



Flitwick Gardeners' Association

Issue 125

Spring 2025

CONTENTS

Page 2	About us; How to find us
Page 3	Seed Box opening hours
Page 4	Chit chat from the Chair Don't forget to renew your membership
Page 5	Changes at the Seedbox! Please from the Rota Organiser
Page 6	Special Offer – 25% off Moles seeds 2025 Spring Show cookery classes 2025 Annual Show photography classes FGA outing in 2025 - Sunday 29th June
Page 7	FGA Trading report
Page 8	FGA AGM - Thursday 24th April at 7pm Show Committee Report
Page 9	AGM Trading Report Chairman's AGM Report
Page 10	AGM Agenda
Page 11	FGA Rules
Page 13	Spring Show Schedule
Page 16	Show Entry Form

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Saturday 29th March - Spring Show
Thursday 24th April - Annual General Meeting (19:00)
Saturday 23rd August - Annual Show
Saturday 11th October - Autumn Show
Thursday 20th November - FGA Quiz

Flitwick Gardeners' Association

We are an association run by members, for members. Our aim is to promote gardening in Flitwick and the surrounding villages.

We have a members' shop, The Seed Box, where we try to stock useful items including seeds, tools and chemicals at very competitive prices. We also have a library and a small range of loan equipment.

We run shows, organise an annual quiz and run the occasional trip to visit a garden. We're always pleased to welcome new members and always looking for help in running the Association and activities. We'd love to hear from you – just a few hours here and there would make all the difference.

How to find us

The Seed Box is situated behind the site of the old Flitwick Leisure Centre on Steppingley Road, MK45 1TH.

Construction of the new development on the Old Leisure Centre site is progressing, with temporary access to the Seed Box still via the back of the New Leisure Centre car park. If you're unsure, see the colour map at <https://www.flitwickgardeners.co.uk/fgaopen.htm>

What3words:

///octopus.downhill.sprayer –Seedbox location

///wake.perfumes.every - Approximate position, at the back of the leisure centre car park, of the start of the access track to the Seedbox

New phone number: **07592 996139**

Seed box Opening Hours

Friday	Closed until further notice
Saturday	2.00 pm to 4.00 pm Feb to Nov (closed on Show and FGA outing days)

New telephone number

Outside of these hours you can always leave a message on **07592 996139**.

Email addresses

General enquiries etc.	enquiries@flitwickgardeners.co.uk
Magazine	newsletter@flitwickgardeners.co.uk
Show info and entries	fgashow@flitwickgardeners.co.uk

Website / Facebook address

Facebook Group	https://www.facebook.com/groups/flitwickgardeners
Website	www.flitwickgardeners.co.uk

Executive Committee

Ian Holman	Chairman, Magazine Editor and Show Committee
Colin Stennett	Secretary and Show Secretary
Daniel Doyle	Trading Coordinator
Leonie Coverley	Treasurer
J-P Carter	Deputy Chairman and Show Committee
Siân Jones	Deputy Secretary
Laurie Arnold	Seeds and Deputy Trading Coordinator
Kath Stennett	Show Committee
Francis Prior	Membership Secretary, Deputy Treasurer
Ann Lutley	Publicity Officer
Sue Titchener	Seed Box Rota Coordinator

Show Committee (not mentioned above)

Sue Foster

Honorary Life Members

Linda Pitts, Syd Pye, Maryan Pateman, J-P Carter, Anne Godden, Colin & Kath Stennett, Laurie Arnold

Chit Chat from the Chair

It's approaching a year since I was elected Chairman of the FGA. I hope that you get as much enjoyment out of your FGA membership as I do – whether that be from growing our amazing value seed potatoes, onion and shallot sets and seeds; entering or visiting our three wonderful shows and the quiz; coming along on our outings; or borrowing one of our gardening books from the Seedbox. So I'd like to start the year by thanking, on your behalf, everyone who makes this happen by volunteering their valuable time throughout the year- without the Committee members and Seedbox helpers, there would be no FGA. But, of course, more help is always welcome to spread the load – so if you think you can offer any help, in any way, however small, do speak to us.

Browsing through a popular gardening magazine on a dark, wet day this month, I noticed that the reader offer was for three 1kg bags of seed potatoes for “just” £20.85, whilst a kilo of Cara was £8.55. Compare those prices to our **3kg bags** for £5.00! Please do promote the FGA and its benefits to your friends and family and invite them to join you when you come down to the Seedbox.

