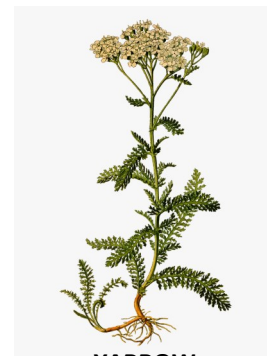




The Village GARDEN CLUB of Sevenhampton & District

MAY/JUNE 2021



YARROW

(*Achillea millefolium*)

NEXT MEETINGS

Wednesday 26th May: Evening visit to The Coach House, Ampney Crucis (£8, including tour)

Tuesday 22nd June: Day visit to Wortley House & Hodges Barn

A QUEST FOR GREATER BIO-DIVERSITY

Henry and Sally Coelho's Creation of a Prairie Garden at South Paddock, Sevenhampton.

My lawn was a guilty pleasure but I felt it was no longer environmentally justifiable. Perfect stripes free of moss and weed, that took me the best part of 10 years to achieve, was my pride and joy. However, it was also an environmental 'dead zone' and it really had to go. 'Lock Down' gave me the time to think and research the options.



I liked the idea of a Prairie garden, focusing on a naturalistic look using ornamental grasses, flowering perennials - a "pollinators' paradise". Inspired by the Dutch gardener [Piet Oudolf](#), I envisioned a haven for insects, pollinators and wildlife.

Last Autumn I planned an arc of interlocking beds. In February I hired a rotavator and churned up the lawn. It was heavy work but once I had started I found I couldn't stop! Having completed one arc, I rotavated a second arc, then a third ending up with three large semi-circles. Paths through the beds were laid out with wood chippings. The soil is heavy clay and I ordered 10 tons of compost in order to increase its fertility.* I've now spread 30 tons - one barrow load at a time!!

A Prairie garden needs thousands of plants and so, in September 2020, I started sowing seeds. Over 40 different plants varying in form, height and colour, which would give continuous seasonal interest.

I have only a small greenhouse so I built multiple shelves. It was soon heaving with plants. It has been a constant churn of sowing, thinning out, potting on and hardening off in the cold frames, raised beds and summerhouse. In November I potted up over a 1000 allium bulbs and they were the first plants to be put into the new beds.

Alongside the Prairie garden, the summerhouse was completely rebuilt and is the focal point. Also I created a pond & bog garden and a shady glade around the old willow for woodland plants and ferns.

Ambitious plans and time will tell - but gardening is a long game after all.

I am looking forward to planting out once the frosts have subsided, hoping to see the results and learn from the failures! I can't wait to see the results in August/September with the additional winter interest to come.

It will take a few years to establish itself but I am hopeful nature will welcome a haven of diverse zones in which to flourish.

Bye bye lawn ..welcome nature ... I can't wait to see what happens.

Summer House: Before



... and after



*Editor's note: Improving heavy, compacted **clay soil** can help healthy growth. Adding materials such as compost, pine bark, composted leaves and gypsum to heavy clay can improve its structure, making the nutrients more readily available and help to eliminate drainage and compaction problems.

Here are some of the plants which were sown and germinated at South Paddock.

Mostly perennials were sown, although lots of annuals will be directly sown later, such as poppies and indigenous wild flowers, which will be placed in the wild section at the bottom of the paddock.

Thalictrum delavayi splendide
Veronica grandis
Salvia hians royle
Verbenas x3
Rudbeckia hirta—Black Eyed Susan
Achillea millefolium Cerise & Alba
Coreopsis tictoria
Helenium waltraut
Salvias x 4 types
Crambe cordifolia
Cardoons
Aruncus dioicus
Helianthus debilis
Lysimachia artopurea
Berkheya purpurea
Sanguisorba officinalis Great Burnet
Verbena hastata
Centaurea cyanus - White & Blue
Lavenders
Baptisia australis

Thalictrum rochebrunianum
Stipa tenuissima
Echinacea purpurea Green Twister
Rudbeckia goldstrum
Rudbeckia luciniata
Verbascum phoeniceum Violetta,
Helenium moerheim
Helenium (Autumnale & Red shades)
Shasta daisy
Angelica ebony sylvestris
Daucus Carota
Ammi Majus
Gaura lindheimeri
Angelica gigas
Echinacea purpurea White Swan
Dierama: Blackbird & Blackberry Bells
Scabiosa - 4 types
Lobelias
Echinops - 3 types

And still more!



YARROW factfile: Native to Eurasia and North America, the Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*) is a member of the Asteraceae family. In the wild it is usually white with pink tinges but there are many garden cultivars, which have vivid colours of yellows, reds & oranges.

It is known for its many medical properties, most especially its ability to hasten blood clotting. The genus name 'Achillea' is derived from the Greek god Achilles, who used it to treat battle wounds; the plant has common names bloodwort, staunchweed and woundwort, which reflect this property. The leaves also contribute to its name, as 'millefolium' and another of its common names - 'milfoil' - allude to seemingly thousands of feathery edges to the leaf. The yarrow is edible and its leaves have an aniseed flavour and are often used in herbal teas.

Achillea are easy plants to grow in the garden being happy in most soil types. They enjoy full sun and are drought resistant; flowering can be extended with deadheading. The many small flowers on each head are favoured by many different pollinators and thus are good for wildflower and prairie gardens. It is also a useful companion plant as it attracts many beneficial insects and repels some pests - although it can have a tendency to harbour greenfly.



Achillea filipendula



SOME USEFUL APPS - FOR SMART PHONES, PCs ETC

RHS Grow your own - free, useful app for planning and advice on how to grow vegetables and soft fruit. Offers timely reminders of when to plant, harvest etc.



