



BOLLAND GARDENING CLUB



PRESS RELEASE

Bolland Garden Club Meeting Wednesday 14th September 2022

At the first Autumn meeting of the Club, members and visitors were fortunate to welcome our speaker, Doug Stewart. Doug is an expert on garden pests and diseases and works closely with the RHS and National Trust. The title of his talk was 'How to Poison Pests and Love the Planet'. The audience when asked to identify common pests mentioned many but the actual list is almost endless.

At the outset we were told of the modern view on how pests and diseases are dealt with, no longer using the early forms of deadly chemicals such as DDT. Many such chemicals were developed at the time of World War II. Such chemicals whilst being very effective were harmful to humans who consumed foods produced by such controls. For the present day gardener there now exist numerous treatments, harmless to humans but still effective in controlling pests and diseases.

Doug's main message was as gardeners we have a choice of two differing views. The first and understandable one is to strive for the perfect garden, i.e. one with weed free striped lawns etc. The other view is to have a garden not so neat and precise but designed to exist in harmony with nature and that includes living with pests. Not all pests are harmful or even very destructive. For example there are some 44 types of slugs of which only 4 cause damage. He pointed out that aphids, a main worry to gardeners, play a major part in preserving the garden's eco system and provide a food source for garden visitors such as hedgehogs and birds. In fact many pests do a valuable service and help to enrich soil. Even wasps do some good as pollinators, albeit unintentionally.

We can spray to decrease unacceptable numbers of aphids, caterpillars and other such pests but avoiding total destruction. Doug told us of modern types of spray which are beneficial to the gardener which avoid using poisons. One such spray was a garlic solution which he made from 2 garlic bulbs cut in half crosswise added to 2 litres of water and then simmered for 30 minutes. When cool, the garlic is squashed into the liquid, sieving the contents and using the solution as a spray or in a watering can on target areas of attacked plants. In a similar manner, solutions of elderberry leaf tea and even one made from chillies (effective in stopping squirrels stealing bird food) can be used.

Doug's advice was to let some of your garden grow fairly wild so as to attract pollinators such as bees and butterflies whilst still maintaining a well manicured and neat part of the garden protected naturally without using harmful solutions or pellets. Nature has its solutions and only requires a little help from us.

A great evening was enjoyed by a larger than usual gathering. The next meeting is on the 12th October, 2022, when a speaker from Bannister Hall Nursery will give a talk entitled 'Trees and Shrubs for Autumn colour.

Clare Stuart

Note for Editors

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