

Rackenford Gardening Club Newsletter, September 2018

Dear Member,

Welcome to the Rackenford Gardening Club Newsletter!

The Autumn Show was held at West Backstone on the 1st September. There were more than 40 individual adult and children entrants, not including the children from Little Angels, and more than 200 adult entries. There were some excellent vegetable, flower and craft entries as well as more recent classes including 'The Biggest Thistle' and 'Oddest shaped vegetable'. If you didn't enter this time, then please do consider having a go next year.

Thank you to all who helped make it such a success, from the judges to those who helped set up and take down tables and chairs, to the ladies who made cakes and served tea! Finally, a big 'thank you' to all who attended on the day to come and view the fantastic skills of the local gardeners, flower arrangers, brewers, cooks and chefs, photographers, artists and thistle growers!

Special mentions to Gordon Willmetts for winning the President's Cup for highest aggregate of points in the vegetable and flower section, Sharon Saupe for her wonderful Silver Stag which secured the Taxis Cup for the most outstanding entry in the show as voted by those who attended. Thelma Willmetts, Marjorie Smith, Margaret Tapp, Dawn Adie and Roy Bertram all won trophies. In a very high-standard Junior section, Louis Denno and Arthur Hyland won cups. For a full list of winners, please refer to the Rackenford Village website.

If anyone grew anything that they couldn't enter because we didn't have a class or has any suggestions as to how we might improve the show, then please email: Rackenfordgardening@gmail.com with your suggestion(s).

Please find some photos of the show on the next page.....





Cheese and Wine and Quiz Evening, 23rd November.

RGC's Cheese and Wine and Quiz evening will take place on November 23rd at a venue to be decided – please put it in your diary! More ticket details to follow at soon.

Jobs to do in the garden.

How unusual to have so much hot weather but the spent mowing grass has been taken up with watering! In case we have more of the same next year, these are some plants that like it warm and dry!

Sedum	Sempervivum	Aeonium	Silene
Lavender	Calendula	Armeria	Mesembryanthemum
Eryngium	Delosperma	Echeveria	Agapanthus

Hopefully you will have been harvesting at least some vegetables over the past few months – but make sure you finish picking peas and beans in October – cut the plants at ground level to allow the roots to fix the nitrogen in the soil. Squash and Pumpkins should be taken in before they turn mushy in the first frosts.

Plant garlic bulbs using a suitable variety such as Solent Wight, Onions Early Crop and Swift can be planted during October and November.

In sheltered areas make sowings of Broad Beans such as the Aquadulce Claudia. Lift and store root crops such as carrots, beetroot and potatoes.

October is usually a great month for preparing the ground for planting soft fruit. Select a well-drained, sunny spot that is not prone to late frosts. Dig over the area incorporating manure or garden compost (first removing all perennial weed roots!)

Do make sure you lift Dahlia tubers, Begonia tubers and Gladiolus corms to store dry over the winter months. Remove the dead foliage before storing them. October and November are the months to plant daffodil, tulip and Allium bulbs for a fabulous spring display.

Spring bedding plants such as wallflowers, Bellis, Primulas and winter pansies can also go in now and will be ready for spring. Autumn is the ideal time to plant Clematis plants. Prune climbing roses and rambling roses once they've finished flowering and tie in the stems but remember not to compost the leaves if they have suffered from blackspot or rust.

After you have tidied the borders, mulch them with bark chips, well-rotted manure, leaf mould or spent mushroom compost to insulate plant roots for the winter and keep weed growth in check.

DIG and DINE

Never let it be said that the Rackenford Gardening Club doesn't keep up with the times. With all things gin being popular currently, why not try the below?

Damson Gin

Rinse and pick over 500gs damsons to remove any leaves and stalks, then pat dry, tip into a freezer bag and freeze overnight. The next day, bash the bag of damsons a couple of times with a rolling pin and then tip the lot into a 2-litre Kilner jar, or divide between 2 smaller jars.

Pour in 250gs of golden caster sugar and 1 litre of gin, and put the lid on. Shake well. Each day for a week, give the jar a good shake until all the sugar has dissolved, then put it in a cool, dark place and leave for 2-3 months.

Line a plastic sieve with a square of muslin (or use a coffee filter in a cone for a really refined gin) and strain the gin through it. Decant into clean, dry bottles, seal and label. The gin is now ready to drink, but will improve and mature over time – it will keep for over a year, if you can wait that long.

Tomatoes seem to be doing well this year. If you have a surplus, give this a try.

Autumn Tomato Chutney

1kg ripe tomatoes peeled and chopped
750g cooking apple, peeled, cored and chopped
375g light muscovado sugar
250g onion, chopped
250g raisins
1 green pepper, deseeded and chopped
2 tsp salt ½ tsp ground ginger
350ml cider vinegar

Put all the ingredients into a large pan and bring to the boil over a medium heat. Stir occasionally until the sugar has dissolved. Boil the mixture, uncovered, for about 45-50 minutes until the fruit is tender and thickened. Cool, then transfer the mixture to a sterilised jar and seal.