

Chelsea Medals for fruit exhibits

It was a delight to see some fruit at this year's Chelsea Flower Show. Too often fruit growing gets overlooked at this event in favour of the more fashionable side of gardening – flowers, garden design etc. This year I am pleased to report that although few in number medals were awarded for exhibits with a high level of fruit content.

Ken Muir Ltd, was awarded Gold for a spectacular display of strawberries. The columns of strawberry plants dripping with gorgeous fruit and scenting the air with a strawberry fragrance was a joy to behold.

The **National Farmers Union & UK Horticulture**, was awarded Gold for its exhibit based on the splendid production output of its members, including a wide range of UK produced fruit of the highest quality. Examples of apples and pears that would surely have won prizes in fruit competitions were displayed alongside huge trays of soft fruit – strawberries, raspberries and blackberries.

The **Thomson & Morgan (UK) Ltd**. 'Our Food, Miles or Metres?' garden by **Gill Oliver Garden Design**, was awarded a well-deserved Silver Knightian medal. This garden demonstrated that within a few square metres you can grow a wide range of fruit and vegetables. The whole garden was 5m x 5m and in addition to a range of vegetables, the fruit included blackberries, blackcurrants, blueberries, gooseberries grown as standards, step-over apples, strawberries, an a range of citrus trees in full fruit.



One of the tricks was to make as much use of the space going up as the space across the ground. The beds were on different heights to make cultivation and harvesting easier. In one triangular bed with sides of about 2 metres, I counted 12 strawberry plants, 3 x blackcurrants, 3 x blackberry, 1 x standard gooseberry, with step-over apples along the long side of the triangle. All in all a real inspiration to gardeners and if this doesn't encourage more fruit growing then I do not know what will!

Congratulations to all medal winners. **Alan Mansfield**

WANTED!

It may sound like we are always asking for volunteers, for help and support, but it is your Fruit Group and it is only as good as you, the members, make it.

This year we have three major events where we need to 'wave the flag', to show that we exist, and to let visitors know the joys of growing – and eating – your own fruit.

Hampton Court Palace Flower Show 2008

The show runs from 8th to 13th July. The Fruit Competition is on **Saturday 12th and Sunday 13th July**. We have a table in the Growing Tastes Marquee on both of these days. If anyone is planning to visit the show on the Saturday or Sunday please come and see us, and if you can spare an hour to stay and talk to visitors about your experience of fruit growing, that would be great. To help, you do not need to have an in-depth knowledge of fruit growing – our friends from the Fruit Department at Wisley will be on-hand to provide technical information – all you need is enthusiasm and a bit of stamina.

If you can spare any time to help please contact: Alan Mansfield on 01992 550175 or email alanmansfield@ntlworld.com

But what about trying your hand at exhibiting your fruit? Anyone who enters the Summer Fruit & Vegetable Competition in July will get free entry to the Hampton Court Flower Show. For details of how to enter please contact georginabarber@rhs.org.uk or the RHS Shows Department at 80 Vincent Square, London, SW1P 2PE for a schedule and full information about entering and staging your exhibit.

Great Autumn Show 2008

This is a spectacular event that each year fills the show halls in Vincent Square. Here you will find some of the best fruit being grown in the UK, much of it by members of the RHS Fruit Group. Dates for this year's show are **Tuesday 7th and Wednesday 8th October**. It is a great place to meet up with fruit growing enthusiasts, to marvel at the beautiful fruit they produce, and pick up a few hints and tips. Again, it would be good if the Fruit Group could have a presence to promote fruit growing and membership of the RHS Fruit Group. **If you are planning to visit and can spare some time to support us please let Gerry Edwards know by emailing him at gerryedwards@blueyonder.co.uk** If you would like to exhibit some of your fruit, again, contact the RHS Shows Department at 80 Vincent Square, London, SW1P 2PE for a schedule.

A Taste of Autumn 2008

Friday, 17th October – Monday, 20 October. We are looking for volunteers to represent and promote the Fruit Group at this major event at Wisley, which this year incorporates the Late Autumn Show, held previously at Vincent Square. If you can offer us a few hours during the four-day event it would be much appreciated. Last year's volunteers enjoyed themselves and we signed up many new members and we would like to do the same again this year.

