

The Notice Board

Starter orchid collection available

Free to a good home, is the collection of a friend of Audrey Fox. it contains 1 paphiopedilum (flowers tend to be a greeny-brown stripe) and 5 phalaenopsis (white, pink, yellow, orange) . All are different but not labelled and at the moment not in flower.

These orchids are tender and will require a warm position with lots of light but no direct sun and out of draughts. They require a certain amount of regular attention but would make a nice starter pack for someone wishing to take on a new hobby, or increase their collection.

There is some special plant food and compost and a couple of books on orchids as well. This will be a great help if you are new to orchid cultivation.

Don't let a lack of knowledge put you off, and if you think you could enjoy taking on this collection, please see Audrey (on the plant stall) at this month's club meeting.

Grendon Court, Upton Bishop is open for the first time in 2009 for the NGS. Last time to see it this year is on Sunday September 13th from 3 - 6pm
Adults cost £4.50.

Your favourite flower

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We would like to have a series of short articles on the favourite flowers of Gardeners' Club members to fill a space in the Notice Board in future editions. We are sure that all of you will have a favourite flower, perhaps one which has happy memories attached to it, or one you remember for other reasons? As a start here is Marilyn talking about sweet peas. Please volunteer to write a short article, or you may be approached directly!

Sweet peas

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My mother and my grandmother, both keen and accomplished gardeners, loved sweet peas; indeed my grandmother died in July and had a bunch of sweet peas from the family on top of her coffin instead of florists' flowers. Although this was a sad time, the flowers always remind me of her when I see them, and each year I grow them in my own garden in her memory, and because I love their colour and scent too. I supply plants to my mother who also loves them and grows them in her garden in the Lake District and to my daughter in Oxford, the 4th generation of sweet pea lovers in the family

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**"Sorrow and scarlet leaf,
Sad thoughts and sunny weather.
Ah me, this glory and this grief
Agree not well together!"**

- Thomas Parsons, 1880, *A Song For September*



One of GC member Pam Davies' more interesting tomatoes!

Meeting report: August 2009

On the occasions when the excellent and obliging Jim Almond gives a talk – even when standing in for a speaker who has had to cancel at the last minute – you feel you're in a win-win, two-for-the-price-of-one situation because Jim packs in so much else besides his sign-posted topic; and so it turned out on 10 August! Jim runs plant photography workshops and we were given a very comprehensive and enjoyable seminar – with a stunning collection of slides, Jim's hallmark whatever his chosen topic – which covered the pros and cons of using a compact versus an SLR camera, picture composition, the labelling and storing of images, the resolution of problems such as over-exposure when photographing white flowers in dark areas, and “cropping” or altering images to remedy composition faults or eliminate unattractive backgrounds. As always, Jim served up his subject-matter with generous helpings of enthusiasm and infectious good humour and, I must say, with a cheeky incursion, at one point, into the territory of the saucy seaside picture post-card which made us laugh! Moreover, in Dr Brian Savory's absence, Jim more than compensated by introducing us to at least five gardens or nurseries and some amazing wild-life, for example, an adult vine weevil and larvae in fine definition and a white-crowned sparrow. Jim's picture of this extremely rare bird appeared on the next day's pages of one of the national newspapers! After one last musical merry-go-round of flowers, gardens and animals, Jim judged the August competition for the best agapanthus or 'love flower' and gave first place to Marilyn Tippet, second place to Audrey Fox, and third place to Rose Morris. Thank you, Jim! To Brian, we express our wishes for a speedy recovery.

Garden visiting by a seasoned garden visitor

This is an article given to me by a gardener who wishes to remain anonymous! Do you agree with their view of what makes a good garden?

I like to visit someone else's garden. I anticipate so many things. Perhaps it will be a thing of beauty. Perhaps it will have a surprising lay-out or contain plants new to me - always interesting - or show an inspirational partnership of well-known plants? Perhaps, if I am lucky, it will have all of these and I shall come away full of ideas for my own plot, and also carry away some small plants in pots or, perhaps if **really** favoured, cuttings.

Sometimes, and this is also quite enjoyable, I shall come away feeling superior! There were **weeds**. There was a need for dead-heading, for better pruning or, worst of all, there has been some last minute gap filling with bedding plants especially for Open Day.

I visited a garden once called Fuschia Cottage. It was packed full with every possible variety of fuschia. all beautifully grown. Some in pots, some in the ground, but all to the exclusion of any other garden plant. On every step, beneath every bush and round very corner there lurked a “creature”; frog, toad, hedgehog, rabbit, squirrel, cat or gnome (plenty of those), even a snail. Some of stone and many of painted plastic or metal. What a strange gardener who can grow a beautiful pink fuschia and “underplant” it with an acid green frog!

Garden Club Visit to Dewstow; August 19th, 2009

Avril's latest venture was to take us on a two hour coach trip to Dewstow, Montgomeryshire. And we had fine weather! The gardens at Dewstow are marketed as "Hidden Gardens and Grottoes"

The 'Hidden' aspect refers to the fact that when the Dewstow Estate was bought by Henry Oakley in 1892, it became that owners dream to build a fantasy garden, not just traditional plants but grottoes too, much with manufactured stone. After his death in 1940 subsequent owners covered many of his structures over, restoring the land to a working farm. The current owners, the Harris family have set themselves the strange task of uncovering the Edwardian work and restoring it for the public to visit. It is now a Grade 1 listed garden.

