



# HAMPSTEAD GARDEN SUBURB HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER August 2021

Edited by Marjorie Harris

## The 'Instead of the September Flower Show' Show 2021

Sadly the Hort Soc Committee has decided they must cancel this year's Autumn Show on Saturday 4 September. So **get your cameras or phones out** and let's have the photographic show to end all photographic shows with pictures of all the things that have helped to keep us going during the hard Covid times. It's not a competition; it won't be judged, but let's flood the Hort Soc website with lovely photographs in the following categories – full details can be found on the final page of the newsletter:

### Wildlife of the animal or human kind!

Insects

Water

My Borders

My favourite Flower or Flowers

Trees and Shrubs

Foliage

Fruit

Veg

Containers

**Just For Fun From weird veg to horticultural hi jinx**

*While on the subject of things that helped keep us going through the pandemic, Hort Soc would like to hear what your garden has meant to you. We will collate your responses and publish them in the next newsletter, either under your name or anonymously, as you wish. Send your paragraph to [marjorieharris@btinternet.com](mailto:marjorieharris@btinternet.com) by 1<sup>st</sup> October.*

## Garden Suburb School Juniors go pond-dipping thanks to Hort Soc donation



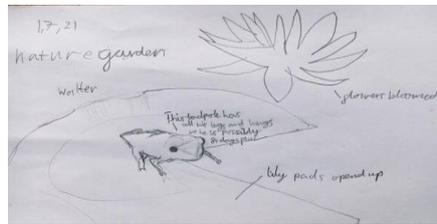
An enthusiastic group of Year 5 children have been getting wet on Tuesday lunchtimes, pond dipping in the Garden Suburb School Nature Garden. The school's flourishing Nature Garden Club was put on hold due to the pandemic but is now up and running again. Thanks to a generous donation from the HGS Horticultural Society, the Nature Garden Club was able to buy essential oxygenating plants (hornwort) for the pond, as well as some native marginal plants to encourage wildlife and add interest.

A water forget-me-not (excellent for newts); marsh marigold, and a water mint (which we will keep an eye on!) are the latest additions. Mating blue damselflies and their larvae, newts and a host of (as yet) unidentified creatures are fascinating the children on their weekly visits.



We have been lucky enough to keep a weekly watch on the thriving community of tadpoles as they make their transition into frogs. On the first visit, the children were fascinated to see that some of the tadpoles had developed back legs. The next week some had front and back legs. To everyone's surprise, these intriguing tadpole-frogs were able to JUMP! We even saw one

take a gasp – it had developed lungs! *Emily Asquith*



## Plant Heritage Autumn Fair

The London group, Plant Heritage, will be holding their Autumn Plant Fair on Saturday 4th September 2021. at St Michael's Primary School, North Road, N6 4BG (an outdoor event). Time: 10am-3.30pm. Entry: free to Plant Heritage members, under 18s and those with their carer. All others: £2.50. Bring cash as well as a bank card. Nurseries attending: Daisy Roots, Rose Cottage Plants, Edulis, Mathew Spratt, Culinary Herbs, Monksilver Nursery, Rotherview, Plants for the Senses. All money raised goes to Plant Heritage to support National Plant Collections. Check website for any last-minute changes: [www.plantheritage.com](http://www.plantheritage.com).

## Caring for Hedgehogs in your garden

Through spring, summer and autumn, Hedgehogs need undisturbed places to create their daytime nests which are made of grass and other vegetation. During winter a hibernation nest, usually made of leaves, will be built beneath a hedge, in a tangle of brambles or within a pile of logs. There are various ways that Hedgehogs can be encouraged to our gardens, bearing in mind they require invertebrate food and an undisturbed place to make a daytime nest. Densely packed borders, log piles in shady places and areas of grass left long, will all create Hedgehog habitat and also encourage the invertebrate food they will be searching for into your garden. During the winter months leave borders uncut and make log and leaf piles and your Hedgehog friendly garden will be a perfect habitat for this much-loved and endearing mammal.

*British Trust for Ornithology Newsletter*

Can anyone identify this plant, seen recently at Kenwood?

*Sylvia Coury*



## GARDEN GIRL

by Caroline Broome

### THE JOY OF DEADHEADING

When it comes to this time of year, I look forward to a slower pace in the garden. Everything is happily doing its thing, no major planting or pruning. Time is spent strolling around the borders, deadheading as I go. This is an activity that cannot be rushed. The gentle and repetitive snipping brings about an almost zen like state of mind; breathing slows, mind empties.



**Rhododendrons** You simply cannot deadhead this plant quickly because the new buds and shoots are emerging right next to the spent flower heads. Delicate thumb and forefinger pincer movement required, rewarded by the decisive but subtle breakaway of seed head from stem. Instant face lift and diverts the shrub's energy into swelling next year's buds instead of creating seeds.



