**Storrington Horticultural Society report of the October 2002 meeting**

A well attended meeting welcomed Sarah Squire, chairman of Squires garden centre’s, to their October meeting and enjoyed her talk on the history, development and challenges facing gardeners, and retail suppliers in this changing and challenging environment.

Squires Garden Center was founded in the mid 1935 by her grandfather David Squire and was much different from the garden centre we see today.

The company was founded in a period of change prior to the Second World War which meant less need for gardeners and grounds men with the reduction in large houses and estates. Changing demands from pleasure and social needs and people owning their own home and the need for plants which previously would have been mainly grown on and estate by the gardeners or organizations.

Initially the company tailored its activity to meet the growing need of the gardening needs of the smaller private gardens which were landscaping with no retail offering.

Again a major change due to the Second World War when landscaping largely ceased in estates and private gardens which together nurseries were turned over to vegetable production. After the war and during the 1960’s people became ever more interested in gardening for themselves and garden centre’s offering a range of gardening products as well as plants and seed were established. Squires opened their first centre at Twickenham in 1964 and now have 16 all in the South of the country.

Gardening needs have increased as have the range of products required to meet a good example of this is the dramatic increase in outside leisure with the growth of the BBQ, leisure furniture, umbrellas’, table ware etc were all required what next we wonder.

There are also some interesting trends not only those being created by a changing environment two of which are.

Gardening for Wild life to help secure food for wildlife with the erosion of natural habitat with building development.

Gardening for wellbeing to help with physical as well as mental issues highlight the benefits of being outside with nature is offered by being in the garden.

Gardening for the world and environment with more and more natural products such as fertilizers, soil conditioners, and the drive to make all plastic plant pots recyclable being sourced by garden centers.

The meeting ended with a raffle and light refreshments. There is no meeting in December which is replaced by two events. On the 10th of December we are having a Christmas afternoon tea from

2.00pm - 4.30pm at the Village hall in Storrington, admission by ticket only as is the Kew outing, which is on 14th December to Kew for their Christmas lights tickets for either event must be purchased before hand which subject to demand at £15 each for the Christmas Tea and £45 each for the Kew Christmas Lights outing, from Janet Webber on 01903 740109.

Our next meeting on 20th January 2023 at the village hall Storrington commencing 7.30pm is a talk by Les Allen-Williams on Insects under threat.

Michael Webber

Web Site: storringtonhorti.org.uk