We found some fine mature trees in the lower garden underplanted with a variety of what had to be shade-loving perennials. Reaching this part meant navigating small underground passages with trickling water and stepping stones; no place for a wheelchair here. A necklace of lakes linked by more streams lies amongst the trees, one of them with fine carp. The warning was always, look behind you before stepping back to take photographs.

As a geologist I was interested in picking out the genuine stones from those manufactured ones used in the construction of underground passage ways. These latter seemed to be a sort of tufa much loved by alpine gardeners - that's me again.

Up-slope, we moved back towards the house over well-cut grass and more trees, specimen trees this time, to reach the main grottoes. Here, entering via dark passages, we walked through a series of ferny rooms, with the sky visible through various plastic roofs. Here again water and stepping stones had to be navigated. We explored these grottoes thoroughly; we had to in order to find our way out again. We couldn't find a hermit in residence, to my disappointment, but we did find a bat.

Lunch had been arranged in advance at the Golf Club adjoining, part of the Dewstow Estate. We had rather nice sandwiches and cakes but the quantity laid out was less than adequate for the 50 of us. However, back at the gardens, the owner spoke to Avril asking if we had had a good lunch and she was able to report back to him that we had had to ask for more to be prepared.

If you didn't go with us, and want something a bit different from the normal garden visit, then give this a try. You will find much more information at:-

www.dewstow.co.uk/gardens.htm

Thanks Avril for your organisation.

Rosemary Naylor



Get Well Soon Keith

Best Wishes to Keith Ackermann, long-time GC member, currently recuperating after major surgery

The September garden: tasks and ideas

If you have done well with your onions this year, as many have, you must lift them and dry them off ready for storage. The weather we have been "enjoying" does not lend itself to outdoor drying in the sun, so take them into the greenhouse or a dry and warm place and leave them to dry off fully before putting them in nets or plaiting them into ropes. Inspect carefully for neck rot before storing. If your vegetable beds are coming to the end of their productive period, consider sowing some lettuce (Winter Density is good) or mizuma (a Japanese salad leaf similar to mustard) now; a cover of enviromesh or cloches will help to ensure a longer harvest free from attack by frost or pest. Rocket may also be sown now and will be safe from flea beetle damage. Dry off pumpkins for Winter storage under the same conditions as your onions.

In the flower garden, watch out for the first frosts which will kill off the top growth of dahlias. In damp soil these must be lifted and dried off before storing them in frost-free conditions; the importance of this was brought home to many of us last Winter when many tubers rotted when planted up in the Spring. Once Agapanthus plants have finished growing and their leaves have died back, either lift them and store as for dahlias or cover the tops with a mound of bracken or compost to help them get through the Winter unless you have them in a very warm and well-drained spot. Those grown in pots should also be well-protected and brought indoors if possible. Now is also the time to take cuttings of pelargoniums and other tender plants so that you can throw out the large adult plants and have new ones for next year. Cuttings taken just under a leaf node will take well if planted in a well-drained compost with perlite or vermiculite added to the mix.

Good late-flowering plants or shrubs for the Autumn garden

Chrysanthemum "Bronze Elegance" or "Ruby Mound"

Dahlia Rip City (red), "Summer Nights" (yellow with dark foliage) Or Twinings After Eight" (white with dark foliage)

Aster "Little Carlow" or "Helen Picton" (blues) or "Twilight" (lavender). All these varieties should resist mildew

Cyclamen hederifolium (pink). alba (white) and also consider hederifolium "Bowles Apollo" which has lovely marbled leaves to add interest after the flowers have faded.,

Echinacea purpurea "Green Edge (white with green edged petals), or "Rubinstern" (deep crimson petals)

Hardy Fuschias including magellanica "Sharpitor" (variegated leaf) and "Baby Blue Eyes". Both are Award of Garden Merit shrubs.

Plant Profile: Sorbus

Sorbus is a genus of between 100-200 species of trees and shrubs in the Rose family Rosaceae. Species of *Sorbus* are commonly known as whitebeam, rowan, service tree, and mountain ash. They are found mainly in northern temperate regions, in woodland, on hills, mountains and on scree. Hybrids are common in the genus, and in Finland and Germany the fruit of some species of sorbus is used to flavour fruit wines and spirits, and of course in the UK the fruit can be used to make a preserve which can be eaten with cold meats. The genus is prone to canker and fireblight and is sometimes attacked by aphid and blister mite, but is generally very hardy and accommodating, preferring woodland conditions and slightly damp soil, so ideal for our part of

Wales. This huge family has many cultivars which are good in the garden, including *Sorbus hupehensis* var. *obtusata* for fruit and colour. Its pinnate leaves, up to 15cm long, each with up to 15 ovate, blue-green leaflets turn a vivid scarlet red in autumn. In spring there are corymbs of white flowers from which the spherical fruit form later; these are initially white before ripening to dark pink. *Sorbus* Joseph Rock is a yellow-fruited variety which is a dependable variety and not too large for the smaller garden. *Sorbus vilmorinii* has very pretty pink or reddish fruits which are not as popular with the birds and so can stay on the tree for longer for you to enjoy. Finally, for the really small garden there is an upright variety called *sorbus* x *hybrida fastigiata*, which in my garden seems to be reliable and takes up a relatively small piece of ground.