



June 2024

Newsletter

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Dear Members,

Welcome to our June Newsletter.

Summer is finally here and is a season that, for many of us, evokes memories of sun-drenched days, lush green landscapes, and the delight of being outdoors - it is a time when nature and life are in full swing. This season, often associated with holidays and relaxation, holds a special place in most of our hearts, offering time to step back from the routine and a chance to "stop and smell the roses."

That is of course in and amongst all of the gardening that we get caught up in at this time of year as our gardens and allotments strive to reach their full glory. The vibrant colours of blooming flowers, the sweet smell of cut grass, and the gentle rustle of leaves in the warm breeze all contribute to a sense of calm and wellbeing. This is boosted as we slowly begin to see the fruits of our labour appear, with vegetables and fruits ripening under the sun, ready for harvest and, hopefully, making an appearance in our annual show on 20th July. (hint!)

Summer is also a time of shows, festivals and fairs; music, food and plants are at the forefront of these for most of us and we have the chance to visit local "open gardens" and plant fairs. Our May speaker, Mike King, has kindly extended an invitation for our members to visit his nursery "Shropshire Sarracenias" outside of his open days and if you would like to do this just drop him a line at www.carnivorousplants.uk.com – or you could wait for his next open day on Saturday October 19th.

Our Society visited Miserden and Painswick Gardens on 6th June (see the article later in the newsletter) and we were lucky with the weather, not a drop of rain. We were also very lucky with our coach driver – he had to contend with many narrow and winding roads to get us there and he did a fantastic job finding ways around some impossibly tight corners! Special thanks to Angela Shaw for booking two such lovely venues and for organising all of the logistics.

Our next meeting is on 27th June when we will be welcoming Josh Egan from Pershore College who is coming to talk to us about "Classy Plants for Classy People".

It is also the last meeting before our Annual Show on 20th July, so we will be looking for volunteers to help us make it the success it has been in previous years. We will have forms on the night for you to sign up for what you are able to help us with – anything you can do to support is appreciated.

Looking forward to seeing you next week.

Ann

BDHS Trip to Miserden and Painswick Gardens



Thursday 6th June dawned bright and surprisingly sunny and a coach loaded with excited members of the Society left Balsall Common for our trip to Miserden and Painswick gardens.

We stopped first at Miserden, which is nestled in the heart of the Cotswolds. Miserden Gardens is part of the Miserden Estate and has a rich history dating back to the early 17th century. The garden itself surrounds Miserden Park House, a Grade II listed building that adds a touch of historical charm to the natural beauty of its setting. The Wills family, who have owned the estate for over a century, have meticulously maintained and enhanced the gardens, making it a delightful destination for visitors – it had the feel of a private garden that happens to be open to the public.

The gardens are a vibrant tapestry of colours and scents. The herbaceous borders were approaching their peak, brimming with a mix of perennials and annuals that created a stunning display. Delphiniums, peonies, irises, poppies and lupins stood tall, their vivid hues contrasting perfectly with the lush greenery. The rose garden, with its array of climbing and shrub roses, filled the air with a lovely fragrance, inviting us to pause and take in the beauty of the flowers and also the sculptures that were displayed across the garden.

There are extensive yew hedges throughout the garden, including a topiary Yew Walk which contrasted beautifully with the loose arrangements of the herbaceous borders and provided a screen to separate the formal Parterre and sundial from the more informal borders. We wandered past the summerhouse and fountain, imagining this as a shady place to sit and read on a sunny day, down the steps fringed with campanula to the south lawn. Pausing to admire an ancient mulberry tree with massive roots growing through the retaining wall. Down more steps and to the south of the gardens themselves Miserden has woodland walks and an arboretum through which we wandered and were rewarded with some stunning views of the surrounding Cotswold hills.



Then it was time to return to the coach and make our way to Painswick Rococo Garden, located in the picturesque village of Painswick in Gloucestershire. We soon realised that the roads between Miserden and Painswick were not meant for coaches like ours – most likely made with the kind pulled by horses in mind! We got there in the end due to the tenacity and excellent spatial awareness of our driver.

Benjamin Hyett originally created Painswick Rococo Garden to entertain guests with its playful and ornamental design and it is a fascinating insight into 18th century design. The garden fell into disrepair over the centuries and was eventually abandoned to woodland in the 1950's until, in 1984, Lord and Lady Dickinson began the work to restore the gardens to their former glory. Today, it is the only complete Rococo garden in England and is being restored to reflect a painting of the garden done in 1748 by Thomas Robins, complete with kitchen garden, borders, woodland walks and numerous follies.

After a lovely lunch at the café, we followed a broadly circular path through the gardens - down a steep slope, past the Eagle house, through the beech walk, past the gothic alcove and plunge pool (which looked very chilly!) before stopping to admire the kitchen garden with its formally arranged geometric beds and clipped hedges. Here there were a variety of heritage vegetables and fruits being grown, though our visit was a little early to see them at their best.



We paused at the Doric seat before moving on to see the maze and get another view of the impressive kitchen garden from the Exedra folly and completed our circuit of the gardens at the Redhouse.

The garden's layout, with its winding paths and hidden corners, its collection of whimsical follies and woodland walks was a very relaxing place to visit and on a warmer day it would be a perfect setting for a picnic. – a good excuse to come back.

