



OCTOBER NEWSLETTER 2016

Autumn Preparations, New Products, Moles, Weather, Gardening, Special Offers



Autumn preparations and new products...

The last few weeks we have been tidying our poultry pens, relocating hens around farm into their winter accommodation and treating all pens again with Poultry Shield and Diatom to prevent any red mites appearing. Each flock is also getting its dose of Nopex to help prevent worms and to get the birds into top condition for the winter. It is always so satisfying to see the birds scratching around in their fresh woodchip runs and then going into clean fluffy shavings at night.

We have also been busy in the shop sorting and cleaning and you should notice a few new products and signs creeping in. This is thanks to Chris who has returned to Mantel Farm. I am sure many of you will remember Chris when he carried out a sales apprenticeship with us a few years ago. Time passes by so quickly, I am sure some will just wonder if he has had a nice holiday! Seeing us struggling with our old scrapers to clean out the pens he has already found a lovely new little hand scraper now also available in the shop and has introduced a larger 5 litre Poultry Shield bottle to help out with those extra autumn cleanouts: more details below..

As usual this month Graham has kindly provided a report on Moles and Tim his usual weather update. We also have a new article from Ian; a local garden manger with a keen interest in bees and ducks and we hope to hear more about his gardening activities through the year.

This month's feature...

Graham Burgess provides a local pest control service, including Bees, Wasps, Mice, Rabbits, Mink, Moles, Rats, Earwigs and Birds. This month he has written a feature on Wasps:

Moles...

The Mole is a lot smaller than most people think they are and I have often heard people say 'that little thing did all this damage to my lawn?' They are only up to 6 inches long and weigh 3-5 oz.



The Mole has poor eyesight but good hearing which is aided by the acoustic attributes of the tunnels it lives in. It has a covering of sensitive hairs called vibrissae on its face, feet and tip of its tail, it also has a sensitive nervous system which is connected to thousands of tiny papillae which are all over its nose. These are known as Eimer's organs and can be filled with blood to increase sensitivity. These together with vibrissae can detect air pressure and air currents. Moles also have an imprinted memory that lets the Mole remember every twist and turn of its tunnel system.

Moles are a solitary animal and only come together when they mate in spring. The female is only in season for about 24 hours and the gestation period lasts about 4 weeks. She will give birth up to 7 kits, tending to her young for about 6 weeks until they will be encouraged to leave the nest.

The young Moles are vulnerable to attack by Owls, Birds of Prey, Foxes, Cats, Stoats and anything that wants a free meal, so they will travel just under surface. This will lift the turf up to look like an ill fitted carpet. Why control Moles? Molehills can damage farm machinery and the soil in the Molehills can carry Listeria which can be eaten by livestock in contaminated silage. Also the spoil is soon colonized by weeds, it makes your lawn look untidy and there is a risk of injury to humans and animals caused by the collapsing tunnels.

For pest control services contact Graham on 07876 108434 or 01424 25122

Our local weather forecast...

Tim Macpherson is a digital publisher and angling film maker as well as being an obsessed boat angler for over 25 years! So he keeps a close watch on the Sussex weather for both his fishing, work and of course his bees and hens in his garden:



Having almost completely failed to predict the hot September – the hottest since 1911 with some days reaching the heady peaks of 30 degrees + I approach this one with some trepidation. I guess the big question is are we going to a) get some much needed rain and b) suffer some normal October storms. Well here goes...

"We should get a brighter end to the coming weekend, with sunshine and a few showers on Sunday and lighter winds, though becoming cloudier and windier later as outbreaks of rain spread in from the west during the start of the week. Changeable conditions are then

expected to continue through the remainder of the week bringing showers or longer spells of rain interspersed by drier and brighter periods. Down here we're likely to see more prolonged drier and brighter spells. Temperatures near normal at first, though soon rising to slightly above average and perhaps even warm at times.

From there on I have low confidence for the forecast during the second half of October, we are more than likely to have changeable unsettled weather but there are signs that the relatively settled weather will continue with higher than average temperatures.

While we all still think it's summer we must be aware that winter is not far away – bees may need extra feeding because there is very little nectar around, and if the queen keeps breeding the colony will consume its winter stores. We've added to our chickens thanks to Mantel Farm after a fallow egg production period following a fox attack we are now getting lots of eggs – but this is unlikely to last as they'll soon begin moulting.

For everything to do with angling see: www.sussexanglingmedia.co.uk and Tim's new publication: www.saltwaterboatangling.co.uk

Ian's Gardening Tales from the Weald...

Ian is a Gardens Manager living in Crowhurst, working as part of a three man team in three large country gardens in the Sussex and Kent Weald, and the idea behind these scribes is to enlighten you about his work in this environment throughout the gardening year:



Wildflower Meadows are an important part of our gardens and just this past week we have cut the meadows with a power scythe leaving the arisings for a week on each site before raking up. This allows the seeds to drop to the soil surface enabling them the chance to germinate next spring hence bulking up the existing plantings. October is also a good time to sow meadows. We select a site and scarify the surface to create an equal 50:50 area of grass and bare soil. We then select an appropriate seed mix and sow very thinly.

Meadows work well in orchards where the annual cut can coincide with the harvesting of the orchard fruit.

Ian Donovan: Hips and Haws Gardening, Crowhurst

Special Offers, New Products and Services

New: 5Ltr Poultry Shield:



Poultry keepers are struggling to keep red mite under control following the dry summer, so we have now introduced a 5 litre bottle of Poultry Shield to help you to give your poultry housing an extra clean:

Just £32.50 Saves £10.00 on 1Ltr bottle price

www.mantelfarmshop.co.uk/Poultry-Shield-5Ltr

New: Hand Scraper:



Do you struggle to reach those back corners of the chicken house, or along the perches? Why not try our new high quality scraper:

Just £6.50

Now available in our shop and through our website

www.mantelfarmshop.co.uk/Scraper-for-cleaning-Perches/Coops

New: Bantam Super Mix



As the days are still fairly long but the temperature starts to drop we often notice the hens are eating more food. This new mix of corn and treats makes a lovely mid afternoon treat and has been specially designed for Bantams with smaller grain included:

1.5kg **£1.75**

5kg **£4.50**

18kg Sack **£12.00**

Our last few dear little ducks:



Ducks are perfect pets to add to the veg patch this time of year, once the crop has been harvested to clear all the grubs and slugs.

With just a few ducks left in our flock we have an end of season offer:

£20 each or 3 for £50 (normal price £30 each)

With best wishes from all at Mantel Farm

www.mantelfarm.co.uk