As was mentioned last year, the FGA has gone peat-free, as there is no such thing as sustainable peat extraction and (in my opinion) no justifiable gardening reason for destroying valuable biodiverse and carbon-storing peat bogs. We all know that gardening is good for our physical, mental and social health, but research published by the Royal Horticultural Society last year showed that gardening in a more environmentally sustainable approach was associated with greater perceived health benefits! So please do support our efforts by buying our peat-free compost – it's even better for you!

Happy gardening!

Ian Holman
Chairman.

Don't forget to renew your membership.

If you have not already renewed your membership for 2025, please come along to the Seed Box to do so as soon as possible. You have until the AGM on 24th April to renew, after this date your membership will expire, and you will need to pay an additional £3 re-joining fee.

Francis Prior Membership Secretary

Changes at the Seedbox!

A couple of important changes have been made at the Seedbox. Firstly, we have a new phone number (**07592 996139**) as we have removed our landline. We have also replaced the old Barclaycard card machine with a Sum-Up card / contactless machine. These two changes should save the FGA about £700-800 per year!

The Sum-Up card reader will automatically print a receipt for you to show that you have successfully paid – if you don't get the receipt, your card hasn't worked!

Leonie Coverley Treasurer

Plea from the Rota Organiser

Firstly, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to all those people who regularly give up their Saturday afternoons, in order to open up and man the tills at the Seed Box to enable us to trade & all those who do all the other ancillary work that is required to keep the Seed Box running. Without these dedicated people, the Seed Box would not be able to be a trading organization for the benefit of its' members and the surrounding community.

I have just completed the rota for the period of February to April 2025, this being a particularly challenging job with so very few volunteers to choose from. Out of a membership of nearly 300, it is surprising to me that so few 'step up to the plate' and volunteer to do a shift at the Seed box. If more people don't volunteer to help, either by manning the tills or being a Key holder then the opening of the seed box on Saturday afternoons will be put in jeopardy- it may be that you turn up at the Seed Box and find that it's closed due to illness or holidays.

I am aware of the people who give their time to help at the shows, the dedicated people who do other jobs for the association, and a very hard working committee who devote time behind the scenes, to maintaining the smooth running of the association; however, this still leaves over 200 members who benefit from membership but do nothing to help maintain this valuable local organization. We currently have 8 key holders and 20 members who man the tills & help out with the compost etc. Neither job is onerous and if everyone gave just two hours of their time on a Saturday afternoon during the trading year, then the burden could be more equally shared out. Please help us keep this excellent resource open for the future and for the benefit all the residents of Flitwick and the surrounding areas.

If you feel that you could give up just one Saturday afternoon over the trading season of February to November, please talk to the people at the Seed Box on your next visit to find out what's involved. We look forward to seeing you.

Sue Titchener
Rota Organiser

Special offer - 25% off Moles seeds

You may (or may not) be aware that we sell Moles seeds by weight – they're stored in the filing cupboard to the left of the entrance to the Compost Room. This year, Broad Beans, Runner beans, French beans, peas and green manure are 25% off! Ask at the till for them to be weighed out for you

2025 Spring Show cookery classes

For this year's Spring Show, the 2 cookery classes are:

- A Pasty filled with a savoury filling.
- A Marble Cake

Why not give both classes a try?

Free onion sets

We will have at the Spring Show, and afterwards at the Seed Box, free Onion sets (bulbs) for children to grow at home for exhibiting at the Annual Show. Make sure your children and grandchildren get theirs!

Colin Stennett (Show Secretary)

2025 Annual Show Photography classes

The classes for the 2024 Annual Show on Saturday 19th August are:

103 Clouds or Mist	104 Sunshine
105 Rain	106 Frost or Snow

The children's photography class is a photograph of 'A Sunny Day.'

As always, the class title is a broad theme in which your photographic imagination can run wild!

FGA outing in 2025 – Sunday 29th June

In the past two year's, we've arranged very enjoyable outings to Shuttleworth and the Swiss Garden and RHS Hyde Hall (the latter with free entry!). Unfortunately, however, not many members have joined the committee on these trips. We're planning another outing this year on Sunday 29th June and will help arrange car shares where needed. We haven't yet decided on the location – options include RHS gardens (e.g. Hyde Hall or Wisley, where we get free entry), Springfield Gardens in Wisbech (also free) or somewhere else! If you're potentially interested in coming along this year, please either email enquiries@flitwickgardeners.co.uk or let us know at the Seedbox (and suggestions for the destination).

Colin Stennett (Secretary)

FGA Trading Report

This coming period we will be selling through all our remaining potatoes, onions and shallots. Although due to a increase in pre-orders there is only available what we have on the shelf to the left when you come in. I recommend you come in early to avoid disappointment.