Recipe of the Month

Elderflower Cordial

Ingredients:

- 30 heads of elderflowers
- 900g caster sugar
- 50g citric acid
- 3 lemons cut in half
- 1.7 litres of boiling water

Method:

1. Shake the elderflower heads to remove any insects
2. Place in a container and cover with boiling water
3. Add sugar, lemons and citric acid and leave to steep for 24 hours
4. Pour through a sieve and then bottle or freeze

Monthly Flower Spike and Pot Plant Competition

Points are awarded for first, second and third positions (First – 5 points, Second – 3 points and Third – 2 points).

Prizes are awarded for the highest aggregate points at the end of the year. Multiple entries are allowed in the “Flower Spike” class, though only one award will be made per entrant.

Pot Plant

- 1st Streptocarpus – Celia Davis
- 2nd Pelargonium – Angela Shaw
- 3rd Sedum – Mary Cotterrell



1st Streptocarpus
Celia Davis



2nd Pelargonium
Angela Shaw



3rd Sedum
Mary Cotterrell

Flower Spike

- 1st Rose – Wendy Jenkinson
- 2nd Clematis – Alison Watson
- 3rd Iris – Mary Cotterrell



1st Rose
Wendy Jenkinson



2nd Clematis
Alison Watson



3rd Iris
Mary Cotterrell

The competition was judged by our guest speaker, Mike King, who had an impressive selection to choose from. Thank you to everyone who entered - the photos of the winners are also on our website.

It's lovely to see what we are all growing in our gardens and is a great source of inspiration, so please think about entering your plants and flowers for our next meeting on 27th June.

NOTICE BOARD

BDHS Meetings:

2024 Monthly Meeting Dates

7:30pm Tea & Coffee. Please remember to bring a mug with you if possible, it helps the environment and the clearing up after the meeting. Speaker starts at 8pm

Guests are welcome - there is a small charge of £3 for entry which includes refreshments.

27 th June	Josh Egan (Pershore College)	Classic plants for classy people
26 th September	Catrina Fenton (Garden Organic – Ryton)	Seed saving & The Heritage Seed Library
31 st October	Nigel Hopes (Hopes Garden Plants)	A year in the life of John's garden

Other BDHS dates:

20 th July	Annual Show - St Peters Hall, Balsall Common
25 th July	Social Evening - 6:30pm (Venue tbc)
28 th Nov 2024	AGM & Buffet – 7:30pm. Village Hall, Balsall Common
20 th March 2025	Annual Dinner – Village Hall, Balsall Common

Further events/details will be announced once they are finalised

Other Dates for your diary

23 rd June	Berkswell Open Gardens (part of the NGS scheme) –11am to 6pm Tickets £7 available online or at the gardens (info in accompanying e mail)
7 th July	Open day at Manor Farm to see “Dave’s Amazing Collection” and the gardens, plus a sale of plants, cakes and original artwork. (to raise funds for Matt Hampson Foundation) 2 to 5:30pm. Parking available, Chadwick Lane, B93 0AS
14 th July	Homemade Scones in the Garden, 3 to 6pm at Sue Dalby’s Garden* £6 per head
28 th July	Garden Party (to raise funds for the Christmas Lights), 3 to 6pm at Sue Dalby’s Garden* £25 per head to include 3 courses and a glass of fizz. Please bring your own wine/drinks and glasses.

* Address is 95 High St, Henley in Arden, B95 5AT

Some jobs for the next few weeks...

There's lots to do in the garden – in between the showers!

- Lift and store tulip bulbs after flowering
- Cut back spring-flowering perennials, such as pulmonaria, to encourage a fresh flush of foliage
- Prune late-spring or early-summer shrubs after flowering, such as weigela and philadelphus, thinning out the older stems
- Give wisteria its summer prune, cutting all the long sideshoots back to 20cm, to promote flowering next spring
- Support tall-growing perennials, including hollyhocks and delphiniums, with a sturdy cane
- Continue planting summer bedding in pots and borders, and water regularly to help plants establish quickly
- Tie in new stems of climbing and rambling roses horizontally to supports, to encourage more flowers
- Take cuttings from pinks and carnations, selecting non-flowering shoots, which should root readily
- Fill any gaps in borders with pots of tall bulbs, such as fragrant lilies, to add instant colour
- Enjoy the last harvests of asparagus this month, then leave the ferny top-growth to grow up over the summer
- Spread mulch around thirsty crops such as beans and courgettes to hold in moisture around their roots
- Tie in new shoots of blackberries, raspberries, loganberries and other cane fruits
- Apply tomato feed regularly to fruiting veg crops, including tomatoes, courgettes, pumpkins and chillies – also good for annual flowering plants in tubs and baskets. Water greenhouse tomatoes regularly to prevent split fruits and blossom end rot
- Pinch out the side shoots of cordon tomatoes regularly
- Rejuvenate chives by cutting the clump down to the base, for a fresh crop of new leaves in just a few weeks
- Take softwood cuttings of herbs such as marjoram and sage, plant in gritty compost and place on a sunny windowsill
- Plant out tender vegetables raised indoors, including beans, tomatoes, pumpkins, courgettes and sweetcorn (arrange sweetcorn in blocks to aid pollination)
- Sow biennials, including foxgloves, honesty, wallflowers and sweet rocket, in seed trays
- Take softwood cuttings from hydrangeas and pelargoniums and stand the pots on a bright windowsill or in a greenhouse
- Increase greenhouse shading and ventilation to keep temperatures down on hot days, damp down the floor when you can