

BOLLAND GARDEN CLUB

PRESS RELEASE

Bolland Garden Club Meeting 14th December 2022

The meeting of the Club on the 14th December was memorable both for the -8C temperature outside and the enjoyable warmth inside the Bolton-by-Bowland Village Hall. The weather, no doubt, affected the usual high attendance, however well over 20 members were present to enjoy a great evening.

David Redmore gave a splendid talk entitled 'Mixed Planting: Growing Edibles amongst the Perennials'. As the title suggests it was about how unusual and fulfilling the growing of flowers in the same area as vegetables can be.

Some years ago David, who lives in Lancaster, became involved in the acquisition of a plot of land adjacent to a lovely Lancaster private house to create additional space to grow flowers and vegetables; structures on this plot were demolished so creating almost an acre of extra garden space to begin a project of 'mixed' growing.

Slides were shown to illustrate the talk and to show how the garden was developed by the use of a number of raised beds and grassed pathways together with well positioned greenhouses. Two greenhouses were dedicated solely to orchid growing. A third serving as a workshop for propagation and general work.

We received many useful tips during the talk about how to create and operate mixed gardening. An example was David's raised beds designed with such dimensions as to allow full gardening work to be done without ever having to walk or trample on the soil. This being key to preserving first class soil conditions. The beds were made to look special by bordering them with wattle fences – hazel wattling being preferred to willow.

Noticeably from the numerous slides shown of the garden, were the trained apples – trained into shapes to enhance the appearance of the raised beds and also used as arches along the pathways. David explained how he did this by growing apple trees to a certain height and using a structure to give them shape and when joined naturally the structure was removed giving a stunning appearance. He also used Nashi Pears (Japanese) which he said was a delightful tasty fruit.

But what about mixed growing? This was shown to be a sophisticated technique – not really for the inexperienced gardener. The main reason why David loves and employs this system is that his garden is always colourful and productive. Flower are planted towards the edges of the raised beds. He uses varieties such as marigolds, poppies and tulips. The planted flowers cleverly attract many predatory insects which play an important part in protecting the later flourishing vegetables from being attacked by pests. This avoids any needs to use pesticides at any stage. As the flowers fade and die then the vegetables planted behind them come into their own. Many different types are grown such as chard, beetroot, courgettes, marrow, leeks and giant onions.

In short the secret of this mixed growing is to ensure the flowers die down as the vegetables come through. Easy to say but difficult to achieve. This was a fantastic talk, full of interest as it related to an almost unknown gardening technique. Proudly carried out here in Lancashire!!

Clare Stuart

Note for Editor – The Bolland Gardening Club meets on the 2nd Wednesday of each month (except January) in the Village Hall, Bolton-by-Bowland at 7.30pm