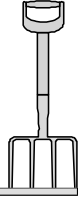
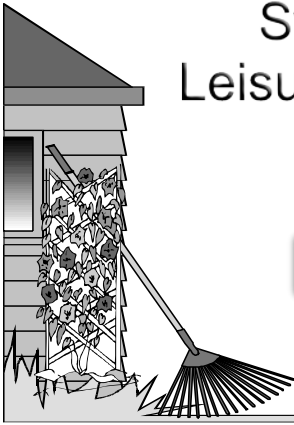


Swindon Allotments & Leisure Gardens Association

Registered Charity no. 1138814

Newsletter Summer 2024



Show & Competition details



Treasurers report

Swindon Growers Summit



Speakers & Coach Trips

Coffee & Cake



Report from the Chair

Summer greetings to all SALGA members, and to all other keen gardeners and growers around Swindon!

Since the Spring Newsletter came out in mid February, it's felt like a long time for Spring to get here. We took many a walk down to our allotment and admired the flood water and temporary lakes – and wondered if we'd ever get the potatoes dug in! And yes, we did, like most people – grabbing the odd half day when the water had receded enough to get the spade in.

Event-wise, SALGA has recently had the AGM, and we can report that all is well, the monthly meetings are well attended, and the shop is now very busy – everyone's playing catch up and planting everything possible to grab the sunshine!

The next SALGA outing is the trip to Kew Gardens on July 4th – now fully booked, so if you're not already signed up, you'll have to wait and see how we get on. I'm looking forward to it especially because it's such hard work getting to anywhere in or around London that it will be a real treat to be carried there by coach.

One of the main topics of discussion at the AGM was how we manage our own publicity: we have very little public presence to tell younger gardeners that we exist and that we might be quite a good club to join! So this is something we'll be doing our best to remedy. I'm hoping that, together with other local growing groups in Swindon, we'll find some new ways to spread the word of what's on offer with SALGA membership.

The current starting point is that, besides this newsletter, we also put information of events etc on the website: www.salga.org.uk. It's worth a look as there is a round up of all local gardening related events for the month.

And, talking of other groups, Maurice and I went to the Swindon Growers Summit 24 on 28th April. I had no idea what to expect, though curious as to the events and talks on offer – I found it fascinating experience, so there's a longer article about it here in this magazine.

So, it just remains to say please come to our Coffee and Cake morning at Pickards Field on St 29th June – the first of the year, as the Easter one fell victim to the floods, and never happened! See you there!

Jane Farr

**COFFEE AND CAKE MORNING
AT THE
PICKARDS FIELD ALLOTMENT SITE**

**Saturday 29th June 2024
10.30 to 12.30**



**A chance to catch up with friends,
find out about this year's
Horticultural Show, and
eat lovely cake!**

**Neil the tool sharpener will also be
there, so bring along your shears and
secateurs.**

Report from the treasurer

Our Treasurer John Edgerton was unable to attend the AGM as he and his wife arrived home from their holiday with an unwelcome attack of illness, from which they're just recovering. John kindly wrote a brief summary for the meeting, which brings us pretty much up to date with our position now in June 2024, so here it is:

Treasurer's Report to SALGA AGM 16 May 2024

2023 was another successful year financially for SALGA despite the influence of significant price rises from our suppliers of shop stocks. In previous years we have tried to maintain a 20% mark up on suppliers' prices in order for the shop to make a positive return to the association's finances but we have found that this was not possible – or perhaps fair to our customers – so we have reduced mark up to more like 12% this year, in order to remain competitive.

The shop will remain open on Sundays until the end of May, at which time an assessment will be made of the feasibility of keeping it open on Sundays through the summer and autumn months.

The Committee recently authorised a transfer of a further £2,500 to the Virgin Money account, which is paying interest monthly at the rate of 4.55%. This will bring in an increase of income monthly from £40 to £50. The Committee appreciates that our funds are currently quite healthy and, to this end, we are minded to find out whether we can help some local, gardening based and deserving causes. Please note we are not allowed to give money to other charities. If any members know of any such deserving causes that could do with some help, would they please let the Chairman know.