Julia also needs items for our display – photographs, stories and examples of fruit you are growing, especially unusual fruit and fruit that survives in your garden now that never used to grow. Have you kept weather records for some years, details of how temperatures and rainfall are changing, photographs of pest and diseases affecting your fruit - many members of the public think that we never have problems! Any produce and/or recipes for fruit. Anything that you think would be interesting for visitors. **If you can offer any help please let Julia Mitchell know, telephone 01372 276 511 or e-mail juliaemitchell@hotmail.com**

Fruit Group Visits 2008

In addition to the active calendar of visits and events organised by our regional branches, see the Diary on page 12, there are four other main events this year:

Tuesday 24th June, Wisley. 1.00pm.

We shall be guests of the Fruit Department at Wisley, which will organise a topical event, likely to focus on soft fruit. This meeting will be held out-of-doors in the Fruit Field, so make sure you come with sensible footwear and equipped for the weather on that day.

Tuesday 12th August.

Cam Valley Orchards and Wimpole Gardens

Proprietor Tim Elbourn welcomes us to Cam Valley Orchards where he grows 30+ cultivars of plums and gages, 19 commercial apple cultivars, 5 varieties of pear. Tim's family have been growing fruit in Cambridgeshire since 1864 and he has recently planted a Heritage Orchard of local varieties of apples. Our visit should fall between his *Czar* picking and his *Victoria* harvest, and many more should be ripe. There is also his farm shop, which sells the home grown fruit, Cam Valley Orchards apple juice, and a range of other local produce.

For the afternoon we move on to the National Trust's Wimpole Estate and Wimpole Hall Farm (6 miles away) for our tour of Wimpole Gardens. Head Gardener Philip Whaites is planing a tour of the walled kitchen garden (traditional varieties of wall-trained fruit, many varieties of rhubarb, 50 varieties of tomato, glass house, Potting Shed, Bothy, Apple Store, Mushroom House and Garden Stable), and tour of pleasure gardens, Victorian parterre, and national collection of walnuts (60+ named cultivars). We shall be visiting in the week before his annual Tomato Festival weekend, which means that the fruit and veg will be at its peak.

Cost £10 per person payable to RHS Fruit Group includes refreshments on arrival, tea and garden tour.

Wednesday 3rd September Visit to Poultry

Farm, Plain Road, Marden, Kent, TN12 9LS

On August 29th 2007 OrchardWorld Ltd and Sainsbury's in partnership with Peter Hall unveiled a unique Orchard, which pioneers the way organic apples are grown in the UK. It is the first of its kind in the UK. It has been created with the objective of producing large volumes of organic apples. The system used is a Dutch 'Table Top' and was developed for conventional production to combine high yields of high quality apples with exceptionally efficient use of scarce and expensive resources such as water, fossil fuels and Grade 1 land; it is also an ideal system to adopt for organic production. The orchard has 10,700 trees on

an M9 dwarfing rootstock spaced at 80cm to 1.2 metre depending on variety in rows 3.2 metre apart. The trees are firmly tied to a wooden cane and wirework structure, held in place by concrete straining posts. The varieties range from well known *Cox*, *Gala*, *Braeburn*, *Bramley* and *Russet* to the more modern *Estival*, *Pinova* and *Early Windsor* - varieties chosen for their flavour and disease resistance.

Cost £12 per person payable to RHS Fruit Group includes refreshments on arrival + lunch

Please join us at any of these events. There are still places on both of our 'away day' visits. If you would like to come with us, please send confirmation and payment to Mr. A. P. Benham, Treasurer, RHS Fruit Group, Essex House, 31 Beacontree Avenue, London E17 4BU.