**Hemerocallis** It helps to have a long thumb nail to apply a sharp pincer movement to the stem of each day old faded trumpet against the fleshy part of the forefinger. Repeat each morning, with cup of tea in the other hand. You can almost count the number of days your hemerocallis has left to flower by the number of remaining buds on each stem.

**Roses** Ah, roses, I could lose myself when deadheading roses! I love the time when all flowers on a single stem have faded so that you can cut right back to the parent stem. This stops the rosebush getting leggy. Often as not, I find myself plunging headfirst into its heart, thinning out any feeble crossing stems and removing blackspotted leaves as I go. This opens up the bush, creating better airflow and therefore discouraging disease.



### THREE SEEDHEADS THAT ARE MORE INTERESTING THAN THEIR FLOWERS

1. *Nicandra physalodes* or Shoo-Fly Plant So easy to grow from seed, grow it in a pot or plant it in your borders. If you want it to keep flowering then you must sacrifice the seed heads, which is why I grow a spare plant or two in pots in the greenhouse to preserve the seed.



2. *Clematis tangutica orientalis* Bill Mackenzie These silky seed heads shimmer in the low light levels of autumn, lasting way longer than their flower heads ever do.
3. *Physalis alkekengi* or Chinese Lantern Plant In my experience, they only morph into seedheads if you leave them growing on the plant. I can spend hours cutting each papery orange lantern off its stem to be displayed en masse in a bowl with one of those mini string lights entwined around them, as a Christmas table decoration. Once the cats find them, they can end up all over the house, still being unearthed at Easter!



### THREE PRUNING QUOTES

1. 'Before most people start boasting about their family tree, they already have done a good job pruning.' Author: Orlando Aloysius Battista

2. 'Clarity is the most important thing. I can compare clarity to pruning in gardening. You know, you need to be clear. If you are not clear, nothing is going to happen. You have to be clear. Then you have to be confident about your vision. And after that, you just have to put a lot of work in. Author: Diane Von Furstenberg
3. 'Firmness in all aspects is a most important quality when gardening, not only in planting but in pruning, dividing and tying up. Plants are like babies, they know when an amateur is handling them.' Author: Margery Fish

Caroline Broome

## **Allotment life during the pandemic**

by Ruth Beedle

Those of us with gardens have been especially fortunate over these past eighteen months to have outside spaces to escape from the news, masks and other Covid related preoccupations. We have places to think, work, dream and play in. These have helped us cope with feelings of uncertainty and anxiety.

Those of us with allotments have had the pleasure of going to another place, where there has been the opportunity for communication at distance throughout lockdown. General chat across the plots about the weather, onions or slugs has helped our health, both body and mind. Many Suburb allotmenters say they have spent far more time than ever before on their plots and many plots are beautifully tended, with paths mowed, fewer weeds and an abundance of crops. From conversation with ploholders I have gathered some of their thoughts:

- *'It has been my paradise'*
- *'...Finally had time for a good clear up and got rid of the plastic!'*
- *'Lockdown brought us all together, albeit 2 metres apart!'*
- *'It stopped me going nuts'*
- *'Meeting others for occasional chats was such a treat'*
- *'The steadiness of the seasons was a relief from all the disturbing news'*
- *'There has been more sharing of seeds and seedlings'*
- *'We have looked after each others' plots'*
- *'Nurturing my plot stopped me thinking about my health problems'*
- *'We've become more of a community than ever'*
- *'Dropping allotment produce on my friends' doorstep was much appreciated by them and a pleasure'*
- *'contacts between ploholders became more frequent, many finding a mental and physical outlet from the limitations imposed by the constraints of being at home. A further and a natural consequence was the marked increase in interest in horticultural husbandry and a more fruitful use of the land available to grateful ploholders.'*

## **Devon Garden Tour (3-day trip)**

by Ann Jones

Despite the early start it was a delight, after 18 months of lockdown and isolation, to meet up with gardening friends outside the Dulux paint centre at Temple Fortune at the start of the Society's three-day trip garden visiting in Devon.

Our first garden on our journey down was Marwood Hill, famous for its national collection of astilbes and recently featured on Gardeners' World. We didn't arrive till about 4pm and as the nursery was due to close at 4:30pm we voted unanimously to start our tour in the nursery! The astilbes were a delight to behold as were the trees. One tree that stood out for me was a fastigate purple beech. This was a garden where you needed to focus on the bigger picture, if you looked too closely you started to notice that nature had, perhaps, encroached too much.



Cornus at Marwood Hill

As is normal on these tours, there was no rest for the wicked and we packed in three gardens on Monday: the Garden House, Buckland Abbey (NT) and Wildside. As we immersed ourselves in the gardens, we were soon able to forget the disappointment of the football the night before. Garden house was a garden of 3 parts – formal walled gardens, traditional lawns and borders with shrubs and herbaceous perennials and the more provocative wilder, naturalistic planting, first started by Keith Wiley when he was head gardener. Geraniums and *Betula ermanii* Greyswood Hill with the most wonderful bark were the plants that stood out for me in the naturalistic plantings at The Garden House.