The accounts for 2023, duly examined and approved by an independent person, show a surplus of £2,296, of which £1,000 has been transferred to the Building Reserve account. In the event of a sudden and urgent need to replace one or more of our containers at Pickards Field, each new unit would cost around £7,000.

John Edgerton

The full accounts for 2023, agreed by the AGM, are now available on the website www.salga.org.uk

Funds for Growers

Do you know of any Swindon garden-related projects, or groups or individuals, who could benefit from some funding support?

The member's shop at Pickards Field is one of the activities which helps SALGA to gain funds each year, thanks to the time and effort of the volunteers, and the small mark-up on goods sold.

Altho we have to retain some funds for future contingencies, this year we hope to benefit other growing activities in Swindon.

We have some funds available which could help towards any projects of a horticultural nature in our town. There is one proviso, which is that we cannot give money to other charities – it must be direct to local groups. If you have any ideas, please write to salgacontacts@gmail.com – all suggestions very welcome!

Jane (Chairperson)

Swindon Growers Summit 24

We'd seen posters advertising this event via other gardening contacts – Linda Kasmaty and Josie Slade in particular, and it sounded interesting. The list of attractions included Speakers – Local Suppliers – A Panel of Experts – and Compost Testing!

So, on Sunday 28th April, we set off to find the Swindon Hub in the town centre, armed with a plastic bag containing a trowel full of the contents of our garden compost bin, which Maurice keeps a fond and parental eye on, making sure that the wormies are happy and have plenty to eat. They seem to respond with vigour to a diet of veg peelings and cardboard.

I had no idea what to expect, or how long it might keep us entertained, but it was a brilliant and informative day!

Tadpole Garden Village

We arrived just as Stuart Holden started speaking about how he and Pete Welsh, both ex-forces, are helping their community in the brand new

Tadpole Garden Village live up to their name! Together they have established community allotments and a garden club. The local schools are involved and they have planted thousands of bulbs, and loads of trees. They also support residents who have been unable to look after their own gardens, which helps people to make friends and feel more confident again.



Another exciting development is a monthly craft and produce market - a good opportunity to go to Tadpole Garden Village, explore this new area of Swindon and see what's going on.

Arboriculture at Helen Browning's Farm

Another interesting speaker was Ben Raskin, talking about how working in horticulture has helped him and his family to stay sane and heal in times of trouble. I think this is an experience all us gardeners share – the peace that comes from gardening – even when we're losing against slugs and floodwater!



Ben works at Helen Browning's organic farm in Bishopstone, and his talk inspired us to go to an Open Day there, where a crowd of interested gardeners and real life modern farmers were shown round their experimental plantings of trees for what's called "arboriculture".

This is a concept where trees are a deliberate part of the agriculture, not just obstacles that get in the way of the tractors! I won't launch into the entire theory now – there are books available on the subject, and Ben himself has co-authored a book coming out this autumn. He's a very good and humorous speaker!

Compost Testing with Rhizophyllia



Our third and final visit of the day was to Eddie Bailey at Rhizophyllia, where we got to look at our compost through a powerful microscope and see all the bacteria and fungi that, together with the worms, eat our veg peelings and turn them into compost. It was most intriguing.

Eddie's view is that these microbes spent billions of years perfecting their bioengineering skills to produce plants and animals in order that they could move to colonising dry land! I've often felt that about flu viruses – horrible for us, but presumably a bonanza of expansion to them! Anyway, this is a fascinating different perspective to Life on Earth - and all going on in your compost bin.



There were loads of other stalls to see and people to talk to, but, after I'd had 10 mins of Shumei Japanese healing, we'd run out of time. So we purchased some delicious salad microgreens from a micro farm near Purton, and went home to eat them in our lunchtime sandwiches!

