

RACKENFORD GARDENING CLUB DECEMBER NEWSLETTER

Dear Member,

Welcome to the last newsletter of 2018!

Well another year of successes and failures in the garden has almost passed and, (we hope), memorable days and evenings with Rackenford Gardening Club!

We had a wonderful Spring Show in the first week of April which was once again held in Rackenford Church. We had some wonderful entries of plants, flowers, sculpture, cooking and even hats! We also had some excellent poems from Rackenford School children - Congratulations to Leo Berwick for his winning entry.

We had a beautiful May day for the most successful Plant Sale in the club's history. Many thanks to all who bought and those who assisted with the laborious task of planting and then 'pricking out' seedlings. The 1st of September saw another hugely successful Autumn show held courtesy of Sarah and David at West Backstone with some superb entries including many from the local children and some very tall thistles!

We are always keen to include additional classes in the shows so if anyone has any suggestions, then please do let one of the committee know.

Finally we had a cracking evening at the Stag Inn where quiz master Martin entertained and educated over 60 people with his gardening-themed quiz. Thanks to Steve for hosting and Oliver and Jack for looking after us. We hope we can hold the quiz again here next year!

Whilst free time is limited for many of us, we are continuing to try and support the School where we can. We have recently invited quotes to make the existing school garden bed more accessible. We also want to make the bank that runs parallel to the church path into something that can be used to grow vegetables.

This work has only been made possible by your membership fees and support at our various events – so thank you all.

Once these alterations have been made, then we will re-start the School Gardening Club. This is extremely popular with the majority of the children and we had over 50 of them sign up when we last ran it. If anyone would be able to give an hour of their time once a or twice a week over a lunchtime to assist with this then please let us know. You would need to have a security check but the cost of this would be borne by ourselves in tandem with the school.

As well as teaching children to grow their own food (without using pesticides!), gardening has been shown to improve a child's motor skills, enhance creativity, increase social skills and improve self-confidence. Gardening also reduces stress and helps children cope with anxiety and frustration – so please do let us know if you can help!

Please also check the end of this newsletter for dates for next year including the AGM.

Gardening Jobs

Even though the growing season is over, there are still jobs to be done in the garden. All leaves, twigs and other bits of plants and vegetables can be swept up so that they don't leave shelter for slugs and snails.

Rose bushes can be pruned by half to prevent wind damage. Similarly, apple and pear trees can be pruned now to encourage strong growth in the Spring. Bare root trees, shrubs and roses as well as soft fruit bushes can be planted.

It's not too late to plant bulbs for the spring and now is the time to order seeds and seed potatoes to start everything again in the New Year.

For those who plan to show off their home grown produce over Christmas, don't forget to keep an eye on the weather forecast – hard frosts, whilst good for sweetening parsnips can make them very hard to dig up!

Why not try this take on roast parsnips? This could just be the thing for Christmas!

Dig and Dine

Quarter 4 parsnips lengthways and place in a roasting tin.

Combine 3 tbsps of olive oil, 2 tsp Dijon mustard, 1 tbsp runny honey and 1 tbsp cider vinegar and 2 tbsps rye flakes. Season with salt and pepper. Mix well, pour over the parsnips and stir to coat.

Tear 3 sprigs each of Thyme and Rosemary over the mixture and roast parsnips for 40-45 minutes at 180 C or 350 F. Turn once or twice until caramelised on the outside and soft inside.

Leave for 5 minutes before serving. This is apparently very good with seasonal dark fruit, sausages and especially duck – but why not try with your Turkey or Goose?

Some dates for your diary

Venues for all the below to be confirmed at the AGM.

RGC AGM: 20th February 2019

RGC Spring Show: April 6th

RGC Plant Sale: May 11th

RGC Autumn Show: August 24th

It only leaves RGC committee to wish you all a wonderful Christmas and very best wishes for 2019.