

LITTLE WALTHAM GARDENING CLUB. - Report of September meeting.

Clive de Bruyn, a well respected and experienced bee keeper, came to give us a talk on 'How to Encourage Pollinators to Your Garden'. His enthusiasm for the insect world was demonstrated by his wide knowledge of the subject. Unbelievably the total weight of insects in the world exceeds the weight of all us human beings.

Clive did not restrict his talk to honey bees. There are a great number pollinators in this country including bumble bees, solitary bees and wasps, butterflies and moths. Different pollination methods devised by plants were discussed. Of course, wide flat flower heads of Sedum and Achillea provide an easily accessible store of nectar and pollen to visiting insects, as do single flowers of Dahlia and Cosmos. More complicated mechanisms of Honeysuckle and Sweet Peas are successfully visited by moths and heavier bees. We learned too, that many flowers, such as blue Forget me nots change colour after they have been pollinated from blue to pink.

We were encouraged to be a bit more untidy in our gardens by allowing (some) weeds to flower. The humble dandelion provides a great larder and Clive brought along some seed of Phacelia for all to take away. This plant is an annual, often used as a green manure, sown in the autumn to germinate and grow, preventing the leaching of nutrients from the soil during the winter rains. Insects enjoy the pollen and nectar that the pretty blue flowers of the plant provides. An excellent evening enjoyed by all.

On 1st October, Tony Dunn of Braintree Organic Gardening Club will be giving a talk on 'Sustainable Living' in Little Waltham Memorial Hall, 7.30pm. Visitors very welcome.

For more information, please phone M Williams 01245 360042 or see website

www.littlewalthamgardeningclub.co.uk