Please don't forget to grab your fertilisers for your soil. I am happy to announce we have Chicken Pellets both available as 20kg bags and 3kg bags. We have plenty of potato fertiliser and even a new Onion fertiliser which will be sold in 1kg bags while we trial it, of which I am excited to try. Not only does it help them grow but it helps to defend them from the rust that can form.

This year we have gone with Westland Brand for our composting needs (completely peat free) but their range along with Melcourt Sylvagrow has meant that we now have Grow bags again! We have tomato planters and the organic planters. With these new ranges comes new prices which we have kept at the lowest price around.

You may notice a theme about how our prices are the best around and it not only true but is something we would like you to boast about to your friends, family and neighbours as word of mouth is how this association survives and I would like you to do all you can to support us through simple word of mouth.

Lastly, please if you are physically capable, please help support our volunteers with the compost. With the parking challenges please be mindful of what you plan to purchase as we ask you only drive into the compound if you are collecting compost or unable to travel the short distance from the tarmac carpark or allotment.

Hoping everyone success in your gardens and allotments. Happy planting!

Daniel Doyle
FGA Trading Secretary

FGA AGM - Thursday 24th April at 7pm

We've been able to get a room at the Rufus Centre in which to hold our AGM, on Thursday 24th April at 7pm. It is not a meeting where we try to get everyone who attends to join the committee (unless you want to!) but to keep all our members informed and you get a chance to ask the committee any questions you have. Therefore, please come along so that the committee are not the only ones attending!!

Colin Stennett
Secretary

Show Committee Report

2024 proved once again that we've got a lot of members in the FGA who know how to grow some great vegetables, flowers, fruit, home produce, handicraft items and photographs to enter our shows.

The Autumn show also showed that you can also grow some larger than average vegetables, which is not always appreciated by the people who must eat them – you can only enjoy a large cabbage for a few meals! All three shows last year were well supported by exhibits from members and by the number of people looking around the hall when we opened the shows to the public, not only to enjoy the exhibits but also some delicious homemade cakes. It was good to see so many of our regular exhibitors, as well as quite a lot of new people, putting entries into the shows.

Our quiz in November was enjoyed by the 17 teams that took part where we also raised £50 each for Keech and the Flitwick Village Hall roof fund.

I'd like to thank those people who made all the events such a success, whether helping with the setting up, organising, making / serving refreshments, washing up and, or, entering. We can always cater for more entries in the shows and more help with setting up!

Colin Stennett (Show Secretary)

Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer's report will be provided at the AGM

Leonie Coverley (Treasurer)

AGM TRADING REPORT

I would like to start off with thanking everyone for another great year of trading and the support from all members, none of this would be possible without the team of volunteers that continue to keep this Association running.

Last year we made the unanimous decision to go Peat-Free trading in 2024. We noticed that a lot of members very quickly bought out their favourites before moving on to the peat-free range. And we appreciate everyone clearing the garden peat we had in stock. We also put on a special offer of 3 for £18 for the clover peat free multipurpose, which although brought in late in the year helped with increasing its popularity.

Something you may not be aware of is our general items supplier went out of business creating a very big gap in trading. This made it very tough to get in some of the items that members expected at certain times of the year. I appreciate everyone's patience while I secured alternative traders to fill this gap. And I am happy to announce that items will be more readily available in the future.

Thank you to everyone who took note of pre-ordering potatoes. Again, we set it up based of last years orders and all orders booked before and during December. We ran instantly out of Caledonian Rose. With inflation we had to make a small change to the price but I know that we are still the best priced Onions and Potatoes around. Please continue your support and join us in a successful 2025!

Daniel Doyle (FGA Trading Secretary)

Chairman's Report for FGA AGM

Reflecting back on 2024, it was another successful year for the FGA, with highlights including successful seed potato sales (with much reduced wastage). three wonderful Shows demonstrating the skills of our members, an enjoyable outing to RHS Hyde Hall, a new lease in place with the Council for the Seedbox and the refurbishment of the lighting in the Seedbox. But also a year not without its challenges, from suppliers going bust, manning the Seedbox each Saturday, to the mud on our access road. So thank you again to everyone who keeps the FGA 'on the road'.