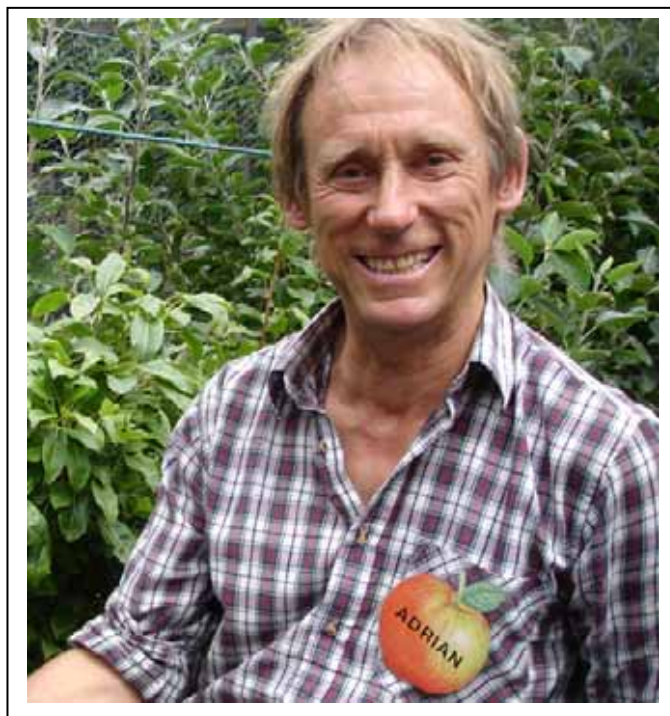
Grower Peter Hall, Judith Batchelar of Sainsbury's and OrchardWorld's Mark Culley open the Orchard
Photograph: OrchardWorld Ltd.

My Delbards

Adrian Baggaley reports on his experience of growing Delbard fruit

It was the late Fruit Group member Jeremy Slane that introduced me to my first Delbard variety by the rather unusual, if not incomprehensible, name of *Delbarestivale*. My first tastings of that apple were not to impress me, the fruit seemed to have taken-on 'off' flavours. However, on the third occasion that I tried, the flavour was excellent, worth investigating further.

Millennium year and the Fruit Group were invited to the October National Fruit Show at Detling. Jeremy Slane and I met-up at the show. One of the trade stands was that of George Delbard's Malicome nursery in France. I was able to acquire their trade and garden catalogues, which I still have, containing very impressive pictures of their named varieties. At that particular time Delbard varieties were not available in the UK, so getting hold of fruit like *Tentation* was definitely out.



The following autumn Jeremy Slane sent in a joint order for, from memory, apples *Tentation*, *Delbard Jubilé*, *Harmonie* and *Régali*; pears *Péradel* and *Fertilia Delbard*; plum *Quetsche d'Alsace*; apricot *Rouge Tardive*; and peach *Gross Mignone*. I collected my trees from Stanmore and brought them back to Nottinghamshire.

The peach and apricot still crop in my polytunnel. The *Quetoche de Alsace* plum was rescued from Jeremy's allotment and had its first real crop for me in 2007.

The establishment of the apple varieties has been a lengthy process for me. The two varieties I chose were *Tentation* and *Delbard Jubilé*, the *Delbarestivale* came from a UK supplier. They were all planted and trained as upright cordons against a panel fence. Success was elusive, cropping was minimal at best. The stocks were M9, but as upright single cordons the growth was at the expense of fruit. What fruit there was on *Delbard Jubilé* was poorly coloured. *Tentation* refused to crop at all, *Delbarestivale* had the odd fruit, which were also poorly coloured and dropped prematurely.

By the winter of 2005-2006 I decided to take them out and move them into the orchard proper, only one *Tentation* was left, the *Delbarestivale* were given away, bar one, which was 'headed' and trained as a bush. This had some fruit on in 2006 but disappointingly none in 2007 – my theory is that I should have a bumper crop this year.

Moving the *Delbard Jubilé* immediately put it into cropping mode. Small crop in 2006, but a good crop of big, very attractive, red and lemony-yellow fruit with superb flavour, in 2007. I am now training it as a pyramid.

The cordon *Tentation* had around nine fruit and the tree I moved to train as a bush had a fair bit of blossom, most of which I took off, leaving a cluster around the bottom. Six beautiful fruits were picked from this position in November 2007, all living up to the trademark name of *Tentation*® delblush, flavour was superb. The moral of this tale? Don't malign French apples when grown properly.

I could dig up the remaining upright cordon *Tentation* and grow it on as a bush, doubtless this would put it into cropping mode, but I think I will persevere for another year at least – the Holy Grail being a plate of six apples at the Late Apple & Pear Competition.

The Pears

Fertilia Delbard® delwilmor lived up to its name, a small amount of blossom produced fruit. My tree is being trained as a pyramid, the rootstock is unknown. I first saw this pear on a Fruit Group visit to Frank P. Matthews nursery. I asked Nick Dunn as to the name of this splendid row of trees, which were laden with fruit. He duly came back with the two names written on a piece of paper. I was also given a handful of fruit which ripened three weeks later. I found out in autumn 2007 that this variety will keep for a month+ in the salad box in the bottom of a 'fridge. In the extraordinary fruit year 2007 the fruit turned yellow on the tree. Most hit the deck in days, the rest went into the 'fridge, the flavour was well down on previous experience. This variety is now marketed as *Invincible*® delwinor.

