



BOLLAND GARDENING CLUB



PRESS RELEASE

Bolland Garden Club Event 25th March 2023

Bolland Garden Club met on Saturday 25th March at the home of the chairman. Members enjoyed an interesting and informative tour of the garden during which David Redman, a consultant horticulturist, demonstrated a variety of different pruning regimes for shrubs.

David had started the demonstration with a discussion about the equipment needed for successful pruning. Good secateurs are essential. He showed members a selection of Felco secateurs and discussed their particular attributes. He particularly recommended the Felco 13 model, although this was the most costly in the range, as the size of the handles allow the use of both hands. Also, being longer, there is a greater mechanical advantage for cutting through tougher material. By-pass secateurs are a must, as the anvil type crush stems instead of cutting them cleanly. Maintenance of secateurs is very important. David recommended the use of a chain saw sharpening file, rather than the carborundum stone more commonly used by members. This was because it was quicker, easier and more effective. Keeping secateurs, and any pruning equipment, clean is important too. A Brillo pad is favourite for this as it removes the build up of dried sap which can inhibit the correct closing of the blades, sometimes forcing them up to a millimetre apart. After cleaning a little oil should be applied.

The principles of pruning do not particularly vary between types of shrub. It is necessary to remove any wood which is dead, damaged, diseased or dying. Once that is done anything crossing over can be removed. This is because branches crossing over will abrade one another, causing wounds through which diseases can enter. It is important also to feed after pruning and David recommended also using a minimum of two inches of mulch but keeping it clear of any woody stems.

Roses need to be pruned to outward facing buds and all weak growth removed altogether. It is important to allow a free flow of air through the plant. David explained the distinction between climbing and rambling roses. Ramblers flower only once in summer, whereas climbers can repeat flower all summer and into autumn. In both cases where the plant is multi-stemmed the oldest stems need to be removed at the base.

The idea that the old, dead, flowers of hydrangeas provide protection against frost for new flower buds developing is not supported by the evidence. So, they can be pruned before the last frosts after all. Some hydrangeas, such as Annabelle, can be cut back very hard as they flower on the current season's wood.

David pointed out a Witch Hazel which was growing under trees and recommended that they be planted in the open then they keep a more compact shape, growing upwards rather than spreading towards the light.

It is important to promptly remove all the dead wood from winter dieback on Japanese acers, and cut back any overlong branches to an outward facing side branch, as any stub will invite decay or dieback.

Note for Editors

The Bolland Gardening Club meets on the second Wednesday of each month in the Village Hall, Bolton by Bowland at 7:30 pm unless otherwise arranged.



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Clematis in different groups need to be pruned at different times according to the age of the wood on which they flower. Those that flower early on shoots grown the previous year need to be cut back immediately after flowering. Those that flower late on the current season's growth need to be pruned as they start into growth. David suggested pruning clematis montana lightly after flowering just to keep it under control.

Although not pruning David gave members a tip for Himalayan birch. Peeling off the old bark to reveal the paler bark beneath. Also washing the trunk and branches using water with a little Algon and a bit of detergent to remove algae.

There will be no meeting during April and the next meeting will be on 10th May in Bolton by Bowland village hall when Dave Newsham, of Bannister Hall Nursery, will give a talk on spring interest trees and shrubs.

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