Despite the popularity of gardening in all of its forms increasing across all age ranges, the FGA's membership has been largely static in recent years. Moving forward, I would like to see the FGA grow in numbers – so please do extol the benefits of membership to friends, family and acquaintances

Ian Holman (Chairman)

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**Thursday 24th April 2025
Rufus Centre, Steppingley Road, Flitwick
7.00pm**

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 18th April 2024.
3. Chairman's Address.
4. Presentation of Annual Reports.
5. Presentation of the Financial Report.
6. Election of officers:-
 - a) Chairman
 - b) Treasurer
 - c) Secretary
 - d) Trading Officer
 - e) Executive Committee.
 - f) Sub-Committee Additional Members.
 - g) Honorary Auditor.
7. To consider the motion proposed by the Secretary and seconded by the Treasurer that the Annual Subscription, Joining Fee and Re-Joining Fee remain unchanged at £3.00 each and that the Surcharge to the Annual Subscription Fee where applied remains unchanged at £3
8. Report on the Future of the Seed box.
9. Any other business.

Nominations for the four Officer appointments are to be lodged at the Seed Box or with the Secretary, Colin Stennett, 10 Salisbury Road, Flitwick, Beds, MK45 1UD at least 21 days prior to the meeting.

Flitwick Gardeners' Association

RULES

As at 20th April, 2023

1.Name: The name of the Association shall be the Flitwick Gardeners' Association.

2.Objects: To promote the interests of gardeners and allotment holders and to take joint action for the benefit of members; To arrange for instruction, trips, and shows and to distribute literature pertaining to these objectives.

3.Members: The Association shall consist of persons who are resident within the Town of Flitwick and nearby towns and villages.

4.Fees and Subscriptions: There will be a joining fee for all new members and for lapsed members applying to rejoin after membership has lapsed in accordance with Rule 5. Every member shall pay an annual subscription, payable in advance of the due date of January 1st. Members receiving the magazine by Royal Mail shall pay an annual surcharge. The amount of the joining fee and of the annual subscription and the surcharge shall be set annually by the Annual General Meeting.

5.Arrears: Any member who is in arrears with his subscription at the time of the AGM shall be deemed to have ceased to be a member unless explanation is given to the Committee in writing of extenuating circumstances.

6.Officers: The Officers shall be Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary and Trading Secretary. All Officers shall be ex-officio members of the Executive Committee.

7.Committee: The affairs of the Association shall be conducted by an Executive Committee of not less than eight members. A quorum shall be of not less than five members. Vacancies arising may be filled by co-option on the authority of the Executive Committee. All members shall retire annually, and a fresh Committee be elected at each Annual General Meeting. Retiring members shall be eligible for re-election.

8.General Meetings: An Annual General Meeting shall be held during March or April each year. 14 days' notice shall be given, and a quorum shall be ten members. At the meeting shall be presented the Reports from the Officers and a set of Examined Accounts and the Officers and Executive Committee Members elected for the coming year. The Financial Year shall be from the First of January until the Thirty-First of December. The Secretary shall have authority to convene an Extraordinary General Meeting at any time after giving the due notice, but he shall always do so if so, requested by no less than ten general members in writing.

9. Discussions at Meetings: No party political or sectarian discussions shall be raised, or resolutions proposed, at any Committee, sub-committee or General Meeting of the Association.

10. Funds: The Committee shall open an account with a Bank selected by the Executive Committee in the name of the Flitwick Gardeners Association and all monies received from any source on behalf of the Association shall be passed through the Treasurer or their nominee to be paid into the account. Payments of value over £100 should be authorised by two members of the Executive Committee, one of whom shall always be the Treasurer or their nominee; payments below this value can be authorised by one Officer only.

11. Association Accounts: The end of year accounts shall be examined by an examiner who is not a member of the Executive Committee and submit their report to the Annual General Meeting.

12. Affiliation: The Association shall affiliate itself to any suitable Group providing it is non-political or non-sectarian and shall pay such annual affiliation fees as may from time to time be prescribed. Nominees may be appointed to represent the Association at the various organisations as determined from time to time.

13. Offences: The Executive Committee may terminate the membership of a member whose conduct is proved to their satisfaction to be detrimental to the Association or to the interests of their fellow members. Any charge against a member must be communicated in writing. An appeal from a decision of the Executive Committee may be made to a Special General Meeting on the requisition in writing of three members to the Secretary who will convene an Extraordinary General Meeting as soon as possible to hear the appeal.

14. Conversion, Dissolution, Etc: The Association may be converted into a registered society, or may be dissolved, or these rules may be amended by a two-thirds majority of those present at a General Meeting convened with the due fourteen days' notice. The notice convening the General Meeting shall list the reason(s) for calling it.

15. Matters arising not covered by these Rules: Any matter not covered by the rules may be dealt with by the Executive Committee at its sole discretion.