Péradel® delbuena. A perfect candidate for an upright cordon, spurs from top to bottom, precocious, too precocious in fact. I would recommend nipping off the flowers for the first two or three years to get an established five-foot cordon. Pick this variety early November and wait. Last year I put them into the store and forgot about them, what a surprise several weeks later to be confronted by these large, mottled golden fruit. I know what you are thinking – flavour? The flavour made *Comice* taste like a cooking pear, these *Péradel* were the best pears I have ever tasted. I am informed that this variety is only available as an expensive double-U cordon in the UK.

Goldember. I planted this variety in 2006, no fruits in 2007. Mode of training is upright cordon against a panel fence. Fingers crossed for a crop in 2008.

Adrian Baggaley grows fruit in Nottinghamshire.

If you would like to catch up with Adrian and see how his Delbards have done this year, he is having an open day at his fruit field on Sunday 17th August 2008. Meet at the Four Bells car park in Woodborough village, Nottinghamshire, NG14 6EA. Meet at 12.30 for a 1.00pm start. Woodborough is 2 miles off the A6097 and is north east of Nottingham.

Adrian will also have his fruit at the Great Autumn Show in Vincent Square on 7th and 8th October, and at the Lowdham Apple Day on 26th October, alongside 100+ varieties of apple from John Hemsall's East Markham Heritage Collection, see www.lowdhamhortsoc.org.uk for details.

Delbard fruit trees are not readily available in the UK but Frank P. Matthews and Keepers Nursery sell some varieties. Delbard themselves have a number of nurseries dotted around northern France. Full information (in English or French) is on their website www.delbard.com where you can sign up for their on-line catalogue and regular email newsletters.

Spring Meeting 19th March 2008

Thanks to Chris Abbott and Chris Hodgson for their reports, which I have combined.

A very cheerful and happy crowd of Fruit Group Members met in Wisley's Hillside Centre in March. The pre-meeting chat, tea etc. was most enjoyable.



Chairman, Gerry Edwards welcomed everyone including new members and speakers: Maike Windhurst, Gerhard Petri and Hilary Dodson. Best Wishes were offered to Peter Collett unable to attend for medical reasons and so unable to make planned presentation (*Now rescheduled for our meeting on 4th November. Ed.*)

Hampton Court Flower Show: 8th – 13th July 2008. An extended Fruit and Vegetable presence is planned for the whole Show with Judging on 8th. Offers of help and further information from Alan Mansfield on 01992 550175

Taste of autumn 17th – 20th October 2008 at Wisley. Chairman mentioned changes to format to include a number of new features such as the Late Fruit and Vegetable Competition, moved from the November Show in Westminster which is not being held this year. Julia Mitchell will welcome past helpers as well as new helpers for this happy and hectic weekend. Offers to Julia to 01372 276511.

Committee Members:



Bob Sherman our Vice- Chairman introduced himself and spoke briefly of his work as a Director of 'Garden Organic'. As Vice Chairman he urged members to request receiving the Fruit Group Newsletter by e-mail.



Tony Benham introduced himself as Fruit Group Treasurer and likewise encouraged us to be 'e-mail friendly' over Fruit Group matters. Subscriptions please, if you have not already paid, and please everyone consider arranging an Annual Standing Order (not Direct Debit). Tony Benham will be happy to hear from you on 020 8531 3053

The Chairman stressed that those without internet facilities would not be forgotten or overlooked.



Ali Valsecchi is now Secretary of the Fruit Group, and our main point of contact with the Fruit Department at RHS Garden Wisley, following Jonathan Keyte, who has moved to 'organic' pastures new.

Spring Meeting 19th March 2008

Restoring an Edwardian Orchard.

Maike Windhorst and Gerhard Petri gave a fascinating account from the time they took over a complete bramble wilderness in 1995 and how since then they have restored many apple trees on the 65 x 45 metre site at Mount Holly Orchard in Essex. Half of the original orchard was planted with Victorian Cox varieties and the rest with various other varieties. Many of the original trees had now been identified and labelled using cut white tiles inscribed with a porcelain paint pen, then baked in an oven.

