

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

PG. 1

Chairman's Winter Message

PG. 2

Joyce's musings: What's Your Poison?

PG. 3

Plant of the month: Mistletoe



Friendship
Flowers and Fun



CHAIRMAN'S WINTER MESSAGE

Well Autumn and Winter are now truly upon us and I hope you are all keeping well and warm in these trying times. We are busy planning our events for next year with workshops and trips and there are other adventures arranged for you all.

I hope you can all make our December meeting when we are making a hanging floral decoration and we will have a great afternoon with plenty of festive cheer.

It has been a privilege to have been the Chairman this past year and I can only thank you all for your support in this new role and also for the fantastic team which helps to run this Club. I look forward to all things floral for the year ahead.

Diane

Joyce's Musings

WHAT'S YOUR POISON?



Whilst I was foraging for natural Christmas decorations it occurred to me that so many of the traditional plant materials associated with the season are toxic to humans. Whilst it hurts to get stabbed by the prickles on the leaves of the holly bush, toxins are present in the whole plant but they are most concentrated in the berries.

Kissing under the mistletoe might be fun, however the leaves and berries are poisonous and contain several chemicals which cause severe gastro-intestinal problems. Yew and its connection to witches in folklore is not something to mess with. Every part of the plant from bark to berries and seeds, if ingested, can cause an irregular heartbeat, breathing difficulties and can induce coma amongst its many severe reactions.

Ivy contains a substance called falcarninol that can cause dermatitis as well as blisters when people handle it.

Firs, spruce, pine and cedars (conifers) are most often used as Christmas trees and as greenery for decorations. These are only mildly toxic but cedars produce an oil which can irritate a sensitive skin.

Thankfully most of us are disinclined to chew on the odd branch or berry and we just admire the beauty of each plant but be warned - don't eat the holly on top of the Christmas pudding!!



Romantic, parasitic and poisonous, mistletoe (*viscum album*) loves broadleaf trees and provides an important habitat for woodland wildlife. Its leathery green leaves offer welcome colour among bare winter branches when much else is dormant. Mistletoe is an evergreen plant that is smothered in white berries. It is a parasitic plant that lives off the nutrients and water from a host tree. Although it is parasitic, it will not kill the host tree but can weaken it. The berries are often spread by birds from one tree to another, and this is how the large rounded clumps of mistletoe form in tree branches. The most common host tree in the UK is apple, but poplar and lime are also frequent hosts.

In Greek mythology, heroes were granted passage to the underworld with mistletoe. For Druidic societies, the plant was believed to give protection against evil and act as a cure for disease, and right through to the Middle Ages it had an association with fertility and vitality. Pagan societies thought it represented the divine male essence. Another piece of the mistletoe puzzle comes from Norse mythology. In the Norse culture, the mistletoe plant was a sign of love and peace. The goddess, Frigga lost her son, the god Baldr, to an arrow made of mistletoe. Frigga's tears became the mistletoe's white berries. In the version of the story with a happy ending, Baldr is restored to life, and Frigga is so grateful that she reverses the reputation of the offending plant—making it a symbol of love and promising to bestow a kiss upon anyone who passes under it, so next time you find yourself puckering up under the mistletoe, remember that it all started with bird droppings, a parasite, barbarians, and a Norse goddess.



Congratulations to our very own Sheila Drybrough who took office as North East Area of NAFAS Chairman at the Annual General Meeting on 19 November 2022 held at Queen Elizabeth Grammar School in Wakefield. Sheila will hold the post for two years and we wish her every success.



Huddersfield Flower Club members present Sheila with a bouquet of flowers.



CHRISTMAS WREATH WORKSHOP

A fun and productive afternoon was hosted by your Admin Team at the Scout Hall, Fixby on 26 November 2022. Twenty students attended and, using a variety of evergreen plant material, they created a wonderful selection of bespoke wreaths to take home and to hang on their front doors just in time for Christmas. Delicious cakes made by Jackie and her daughters were enjoyed with a cup of tea with Anne on kitchen duty. Thanks go to all the foragers who braved rain and the elements to gather all the materials used.







TREASURER'S REPORT

As we begin a new Flower Club Year, it is so lovely to have so many returning members, and we thank you for your continued membership. So far we have 45 members, including one new member for this year, and interest shown for another couple of members to possibly join us.

As part of your membership you will have received a 'Bring a Friend for Free' voucher, so please do consider bringing along friends and family who enjoy all things flowers, and share with them our fantastic programme of events.

As you know, with rising costs all around us, we too had to increase our fees this year. The income these fees generate, sadly will not cover all our expenditure, but these along with all our extra fund raising activities e.g. Wreath Making, Harrogate show, Raffle, Craft stall etc do ensure we continue to remain financially stable. We are planning more exciting events and activities in the coming year for you to enjoy and look forward to your continuing support.

Teresa



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- 10 & 11 December 2022** Christmas Tree Festival 2022 Kirkheaton Parish Church
A weekend full of live music, lots of trees, activities for children and refreshments.
Free entry: Saturday 10th Dec 11am – 4pm, Sunday 11th Dec opening 1pm and closing with carols at 4pm.
- 14 December 2022** Club Christmas Miscellany Tea
- 18 January 2023** Club Meeting: Demonstrator – Karen Longbottom