

The Speaker for our October meeting was Nina Lewis who gave an excellent presentation on 'Gardening in the Future'.

Gardeners are finding climate change a major challenge, but Nina outlined a number of ways to respond to this, bearing in mind the need to encourage biodiversity. With wetter warmer winters our autumns are now longer and plants are continuing to flower later in the year, thus encouraging insect life. If plants aren't cut back, they provide cosy protective nooks for over wintering insects.

Such plants as bananas and canna lilies, previously considered 'tender', can, with the aid of judicious cutting back and protection with horticultural fleece, be safely brought through the winter months. However, tender plants don't tolerate waterlogged roots, therefore the incorporation of grit for drainage is a necessity, especially on clay soils.

Nina enlarged on this drainage issue with reference to the gardens of Beth Chatto and East Ruston Old Vicarage. Succulents are tried and tested survivors of long droughts such as we experience in Essex, but again, good drainage is an issue.

Nina outlined a number of methods of recycling in the garden together with examples of using unusual areas for plant growth, such as 'green walls' and roofs with a slight gradient.

This presentation was well thought out and presented leaving the audience with numerous positive ideas on tackling climate change.

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 6th November, 7.30pm in Little Waltham Memorial Hall, when the subject will be 'Unusual Edibles' by Matt Oliver (ex RHS Hyde Hall)