Here are some useful contacts for some of the participants:

Tadpole Garden Village Community Gardening

<https://tadpolegardenvillage.com>

Purton Farm Shop

www.purtonhouseorganics.co.uk

Eddie Bailey & Rhizophyllia Workshops

info@rhizophyllia.co.uk

Microgreens just outside Cricklade

coadmicrofarm.co.uk

Shumei Natural Agriculture

<http://happysoilfoods.uk>

Jane Farr



Speakers

MONTHLY MEETINGS 7.30pm IMMANUEL CHURCH HALL, UPHAM RD SN3 1DH

*Meetings are the third Thurs of every month & include tea,
coffee & a raffle*

June 20th Growing, harvesting and storing vegetables Dr Keith Ferguson

There is always something new to be learned about this topic. Keith Ferguson will give us his take on this perennially interesting topic.

July 18th Save the Bees from the Asian Hornet and Details of Salga Show - Mike Carter

In September 2016, The National Bee Unit confirmed a sighting of the Asian hornet in the Tetbury area of Gloucestershire – the first time the hornet had been discovered in the UK. Further sightings were made in 2017 & 2018, most recently in Cornwall. Should we be worried? Mike will reveal all in his talk in July!

August 15th Newly Opened Swindon Museum Councillor Linda Kasmaty

The recently opened Swindon Museum and Art Gallery website describes the venue as

“ A vibrant and creative cultural destination for everyone, with a team of passionate experts at our heart. We provide inspiration and enjoyment, offering a sense of place and pride for local residents and beyond; sharing Swindon’s stories through our diverse collections and showcasing modern and contemporary British art.”

Please come along to hear more about this exciting new venture from Linda Kasmaty our August speaker.

September 19th

**Gardening the Globe: Horticulture of the
Commonwealth War Graves Commission
Larry Banda**

We look forward to hearing about Larry's work as a volunteer with the commission which in addition to commemorating Commonwealth military service members, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission maintains over 40,000 non-Commonwealth war graves and over 25,000 non-war military and civilian graves.

October 17th

**The Cutting Garden
Moira White**

A brief history of the cutting garden: how to start your own patch, where to buy seeds and grow them successfully. Internet resources. Plants I grow!

I started my cutting garden many years ago after being inspired by Sarah Raven. Every year I grow hundreds of plants from seeds and cuttings. I've sold flowers and plants at a local Country Market, provided flowers for family and friends and grown flowers for several weddings. I love wildlife, gardening organically and try to grow plants to support bees and other pollinators.

November 21st

**Christmas Floral Art
Sue Castle**

Since becoming involved with floral art Sue has created floral arrangements for Westminster Abbey three times and served on the Board of Directors of the National Association of Flower Arrangement Societies (NAFAS). This evening Sue will be showing us how to create a wreath ring, a table decoration and an advent decoration which she has kindly said she will donate as prizes in our raffle.

December 19th

**Quiz and Fish and Chips
Our popular Quiz Night**

This Christmas celebration returns this year giving us the chance to enjoy a great social evening along with delicious fish and chips!

Annual Show Changes

The 2024 Annual Show will take place on Saturday, August 31st in Pinetrees Community Centre, Pinehurst Circle SN2 1QR.

Spurred on by the popularity of some of last year's schedule changes, such as the three entries per class and the strangest looking vegetable, we are gradually phasing in more changes from Members feedback. The main changes are: -

- Three new Garden Photography classes have been introduced to replace the previous single and more generic "Gardening Theme" class. This year's themes will be "Yellow Flower(s)", "Garden Friend(s)" and "Garden Vegetable(s)" we hope to vary these themes in future years. There will also be an under 16 children's photography class: 'My favourite plant or flower'. So, start taking those photos now to exhibit in the show!
- We would like to encourage more children's entries – so children's entries will be free of charge and we welcome entries in the children's classes from SALGA members children, grandchildren or **ANY CHILD known to a member**. In addition to the other 8 children's classes - this year we have a new under 5's class - an open class of garden-related arts or crafts or cooking entries and a new under 16 class of decorated cup-cakes, fairy cakes or biscuits.
- To encourage members who don't have access to cut flower gardens, the Floral Art Classes (H51, H52, H53) will permit shop-bought as well as home-grown flowers in just these three classes.
- To encourage new members and variety - a new rule for the handicrafts section is that entries that have previously won a prize cannot be re-entered.
- Finally, so that we can learn what seed varieties work locally - It would also be greatly appreciated if exhibitors could name the plant varieties they're showing (if they know them!), this is definitely not compulsory but useful for local growers.