Varieties-certain: *Bismarck*, *Blenheim Orange*, *Charles Ross*, *Cox's Orange Pippin*, *Duchess of Oldenburg*, *King of Pippins*, *Norfolk Beefing*, *Warner's King*, *Worcester Pearmain*

Less certain: *Fearn's Pippin*, *Dumelow's Seedling*, *Lord Lambourne*, *Red Astrachan*.

They recommended *Norfolk Beefing* as a late-keeper under domestic conditions (garage) and told us that these apples were very tasty when baked slowly.

In their restoration programme they have attempted to keep 'wildlife holes' to preserve the habitat for dormice among other creatures, as well as a programme of dehorning and renewal pruning in stages over three or more years to produce a new crown and to keep the trees well balanced. They have cleared encroaching trees including some oaks. The equipment recommended for orchard management comprised of a tall ladder, petrol shredder and a power scythe. Some difficulty has been experienced with new plantings on M25, bowing over because of their lovely Essex clay.

There was much discussion regarding gradual renewal pruning or an all in one approach!

Maike and Gerhard have learnt much from old books including C.R.Thompson's: '*Pruning of Apples and Pears by Renewal Methods*' published in 1949, as well as Raymond Bush's '*Fruit Tree Growing*'. Maike enjoyed discovering from Thompson's book the renewal technique of 'dehorning' fruit trees - a process of pruning from the top downwards to restore well balanced trees. Their power-point presentation told it's own vivid story and we enjoyed handling some of their very late *Norfolk Beefing* apples – very reliable, needs little care and what a lovely dark purplish red flush colour.

Thank you Maike and Gerhard for your enthusiasm and presentation.

Moving a Fruit Plantation Quickly:



Hilary Dodson, Chairman of Northern Fruit Group at Harlow Carr was surprised along with other members of the NFG by a poster displayed in 2006 of plans for a Winter Walk at RHS Garden Harlow Carr. This meant that the fruit collection would be bulldozed within weeks. It had to be moved. Members begged and scrounged buckets - rolled up their sleeves and began the task of potting up soft fruit, lifting established trees, wrapping them in plastic, and dividing the remainder amongst members.

Huddersfield Council granted allotment space where many specimens were 'heeled-in' and many plants were positioned to screen a polytunnel. A new home has now been found for most of the collection in the walled garden at Harewood House near Leeds.

Hilary spoke of problems with moving fruit, including the wrong pH for the blueberries, the difficulty of yellow Yorkshire clay, and attempts to cure gooseberry sawfly with fabric underlay.

The meeting concluded with a lively Q&A session covering a wide range of fruit related issues.

Exotic fruit - some demotions may be in order?

writes Roy Dynan

One aspect of the FG Newsletter I've particularly enjoyed over the years is how it reflects the range of criteria used by various members when choosing what fruit species to grow.

This issue has gradually become the big one for me! I've been adding fruit trees and bushes to my small garden and allotment for nearly 30 years now, and I started to run out of space quite early on.

Like everyone else, (or at least those without broad acres and the manpower to run them), I soon found that for every new enthusiasm I'd have to let something else look after itself or even fade away.



Strawberry guava – an exotic that Roy Dynan thinks we could soon be growing in our gardens.

Photograph courtesy of the U.S. Geological Survey

Overall I've only made small sacrifices, but they are just enough, and they also let me focus on more exotic fruits that are difficult to source in any UK greengrocer (even in the big London food halls), but are nevertheless delicious and easy to grow.

I think my main examples would be hybrid (x labrusca) grapes, some cactus fruits and the two types of strawberry guava. The hybrid grapes really should be regarded as an entirely separate fruit (as unique as nashi pears) with wildly different flavours from spicy to strawberry-foxy, (though the well-known strawberry grape is far from the best example). There's not much to say on this - the range of hybrid vines (including seedless types) has become much wider in recent years, and they are generally both earlier and more disease-resistant than the traditional varieties. It is now entirely possible to grow excellent black seedless grapes outside in anything better than a moderately sunny spot - try a web search for UK suppliers of *Glenora* - there were several last time I looked.

Some cactus species produce fruits that are much better than the 'dragon fruit' and 'prickly pears' in the shops, but are quite happy alongside the toughest citrus - and produce good yields too. However I am aware that most Fruit Group members are more interested in hardy fruits, so cacti which needs both protection **and** pots are probably a step too far for this piece.

