



## June 2020: Special Edition 12

Dear Members,

Gradually lockdown is lifting, we can go out, visit the shops and meet up with a small number of friends. Gardens are opening and the old normality is slowly returning. But, the need to maintain social distancing is problematic as is planning for events.

Therefore, sadly we have had to cancel the Flower Show in September. This decision was not taken lightly, but the restrictions would have prevented many of the things which we feel make the Show – the refreshments, the ability for people to mingle and chat, the raffle and prize giving. We are looking at a possible online Show, so watch out for news over the summer.

In the meantime, I hope you enjoy Edition 12 of our Lockdown Newsletter, which includes a quiz, some more members gardens and other trivial collected over the last week.

Contributions to

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Enjoy your gardens!

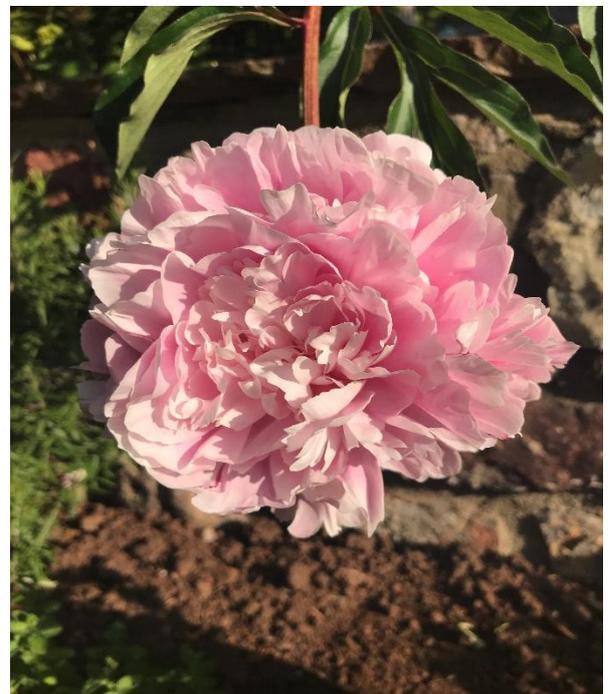
**Kate Anthony Wilkinson** (Chair)

### MEMBERS GARDENS

This week it's my garden.



Due to the lack of wind and rain earlier in June the peonies have been wonderful – although rather dashed this week with the recent rain!



The geraniums have been particularly good, not needing much watering, but again have now been rather bashed by this weeks rain.



## LAST WEEK'S QUIZ : Answers to Floral Books

1	The Name Of The Rose by Umberto Eco
2	The Perks Of Being A Wallflower by Stephen Chbosky
3	The Scarlet Pimpernel by Baroness Orczy
4	Dandelion Wine by Ray Bradbury
5	Snow White and Rose Red by Patricia C Wrede and others
6	Daisy Head Mayzie by Dr Seuss



## QUIZ TIME: Floral Films

Below are six films but the floral word is missing.

1	Steel - - - - - (1989)
2	Blue - - - - - (2013)
3	The Best Exotic - - - - - Hotel (2011)
4	The Yellow - - - - Of Texas (1944)
5	White - - - - - (2002)
6	- - - - - Fever (2017)



## GARDEN PESTS: Caterpillars

Following on from last weeks article about Japanese Knotweed, this week we are looking at caterpillars. Thanks to Bill who sent some amazing photos (opposite) of the caterpillars which had taken a liking to his mullein. Despite their greedy habits, the plant is surviving and now has managed to put out some flowers.

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These are the caterpillars of the Mullein moth, with their very distinctive yellow, black and white markings. Their favourite food is, you've guessed it, the Great Mullein. They are well distributed throughout much of southern and central England and along the Cornish coastline. The Mullein moth (*Shargacucilla verbasci*) lays its eggs on verbasum (Mullein),



buddleia and figwort at the end of Spring. Shortly afterwards, from late Spring to July the caterpillars (or rather larvae as they become moths) demolish the foliage – bad infestations can strip a plant. Then they hide in the soil to pupate. They emerge as a brown moth, but this is rarely seen in flight.



There are various ways to get rid of caterpillars, short of picking them off and rehusing them away from your favourite plants. An insecticide can be used which contains pyrethrum but use in the evening to avoid harming pollinating bugs.

If you prefer a more natural method, you might like to try one of the following. I am told that vinegar is a good natural alternative if you don't want to use pesticides – a light solution will help to get rid of caterpillars. Mix 2 tablespoons in 4 litres of water and spray on plants (raw vinegar will kill snails and slugs if sprayed directly on them).

If you would prefer not to eradicate caterpillars, then you can use plant fabric or mesh to cover them during the eating period. Also cover the ground to prevent the caterpillars hiding in the soil to pupate.



Another way to deter caterpillars on your plants is to spray the plant with soapy water; this will not kill the caterpillar or harm the plant but will make the plant stems slippery and more difficult to climb and so deter the caterpillar.

Another home remedy is chilly and garlic spray. Mix 3 oz dried ground chillies to ½ gallon of boiling water and allow to seep for 5 minutes. Then add ½ gallon of cold water and a few drops of liquid soap. Stir well and then allow the mixture to cool for a few hours. Spray the mixture on a small area of plant and check in 24 hours to make sure there is no damage to the plant; if there is not, it can be used to spray your plants.

A variation on this is a mixture of pepper and garlic spray. Combine a tablespoon of dried red pepper flakes with a whole clove of minced garlic and a teaspoon of liquid soap in a gallon of water. Mix thoroughly and allow to stand for 24 hours. Spray your caterpillar infested plants,

Finally, neem oil can be used, but this can also harm beneficial bugs so use sparingly.





## BEDMINSTER IN BLOOM

Like so many other events, Bedminster in Bloom which takes place each June was cancelled this year, but the website below has some film which you might like to watch. Thanks to Ian for sharing this.

[www.bloomingbedminster.org.uk](http://www.bloomingbedminster.org.uk)

## PLANT FACTS: CYTISUS

The *Cytisus* are the Brooms, appearing in a wide range of shapes and sizes, from small, spreading, ground-hugging plants to small trees. Many have spring flowering and will now have gone over and need some attention.



*Cytisus Decumbens* (above) is a prostrate; good for rock-gardens with bright yellow flowers in May and June. *Cytisus Procumbens* is also dwarf and prostrate.

*Cytisus Scoparius* is the common Broom (top right), a native shrub, similar to the Gorse, but without the spines. Bright, butter-yellow flowers in May make it a sunshine feature. Named varieties within this species occur, such as *Cornish Cream* (cream flowers) (opposite), *Firefly* (yellow with bronze markings), *Golden Sunlight* (rich yellow) and *Suphureus* (cream and red). The *Cytisus X Praecox* group, known as the *Warminster Brooms* produce long, arching branches of rich cream flowers.

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*Albus* is a white flowering kind, with *Allgold* being a bright yellow.



The important fact for now, is that after flowering, the flowered shoots need to be cut back very hard indeed to produce new growth and to prevent the shrub from becoming floppy.



Thanks to Chris Young for Plant Facts.

## DID YOU KNOW.....?

Wallflowers, which grace many spring borders, have two chemical weapons at their disposal to keep caterpillars and other pests at bay. These are activated when predatory creatures such as mammals, aphids, bugs and caterpillars have a nibble. They produce chemicals called glucosinolates, developed millennia ago, but more recently supplemented by cardenolides which tackle those pests which have become resistant to the first. Clever plants!