**Spring into Spring**

At the February meeting Jean Griffin shared advice and tips for preparing our gardens for Spring in an informative and entertaining talk.

Jean trained at Studley College and the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, and has had a series of roles in horticulture. She currently gives gardening advice on Sunday Gardening on the Pat Marsh Show on BBC Radio Sussex. (Sunday.gardening@bbc.co.uk).

One of her key pieces of advice was to try something different each year - for example, many people grow the same type of tomato every year, but some of the newer varieties are less prone to blight. She also recommended other new varieties she has found success with, such as round courgettes, and golden and rainbow beetroot (golden beetroot being sweeter than red, and having the advantage that they don’t stain!). To encourage pollinators, try giant marigolds (Torchlight) and Ammi.

Jean demonstrated the best techniques for sowing seeds, although recommended only sowing chillies in March, everything else should wait until later. When watering seedlings, always use a rose on the watering can, and sweep across the seed tray to provide an even supply of water.

She recommends using sheep fleece pellets to deter slugs, and avoid the blue slug pellets if possible. If really necessary, just one or two is sufficient.

Her number one message from the talk was not to overwater anything – for houseplants, she recommends watering on the draining board, and allowing them to drain out before returning to their saucer.

The evening concluded with light refreshments and a raffle.

Jo Myland