by turning up on the day to help out. All profits will go to the Sussex Beacon so any support you can give to this event will be very much appreciated.


Please bring donations early on the day or contact Helen beforehand to arrange a suitable time to deliver them.

Directions to the site are on our website at www.bhogg.org

Tree Identification Walk

with Owen Johnson, author of regarded tree books

SATURDAY 16TH JULY 2011, 10AM TO 12 NOON IN PRESTON PARK

(meet at the Rotunda Café) 

Following the roaring success of the Owen's previous walk in Stanmer Park, BHOGG have invited Owen to share his amazing knowledge with us once again, this time at Preston Park.

Owen's walk will take in the good range of trees in the park, including two of the oldest elms left in the world, and some interesting and unusual ornamentals tucked away in various corners. In addition most of the common native trees are represented, allowing people a basic introduction.

The BHOGG contact for this event is Jenni 07951 146547