SPRING SHOW

Saturday 29th March at the Village Hall.

Staging of exhibits 12:30- 2pm
Judging 2 - 3pm
Public admitted 3pm – **No admission charge**

RULES

1. All classes are open to members of the Association, their partners and to their children or grandchildren who are 16 years or younger.
2. Entries can be made at the show when brought in for staging or **Email entries in advance to: FGASHOW@Flitwickgardeners.co.uk**
3. There will be no entry fee for exhibits.
4. **Each Exhibitor may enter up to 2 entries in any one class**
5. Classes 1 - 14, 17, 18, 21, 23, 25, 27 and 28 to be shown as cut flowers in vases to be supplied by the FGA.
6. Entries for Classes 15, 16, 19, 20, 22, 24 and 26 to be shown as grown.
7. All exhibits in classes 1 to 25 (inclusive), 27 and 28 must be grown by the exhibitor in their garden or allotment.
8. Pot Plants must be exhibited in terracotta or plain plastic type pots and for class 26 must have been in exhibitor's possession for at least 6 months.
9. **NO Exhibit should be removed from display until after the raffle has been completed** (approximately 16:00).

TROPHIES

- Flitwick Gardeners Association Spring Show – Best Vase in Show
- Flitwick Gardeners Association Spring Show – Best Bloom in Show

NARCISSI (DAFFODILS)

See page 15 for further information on the classification of daffodils.

CLASS No. DIVISION 1 TRUMPET DAFFODIL CULTIVARS

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | One Bloom Yellow Petals |
| 2 | One Bloom White / Cream Petals |
| 3 | One Vase, Three Blooms of one Cultivar |

DIVISION 2 LARGE-CUPPED DAFFODIL CULTIVARS

- | | |
|---|--|
| 4 | One Bloom Yellow Petals |
| 5 | One Bloom White / Cream Petals |
| 6 | One Vase, Three Blooms of one Cultivar |

DIVISION 3 SMALL-CUPPED DAFFODIL CULTIVARS

- 7 One Bloom, any colour
8 One Vase, Three Blooms of one Cultivar

DIVISION 4 DOUBLE DAFFODIL CULTIVARS

- 9 One Bloom, any colour
10 One Vase, Three Blooms of one Cultivar

MULTI-HEADED DAFFODIL CULTIVAR

- 11 One Stem
12 One Vase of Three Stems of one Cultivar

Any Other Daffodil Cultivar not mentioned above, including miniatures

- 13 One Stem
14 One Vase of Three Stems of one Cultivar

Pot of Daffodil – from any of the Divisions

- 15 One Pot of Narcissi, any number of bulbs, one Cultivar (Pot not to exceed 300 mm (12 Inches) diameter)

CHILDRENS' BULB COMPETITION

- 16 One Pot of Narcissi (Daffodils)

TULIPS

- 17 One Bloom
18 One Vase, three Blooms of one Cultivar
19 One Pot of Tulips, any number of bulbs, one Cultivar (Pot not to exceed 300 mm (12 inches) diameter)





MISCELLANEOUS

- 20 One Pot of growing Polyanthus or Primula
21 One Stem of Hyacinth
22 One Pot of one or more Hyacinths
23 One Vase of Flowering Shrub of one or more varieties
24 One Pot of growing bulbs, excluding anything mentioned above.
25 One Vase of Mixed Flowers – at least 3 different types of flowers
26 Any Other Pot Plant (Flowering or Foliage)
27 One Vase of 4 stems of Daffodil from 4 different Divisions
28 One Vase of Hellebores [*new class*]
29 One Decorated Hardboiled Egg (Children only)

COOKERY

- 30 A Pasty with a savoury filling.
31 A Marble Cake

Horticultural classification of Daffodils

Division 1: Trumpet	
	One flower to each stem. The cup or trumpet is as long or longer than the petals.
Division 2: Large Cupped	
	One flower to each stem. The cup or trumpet is more than one third but less than equal to the length of the petals.
Division 3: Small Cupped	
	One flower to each stem. The cup or trumpet is NOT more than one third the length of the petals.
Division 4: Double	
	One or more flowers per stem, with doubling of the petal segments or cup / trumpet or both.

ENTRY FORM

Flitwick Gardener's Association Spring Show Entry Form. Ring the classes you intend to enter (and put a '2' next to a class if you intend to put 2 entries in that class)

Members Name Membership No.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Spouse or partner's Name

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Child's Name Age..... 16 28

Child's Name Age..... 16 28

Child's Name Age..... 16 28