

VEGETABLES FOR SHOWING, INCLUDING GIANT VEGETABLES

The HIHS Committee "Choir" sang Happy Birthday for various members celebrating at the time of the talk, then Chairman Bill Biggs gave out some notices before introducing the speaker.



Dahlia exhibitor and Judge Barry Moore from Waterlooville has taken many photographs of vegetables displays at shows as he has attended and presented them for the enjoyment of members at the final talk of the 2013 – 2014 Spring series at the URC Hall on 23rd April.

He began by paying a compliment to HIHS on our shows at which he has been exhibiting since 1969.

Barry's opening slides were of show collections, comprising three to six different vegetables.

They are usually on black trays sometimes with back supports if leeks or celery are included as they need the height for dramatic effect. Black circles or rectangles seem to show off beans and peas to the best effect.

Some shows have such entries for leeks that they have to be arranged across the width of two tables! The leek leaves or flags have to be supported during growth so that they look upright and immaculate on the show bench. Most show vegetables of this type are grown in poly tunnels in containers.



We were treated to shots of onions and shallots, some of the latter enormous. When weight is the only factor, the onions are not dressed like show onions, but look quite scruffy. Giant cabbages are achieved that would feed a family for a fortnight and when it comes to giant marrows and cucumbers, looks are certainly not a consideration, for the knobbly and gnarled specimens that we saw would win no beauty contest.

At the Shepton Mallet Show, such huge pumpkins are entered that a fork lift truck has to manoeuvre them from the scales to the low show bench.

The same giant vegetable can appear at a succession of horticultural shows from the beginning of September, gradually losing weight as moisture evaporates through the month. Many of them are raised by being fed with beer and other secret potions.



Barry showed us some longest parsnips and carrots. Some carrots are so long that several tables are required for their length and even then, they have to turn the corner and run the other way. These are grown in drainpipes at an angle, transported to the show in the pipes which are then cut open allowing the precious tap root to be eased out by several persons and lifted to the show bench.

Barry grows about 250 dahlias per annum to ensure the maximum choice for show entries. His entire allotment plot is surrounded by a structure bearing 200 runner bean plants for protection from the wind.

Members enjoyed questioning Barry throughout his talk. We had some tips about composts, watering, growing leeks and onions and selecting vegetables for showing. However, would we be like the contestant who dug three rows of carrots to find five matching ones?

Bill Biggs thanked Barry and conducted the 100+ Club draw and the raffle after which all enjoyed refreshments.

Jan Mitchell HIHS Publicity Officer