I'm going to suggest a lesser stretch of the envelope: There is an easy way to grow the strawberry guavas (*Psidium littorale* aka. *P. cattleaneum*) in most, maybe all of the UK, using not much more than a cold frame.

There are two main subspecies - both delicious fruits with good reliable yields. They get their name from the red version which has an unique rich taste of guava plus lots of berry flavour - strawberry is just the most recognisable. Ripe fruit is actually deep maroon and about 1.5-2cm across, though it can apparently reach 3-4cm in ideal conditions. The slightly knobbly surface smooths out and softens when fully ripe. The yellow version is usually listed as subsp. *lucida* with an equally delicious but milder flavour - as good as the very best true guavas but without their alleycat smell. It is also slightly larger than the red version. The bushes produce fruit fairly quickly, starting at around 60cm high, and can be pruned anywhere between this and their final height of 2m, so are ideal for a restricted space. It's very easy to get good crops in a frost-free conservatory, but I wanted that space for new experiments.

Of course gardeners in places like Cornwall could grow these delicious fruits in a good spot outdoors (though I've seen no evidence of this - maybe they worry about introducing a weed), but nearly everyone else will need something better than a cold greenhouse. I think most growers will agree that it's the root zone that kills most nominally hardy exotics - even the otherwise promising ones that happily survive frosts in places like California. The strawberry guavas are exotic by anyone's standards, but are a special case because their roots seem unscathed by the worst winters in these islands.

If planted outside and mulched the branches may get frosted in bad years but plants always grow back from soil level in spring. Unfortunately too many bad winters in a row mean the plants can get smaller every year. I tried bubble wrap and fleece but on an open allotment it couldn't provide total frost protection. It became obvious that the twigs and leaves can't stand our grey maritime cold that can hover between 0 and -5°C for days or weeks.

I can't remember where I read about the dramatic effects of putting an oil drum full of water in a cold frame, but it is apparently in widespread use among to growers in New England. It was obviously worth a try - 40-odd gallons of water is the simplest form of heatsink - and provided you only want frost-free it is by far the most effective. Oil drums are pretty rare in North London, so I had to make do with an old galvanised cold water tank plugged with corks. It works a treat. Anything near it remains above zero unless the whole tank freezes solid - which never happens. When a litre of nearly freezing water becomes ice it releases about as much energy as it takes to raise a litre of tap water to boiling point. Hundreds of litres can release a shed-load of energy - a lot more than you need to keep frost out of a greenhouse on the coldest night. A few inches of ice on top makes no difference at all. It means that a tank inside a fairly rudimentary frame covered in plastic gives plenty of protection - it's a heat source all night long, so draught-proofing is at least as important as insulation, though it's a good idea to have both. Bubble plastic is excellent. I'm now completely converted to this method and would be very interested to hear of others' experiences. It has completely changed my perceptions about what can be grown where, and has prompted a radical reshuffle. I'm hoping to find another tank for my greenhouse, and then I won't have any good reason for ever using a heater again - both cost and reliability are in a different league, not to mention the green aspects.

Every September I do a triage for my winter moves - next time some hardier citrus that I normally keep in a 5°C conservatory would probably be as happy and much safer in the greenhouse with a new heatsink, giving me more room for experimentation. Some plants now on the greenhouse benches will be happier in the ground - sharing the frame with the existing heatsink.

My project for this summer is to make use of the vacant shady space between the north side of the frame and the tank. I'm aiming to plant a good strong *Passiflora edulis* there, where the roots will be protected and I can wrap the vines around the tank before the first frost...

I'm also wondering if I can make use of my pond in some way: Perhaps I could build a frame over it every winter and launch a floating garden. The pond is no oil painting anyway at this time of year, and the fish might enjoy it - providing I can refine my capillary watering techniques to ensure no nitrogen gets into the water...

Keep pushing that envelope!