Show schedules detailing these and other minor changes will be published on the SALGA Website and available in hard copy in the shop as soon as changes are finalised.

We look forward to seeing you on Saturday 31st August, with a whole host of great exhibits and lots of lovely homemade cakes (donations welcome!) and a cuppa to enjoy with lively chat, children's activities, and seed giveaways.

SALGA Primary Schools Competition 2023/24

In February I emailed 70 Primary schools and special schools in Swindon about the competition. In 2023 22 schools asked for seeds, however only 8 schools entered the competition. In addition, to try to help schools with gardening, a webinar was held in March to provide advice and support for schools and from this a WhatsApp was formed.

Janet Cook and I visited each school and they each received a £15 voucher to spend at the SALGA shop. (Winners of last year's vouchers commented on how this helped them buy new compost!)

Judging between different types of schools with gardens of varying sizes is a challenge for the judges. We saw two large gardens at Shaw Ridge and The Chalet School and each were productive and well used by pupils and staff.

Where there are children with complex learning needs more time is devoted to gardening. This was apparent at The Chalet School and the ARK at Millbrook School which had good quality plants.

In mainstream education the demands of the curriculum mean that less time is available to fit in activities such as gardening but despite this the school have been able to create successful gardens.

Results

School Award

Bishopstone CE Primary School	Highly Commended
Millbrook Primary School	Highly Commended
Westrop Primary School	Best Vegetables
Shaw Ridge Primary School	Best Fruit
St Francis CE Primary School	Best Flowers
The Chalet School	The SALGA Endeavour Children's Cup
Eastrop Infant School	The Schools Trophy

This Year's Competition

Some of the categories in this year's competition have been changed this year with the cup being awarded for the best 1 metre square planter. We have introduced this because it is difficult to judge between schools who have different sized plots and resources.

Competition categories

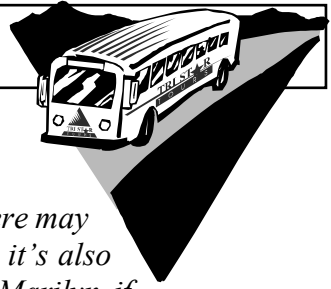
- The Schools Trophy for the most imaginative and attractive raised 1 metre square, planter, demonstrating well looked after plants, pupil involvement. (This could be made from wood from a pallet)
- The Schools Trophy most imaginative and attractive raised 1 metre square, planter
- The Endeavour Cup for best entry by children with additional needs.
- Large School Garden
- Small School Garden
- Best vegetable planting
- Best fruit planting
- Best floral planting

So far the response this year there has been disappointing. If anyone wants to help with judging the gardens they will be very welcome.

Chris Cossey



2024 Coach Trips



Kew Gardens

Thurs July 4th

This trip is now fully booked, tho it's possible there may be a few cancellations, given that we now know it's also our long-awaited General Election! Contact Marilyn if you're desperate to get away

Attractions include:

The Temperate House – step into the world's greatest glasshouse and journey across 5 continents and 16 islands. Learn how they are helping to save some of the world's rarest and most threatened plants.

The Palm House – experience the magic of a tropical paradise in London! The iconic Victorian Palm House and its rainforest climate supports a unique collection from around the world.

The Hive – a visit here reveals the secret world of the honeybee.