At Wildside, Keith Wiley has taken his ideas of naturalistic planting several steps further. It started with a 3-acre flat landscape and, with the aid of a digger and dumper, has now become:

- The Canyons: a 25ft mountain overlooking an area for desert plants
- The Courtyard: raised beds surrounded by a 90m arbour covered with wisteria
- The Lower Garden: narrow paths around raised mounds and linked water areas.

In the process 110,000 tons of soil were moved. The Courtyard Garden, a series of raised beds surrounded by a 90m arbour covered with wisteria had a familiar feel. The Canyons and Lower Garden on the other hand were a new concept to many of us – planting which seeks to work in harmony with nature, allowing plants to thrive much as they would in the wild even though some of the plants would never be seen together in the wild!!



Taking time out at Wildside

Of note at Buckland Abbey was an innovative parterre of berberis and yew. On Tuesday it was time to head home, but not before two more garden visits. Our first stop was at the RHS garden at Rosemoor. Aa.....aah Rosemoor, what can I say? One expects perfection and attention to detail from the RHS, and perfection is what one got, with hardly a weed in site. Even the wild flower meadows seemed controlled and ordered. So much to see and so little time. The rose gardens were at their best, the potager was full of tempting veg and ornamental plants. The once spiral

garden, redesigned as a cool garden by Jo Thompson, filled with plants of blue, white and pastel hues, provided a contrast to the vibrant reds and oranges of the hot garden. Rosemoor is a garden of two halves and one cannot leave Rosemoor without visiting Lady Ann Palmer's garden created in the 1960s. Not surprisingly this part of the garden, although large, was more relaxed and intimate in feel.

Our final stop, Holbrook Garden, came as a shock to some of us, myself included. I think we felt that we had gone from Wildside to wilderness. This was naturalistic planting of an extreme nature, completely *off piste*. Imagine a garden of island beds (remember Adrian Bloom and his island beds?) but instead of being interspersed between wide green paths of lawn they are separated with meandering narrow paths such that sometimes you feel as if you are pushing your way through a jungle. The planting in the beds takes inspiration from natural plant communities with wildflowers and what some might call weeds being allowed free expression alongside more traditional plantings of shrubs and herbaceous perennials. If this was not my favourite garden of the trip, it was most definitely my favourite tea stop – our visit ended with the obligatory cuppa and home-made biscuits served by our genial host.

I won't be resculpturing my garden with a digger in the foreseeable future but do hope to emulate one planting combination I saw in the Courtyard at Wildside – *Stipa tenuissima* and lily 'Tiger Baby'. I wonder what I will have to take out to accommodate them?!!!! Many thanks to Diane Berger for organising the trip and I look forward to next year's.

### **Dates for your Diary**

Our programme for the rest of the year, both live and via Zoom, can be found on the Society's website - [www.hortsoc.co.uk](http://www.hortsoc.co.uk). From August we plan monthly Zoom talks on various topics, except in October, when Philip Colman\* will be at Fellowship House at 7.30pm to talk about his much-loved family firm, Finchley Nurseries. Links for the Zoom talks, all at 7.30pm, will be sent to members a day or two before each event. Towards the end of the year, we hope to hold a party to celebrate the fact that, at last, members can get together again to swap stories of how their gardens are growing, or just talk face to face.

- 18th August, Catherine Horwood: **Beth Chatto**
- 29th September, Andrew Babicz: **Compost**
- **\*14<sup>th</sup> October, Philip Colman talking about Finchley Nurseries**, Fellowship House, Willifield Way. Free to members; £2 non-members at the door. *Social distancing will be in place, so numbers will be controlled and we reserve the right to refuse entry once all seats are taken.*
- 17th November, Catherine Horwood: **The Rose**
- 15th December, Andrew Babicz: **Historic Gardens of England**

**See overleaf for details and rules for entering the photographic  
'Instead of the September Flower Show' Show 2021**

**HAMPSTEAD GARDEN SUBURB  
HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY**  
**The 'Instead of the September Flower Show'  
Show 2021**

Available to view from Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> Sept:  
<https://hortsoc.blogspot.com/>

**HOW TO PARTICIPATE**

Closing date for entries: Saturday 28 August. Send your digital photographs to David Broome by email ([hgsms.membership@virginmedia.com](mailto:hgsms.membership@virginmedia.com)) or by post: 79 Church Lane, East Finchley, London N2 0TH. Tel. 020 8444 2329.

**EXHIBITION ONLY - THIS IS NOT A COMPETITION**

- No entry fees
- Each photo to be labelled with your name and the category number.
- Open to all ages
- Photos must be taken by you
- More than one entry per class welcome
- Photos could be from your garden, your neighbourhood or the world at large.

**CATEGORIES**

**Wildlife** of the animal or human kind!

**Insects**

**Water**

**My Borders**

**My favourite Flower or Flowers**

**Trees and Shrubs**

**Foliage**

**Fruit**

**Veg**

**Containers**

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