Roy Dynan, who grows fruit in north London

Editor's note: Nurseryman Terry Read who specialises in exotic plants will be at the Fruit Group meeting at Wisley on 4th November to give us a talk on 'Warm Temperate Fruit'

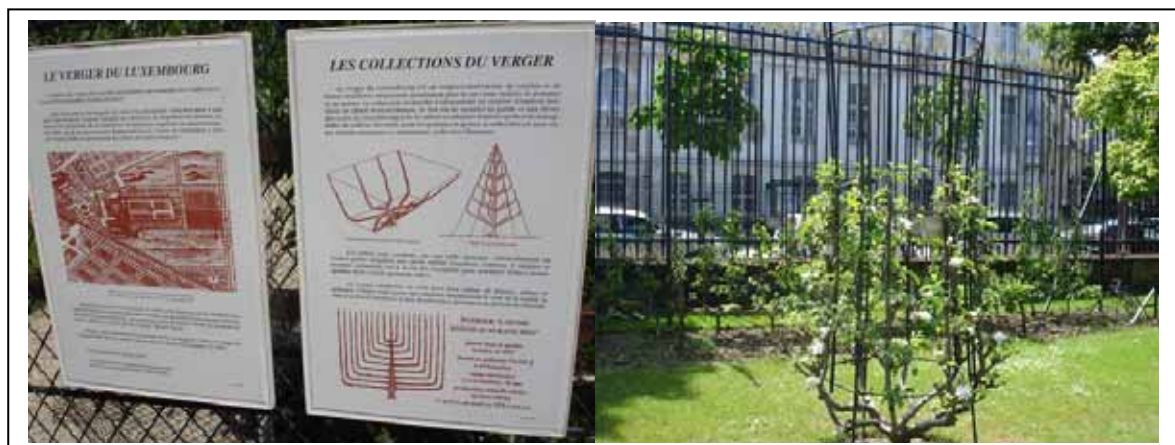
Newton's apple – worth a look

If you find yourself in Lincolnshire you may find it interesting to pop in to the National Trust property Woolsthorpe Manor, just off the A1 at Woolsthorpe by Colsterworth, nr Grantham, Lincolnshire NG33 5PD, the birthplace and family home of Sir Isaac Newton. What you will find is a descendant of the apple tree that (allegedly) gave him the inspiration for his theories of gravity. Go at the right time of the year (October) and you might even see some of the fruit on this *Flower of Kent* tree.

Alan Mansfield



Trained Fruit in Jardin du Luxembourg, Paris



If you find yourself in Paris (two and a bit hours on Eurostar makes it much easier nowadays) don't forget that in the heart of the city, in the Jardin du Luxembourg, is a splendid collection of trained fruit. There are around 300 apples and pears of many varieties, most trained in classical styles – cordons, espalier, crowns, cups, cruciform, etc. Particularly interesting is the way that they are tied using flexible young cuttings rather than twine. In addition to the top fruit, I also spotted kiwi, gooseberries, and blueberries. **Alan Mansfield**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NEW MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Further to our request for volunteers in the last newsletter, I am pleased to announce that we have a new membership secretary, **Geoff Larbalestier**. If you have any queries or change of contact details will you please either e-mail them to fruit_group_membership@hotmail.co.uk or write or telephone Geoff. **His address is Orchard Villa, Lower Ansford, Castle Cary, Somerset BA7 7JY, telephone number 01963 359 697.**

TRANSPORT CO-ORDINATOR

One of the aims of the RHS is that its carbon footprint is minimised. For our part we are doing our best to minimise the carbon footprint of the Fruit Group. One way is by asking our members to receive their newsletters by e-mail. We are looking to our members to work together to save themselves money and lower the car miles of attending meetings be they regional, at Wisley or external visits.

We have appointed a 'transport co-ordinator', **Corinne Bellaby**, who will put members requiring lifts in touch with those who are happy to give lifts. If you fit into one of these groups will you please contact Corinne direct, **telephone 0118 973 4609, e-mail corinne@cbellaby.freeseve.co.uk, postal address: 119a Barkham Ride, Finchampstead, Wokingham, RG40 4EP.**

TREASURER

We all know our treasurer **Tony Benham**, and some of you have asked for his contact details, which he is pleased to provide. His address is: **Mr A Benham, RHS Fruit Group Treasurer, Essex House, 31 Beacontree Avenue, London, E17 4BU** You can also contact Tony by **telephone on 020 8531 3053** or by emailing fruit_group_treasurer@msn.com

Electronic Newsletter

Remember - you can receive the FG Newsletter in full colour via email but in accordance with the Data Protection Act we require your consent

The RHS is committed to minimise its carbon footprint. One way we can help is to encourage electronic communication. Combine this with the rising cost of postage, photocopying, and paper and there is an advantage in distributing our Newsletter by email. The most obvious and direct advantage to you is that you will receive it in **full colour**, which is much superior to the black and white photocopied version. For members who do not have email or Internet access we will continue to produce and mail black and white copies. However, we know, that some 80% of the members do have email but we need your permission first.