The Kew Explorer – this is a hop-on, hop-off Land Train. Once a ticket is purchased, it is valid all day. This allows you to visit the prime attractions without too much walking – and to tour around the vast majority of the site.

Malvern Autumn Show Saturday 28th September

There are still seats available for this trip ...

This is a sponsored show, and is not run by the RHS (unlike the Spring Show). We should see the Flowers on show in the Floral Marquee, the Giant Vegetables on display (which frequently break records), and should have the opportunity to listen to the invited speakers, as well as visiting all the stalls and garden suppliers. It is a flat site, with a variety of food outlets.

Depart Gorse Hill: 8.30 a.m. Depart Malvern: 4.30 p.m.

Cost £38 – based on 35 persons travelling.

(this includes driver's gratuity)

Marilyn Stott Tel: 01793 861657

45% Discount on seeds!

Yes, that's right. Every packet of seeds that you order from the Kings seed catalogue when ordering through SALGA, qualifies for 45% discount. As well as Flower, Vegetable and Herb seeds ordered, you can get 45% discount on Onion sets and Shallot sets too. There is a small delivery charge but the savings from your order, can more than cover this. There are other advantages from ordering from the catalogue too - Low price on potatoes and 10% discount on Sundry items that every gardener needs.

The Kings Seeds catalogue will be available in September – watch out for the email that will tell you it is in the Shop at Pickard's Field for your collection. The catalogue will have order forms and full details of all you have to do together with the closing date for orders to be received. Once you've placed your order, if you do not wish to keep the catalogue, please return it to the Shop so that someone else may be able to use it.

Let everything in parks and gardens inspire you this year. Come along to the Annual Horticultural Show on Saturday 31st August to see what your fellow members have produced from their seeds so that you are ready to place the order once the catalogues are here.

Glenys Dingwall

Membership

Membership can now be renewed for 2024 at the shop, at meetings, by post or by email. **If you don't have an Orange Card, your Membership is out of date**

1. At the Shop at Pickards Field – Renewals and new members.
2. Electronically – using a Membership form submitted to me by e-mail at **deniswmatthews@gmail.com** and payment of the £7 by bank transfer. Usually, Membership cards can be collected at the shop. If you would like your card posted, could you please add an extra 85 pence to your bank transfer to cover postage.
3. By Post – For existing members, send me your name and address and a cheque for £7. For new members, please complete a membership form which is below, or under “Membership” on the SALGA website **salga.org.uk**, A stamped and self-addressed envelope is required if you wish your membership card to be sent to you.
4. At live monthly meetings.

We would very much like you to pay by bank transfer as our bank has introduced significant charges for cheques. Bank details: Salga Account **00020536**, Sort Code **40-52-40** and **include your name** as a reference.

Please supply the following details for any new membership

Membership Number (for renewals).....

Name

Address

Post Code..... Telephone.....

E-mail address (please write clearly)

.....

Allotment site, (if any).....Plot number

GIFT AID If any member of the household is a UK taxpayer, SALGA asks that the membership is made out in that person's name and the declaration below is signed accordingly. For every £7 subscription that is "Gift Aided" SALGA receives £1.75 from the exchequer at no additional cost to the member.

I am a UK taxpayer and would like SALGA to treat all subscriptions I make from the date of this declaration, until I notify otherwise, as Gift Aid contributions.

Date.....

Signature

IF YOU HAVE SIGNED THE GIFT AID DECLARATION PLEASE GIVE YOUR FIRST NAME IN FULL

.....

Denis Matthews, 3 Clevedon Gardens, Swindon SN4 9EZ

SALGA officers & committee members

Chair	Jane Farr	07939 567934
Secretary	Maurice Moylett	07901 638248
President	Don Reeve	01793 423918
Treasurer	John Edgerton	01793 642965

Membership Secretary Denis Matthews 01793 312114

General Committee Members

Cindy Matthews	01793 312114
Viv Dipper	01793 322421
Patrick Hawker	01793 526944
Sandie Mulcahy	07795 355115

Show Committee

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