



# THE FRUIT GROUP NEWSLETTER

Europom Special Edition

October 2010



## Welcome Europom 2010



The RHS Fruit Group was formed in 1945 for members who enjoy growing tree fruit (apples, pears, plums and cherries) and soft fruit (strawberries, raspberries, gooseberries, currants and other berries).

It is run by RHS members, for RHS members, and provides a place for discussion of fruit with other enthusiasts, as well as opportunities to join a wide range of events around the UK including lectures, guided visits and workshops.

The group has close links with RHS staff, especially at RHS Garden Wisley and RHS Garden Rosemoor. If you have an interest in growing fruit - in a large garden, or even a window box - you are all welcome.



September 2010, RHS Fruit Group members visit Paul Barnett (centre, back row) and his fruit garden in West Sussex, where he has budded and grafted over 200 different varieties of apple onto this single *Bramley* apple tree.

## Growing gooseberries for flavour

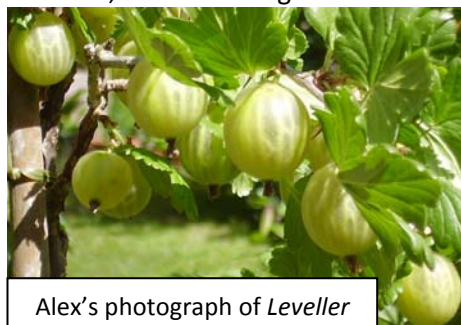
Fruit Group member **Alex Deadman** gave a talk at the FG meeting at Wisley on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2010

My favourite summer fruit is the gooseberry, which I have been growing for more than 25 years. For me, maximising flavour is the primary objective in fruit growing, and one variety I grow is *Leveller* - a relatively modern variety with a really good flavour. Many variables affected the flavour of fruit, such as site, soil, climate, variety selection, cultivation - feeding weeding, pruning etc. and even harvesting at the correct moment. In principle, all one has to do is to get all of these factors just right, and although we might have little or no control over some of these, the amateur grower can do something to maximise the taste of their fruit.

In growing gooseberries, I have found 3 techniques which can affect fruit quality and flavour:

- Growing as a cordon,
- Paying attention to trace elements,
- Restricting water in the later stages of development

I grow gooseberries as double cordons since I discovered that growing as a bush resulted in two problems. Firstly American gooseberry mildew was usually present, and secondly harvesting the gooseberries - especially from an awkwardly growing branch in the middle of the bush – which nearly always resulted in an unwelcome encounter with a nasty thorn!



Alex's photograph of *Leveller*

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## Summer Fruit and Vegetable Competition

For the second year running the RHS Summer Fruit and Vegetable Competition was held at the Tatton Park Flower Show, 21<sup>st</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> July 2010. The standards were high this year – which proves that top quality summer fruit can still be grown across the country, despite the wide variations in the weather that growers have experienced over the past twelve months.



A prize-winning basket of fruit from Adrian Baggaley. Photograph, by John Beswick.

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## Garden Organic, 14th July

It was a real pleasure to be able to spend a full day at the Garden Organic site at Ryton, near Coventry. We were the guests of our own vice-chairman, Bob Sherman, who is the Director of Horticulture for the Garden Organic organisation. After a welcome and orientation talk from Bob, we were split into two groups: one group, led by Head Gardener Andy Strachan, visited the fruit collection, to look at a wide range of top fruit and soft fruit grown using organic methods of management. A highlight of the day was the tastings of currants – black, white and red. At lunchtime we were treated to a talk and presentation on 'Bacterial Canker of Stone Fruits' by eminent plant pathologist, microbiologist and horticultural scientist Dr Steve Roberts.





## 2011 should be a very good year for the RHS Fruit Group

Plans for next year include: meetings at Wisley in March and November with expert speakers and demonstration of vine growing, pruning and tastings; July tour of the Wisley fruit collection; August visit to soft fruit farm in Kent; autumn visit to traditional walled fruit garden in East Anglia; plus regional events.

Regular RHS events that have a particular interest for fruit growers include the Summer Fruit & Vegetable Competition in July; the Autumn Fruit & Vegetable Competition at the London Autumn Harvest Show in Westminster in October; the Late Fruit & Vegetable Competition in November; plus Taste of Autumn events at RHS Garden Wisley, RHS Garden Rosemoor, Devon, RHS Garden Hyde Hall, Essex and RHS Garden Harlow Carr, Yorkshire, in October.



RHS Autumn Fruit Competition 2010

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## Passionate about fruit? - then join us - the RHS Fruit Group

The RHS Fruit Group welcomes new members – anyone who has an interest in fruit, is enthusiastic about fruit growing, and is a member of the RHS can join us. Members include amateur gardeners – from beginners to those with more years of experience, professional gardeners and commercial growers.

Membership of the Fruit Group is open to all RHS members on payment of the annual subscription, currently £7. The subscription year is from January to December.

Please use the membership form overleaf.

### Benefits of joining the RHS Fruit Group

- The Fruit Group Newsletter, published three times a year, containing details of events, advice, news, views and fruit growing experiences
- Opportunity to attend guided visits, seminars and workshops on all aspects of fruit growing
- A chance to share your experiences with other enthusiastic fruit-growers
- Advice on growing fruit from other Fruit Group members, and experts from the RHS



Blackberry *Veronique* growing at Wisley

## Wisley visit, 24th August

Our annual visit to Wisley as guests of the RHS Fruit Department was a splendid affair, where we were all able to discover something new.

The meeting started with a comprehensive round-up of cane fruit by Barry Clark, holder of a national collection of rubus - which includes raspberries, blackberries, loganberries and other hybrid berried fruit. We then held a tasting of early apples from the Wisley orchard, before being given a tour of the Wisley collection of cane fruit.

The Wisley orchard and model fruit gardens were looking great, and it was a good opportunity to see how the apples and pears were doing, and how the vineyard has become established.

RHS Fruit Specialist Jim Arbury was our host, and members were able to learn first hand, just how to get the best out of growing cane fruit. At this time of the year the fruit was ripening, so we could see which varieties were doing well, and which would be most suitable for our gardens.

The RHS Fruit Group Newsletter is produced three times a year and includes news, views and information on fruit growing - written by members for members.

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### THE RHS FRUIT GROUP – MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Please Note: Applicants must be members of the Royal Horticultural Society.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Post code \_\_\_\_\_ RHS membership number \_\_\_\_\_

Tel. No \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to join the RHS Fruit Group, and I enclose a cheque or postal order for £7.00 which is made payable to The RHS Fruit Group.

Please return this form, with payment to:

**The RHS Fruit Group, c/o The Curator's Office, RHS Garden Wisley, Woking, Surrey GU23 6QB**

If you would prefer to receive the Fruit Group Newsletter and other Group correspondence by e-mail please e-mail your agreement (giving your name and RHS membership number)

to : [fruitgroupmembership@rhs.org.uk](mailto:fruitgroupmembership@rhs.org.uk)