If you would like to receive the colour electronic version of the Newsletter

Please email your permission to: fruit_group_membership@hotmail.co.uk

To open the Newsletter you need Adobe Reader, which can be downloaded free from <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>

Dates for 2008

Organising branch shown in (brackets).

Tuesday 24th June, Wisley. 1.00pm. Topical event organised by the Fruit Department at Wisley, likely to focus on soft fruit. (RHS)

Hampton Court Flower Show, 8th- 13th July
Saturday 12th July, Visit Thornhayes Nursery, St. Andrews Wood, Dulford, Cullompton, EX15 2DF. Kevin Croucher demonstrating pruning and training top fruit. This event is being run by Kevin Croucher, all bookings must be made with him direct on 01884 266746

Wednesday 16th July. Visit Compton Scorpion Estate, Charingworth, Chipping Camden, Gloucestershire. Starting at 11.30am and finishing about 4.00pm. (M)

Tuesday 12th August. Morning visit to **Cam Valley Orchards,** Meldreth, nr Royston, Herts., SG8 2ND, for a tour of plum and gage orchards (36+ cultivars); afternoon visit to **Wimpole Gardens,** Wimpole Hall Farm, Arrington, nr Royston, Herts., SG8 0BW. National Trust property with walled kitchen garden, many rhubarb varieties, national collection of walnuts (60+ cultivars). (RHS)

Sunday 17th August. Adrian Baggaley Open Day. A chance to visit Adrian's fruit field. Meet at the Four Bells car park in Woodborough village, Nottinghamshire, NG14 6EA. Meet at 12.30 for a 1.00pm start.. (M)

Wednesday 3rd September. Visit Poultry Farm, Plain Road, Marden, Kent, TN12 9LS, to see Peter Hall's organically grown hops, and the new organic 'Concept Orchard', supported by Orchard World, grapes and on-farm conservation projects. (RHS)

Saturday 20th September. Visit Doug Palmer's Prize Winning Fruit Collection, Yealmpton, South Devon. Apple, pears, plums, cherries, apricots, peaches, outside and in polytunnels. (SW)

Wednesday 24th September. Visit Hanbury Hall, National Trust, School Road, Hanbury, Droitwich Spa, Worcs. Meet outside the hall at 2.00pm. Finish about 4.00pm. (M)

Great Autumn Show 7th & 8th October

A Taste of Autumn 17th-20th October

Tuesday 4th November, Wisley 1.00pm. Nurseryman Terry Read on 'Warm Temperate Fruit', and Peter Collett on 'Moving a Mature Orchard'; plus Q&A session. (RHS)

Branch contacts will have details of all regional events, costs etc.

RHS Fruit Group (RHS)

For more information contact:
Stephen Colfer, 01483 212342

South West Branch (SW)

For more information contact:
Brian Fox, Chair, 01264 357229

Midlands Branch (M)

For more information contact:
John Beswick, Secretary, 01604 403115

Northern Fruit Group (N)

For more information contact:
Hilary Dodson, Chair, 01943 464325

The Regional Branches extend a warm welcome to all members of the Fruit Group. No matter what your geographical location, members may attend any event organised by Regional Branches.

YOUR COMMITTEE

Chairman: Gerald Edwards

Vice- Chairman: Bob Sherman

Secretary: Alessandra Valsecchi

Treasurer: Tony Benham

Committee members: Peter Collett, Hilary Dodson (Northern Fruit Group), Brian Fox (South West), Alan Mansfield (Editor), Julia Mitchell, John Poole (Midlands), John Sale, Howard Stringer, Eric Spanier

The RHS Fruit Group Newsletter relies heavily on contributions from members. Many thanks to all of you who have submitted articles, apologies if they have not appeared in this issue. We always need short articles of 100-150 words to fit around longer articles. If you have anything that may be considered for publication, please hand it to me at a Fruit Group meeting or send it to: Alan Mansfield, PO Box 74, Hertford, Hertfordshire, SG13 7UG. Telephone: 01992 550175 Ideally, copy should be in electronic format emailed to: alanmansfield@ntlworld.com
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