British Trees - free from the Woodland Trust. Useful when out walking to identify British trees along your route. Enter details, such as leaf shape/bark texture to aid recognition.

Note from Ed: If you can recommend other apps, please let me know and I will publish them in the next edition.

In 1992, Steve Ryan and his wife from Bridlington, set up a small business from their council home, selling bee products. This April he sold the business for over £100 million. Mr Ryan said he was inspired by honey bees, which he describes as "intriguing and phenomenal insects" and "loved the idea of 100,000 bodies working for free" - typical Yorkshireman!*



This, together with their important pollination role, is another reason to garden with honey bees in mind. Accompanying this newsletter is a comprehensive factsheet giving gardening tips and recommendations for bee-friendly plants. With bee numbers dwindling, sensitive gardening is more important than ever.

**[I'm from Yorkshire so feel qualified to say such things.]*

Vanessa Berridge, Glos. County Organiser for the **National Garden Scheme**, gave April's interesting talk about the work of this valuable organisation, which raises funds for health and nursing charities.



Vanessa was editor of *The English Garden* magazine and is now an internationally published writer on gardening and garden history. Books include:

- *The Princess's Garden: Royal Intrigue & the Untold Story of Kew*
- *Kiftgate Court Gardens: Three Generations of Women Gardeners*
- *Great British Gardeners: From Early Plantsmen to Chelsea Medal Winners* - (now also published in paperback).

A History of Borde Hill Garden in Sussex has also just been written.

Vanessa lives in Winchcombe, where her garden is opened for the NGS this Sunday, 2nd May from 2-5pm. Tickets can be pre-booked on ngs.org.uk; plants and teas will also be available.

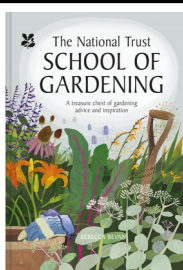
A timely reminder to avoid planting Spanish Bluebells. These are larger and more robust garden imports, which easily get cross pollinated with our own wild bluebell. The resulting hybrid can then dominate and displace our own indigenous species. The article in our [May/June newsletter of 2017](#) explains more.



GARDENERS' WORLD magazine is offering a '2 for 1' garden entry discount in their May issue, which also includes free seeds.

The National Trust have just published the "**School of Gardening**" by Rebecca Bevan. It includes loads of tips & advice for anyone interested in gardening. Practical guides and topics from the Trust's own expert gardeners are offered as well as many images of National Trust gardens.

Publisher: Pavilion Books
ISBN: 9781911657156



Some Gardening jobs for:

May

Protect tender plants from late frosts
Tie in climbing & rambling roses and feed
Earth up early potatoes & plant all others
Take softwood cuttings
Propagate perennials by basal stem cuttings
House plants, like Ficus & Citruses, can be moved outside
Increase lawn mowing to weekly cuts as weather warms

June

Plant out summer bedding
Stake tall plants eg delphiniums
Pinch out side shoots on tomatoes
Water pots and new plants but be 'Water wise'
Find time to relax and enjoy the result of your toils !



Have you anything of interest that can be included in the next newsletter? If so please contact Di Cook (editor) at ditex.cook@gmail.com or Tel: 01242 603480

HOW TO GET A GREEN, HEALTHY AND WEED-FREE GARDEN

Last month's Zoom talk from Mike Simmonds, Trugreen – Professional Lawncare, Tel: 07722 045855

(Notes kindly provided by Yvette Ruggins)

TOP TIPS for maintaining your lawn....

Mowing

Good mowing is key

Mow little & often, regardless of the season

Never remove more than 1/3 of the grass blade. Leave grass slightly longer (30mm) during the cooler seasons and reduce to 20-25mm in periods of strong growth. Too long grass leads to thatch

Consider weather conditions and the time of year. Don't cut when wet, soft under foot or when frost/snow is forecast

Ensure that the blades are sharp and regularly service the lawn mower.

A rotary lawn mower is better than a cylinder mower to keep the weight off the lawn at this time of year

Fertilisers

There are 3 main nutrients to feed the lawn:

Nitrogen (N) for growth & colour

Phosphate (P) for root development & plant health

Potassium (K) to enhance stress tolerance & disease resistance

Weed Control

Weeds or moss suffocate the grass and reduce its quality

Need to use selective herbicides

Weed control can only be completed when the weeds are actively growing

Use different herbicides for different weeds

Apply correctly

The herbicide lands on the weed leaf, moves to the root which wilts and kills the root

Moisture Management

Watering

Wet soil to depth of 150mm

Apply during the cooler periods of the day, to avoid evaporation

Roots search for moisture & nutrients

Water for 30 minutes 2-3 days/week, depending on soil conditions, soil profile and water pressure

Wetting Agent

Helps retain moisture in the soil longer

Assists in re-hydration and prepares the lawn to withstand higher temperatures

Moss Control

Moss appears where there's poor drainage, compacted or low in nutrients soil

Need to apply Ferrous Sulphate before scarifying. This suppresses the moss, blackens it and the moss dies back

Scarification

Hatch is dead plant material which prevents water & nutrients from reaching the grass roots and provides humid, moist conditions for fungal diseases to take a hold e.g. snow mold

Aeration

Good soil structure and pore space provide the foundation of a healthy lawn

Soil such as heavy loam or clay can be compacted

Aerate using a garden fork, special machine or attach to the base of shoes!

Pests

Chafer grubs (Chafer beetle/Maybug) or leather jackets (crane fly/daddylonglegs) eat the roots. If you see them, treat them!

Apply specific microscopic nematodes at the right time of the year, temperature, bug size and moisture level

Diseases

Need correct diagnosis of pathogen or spread of mycelium to ensure correct fungicide is used

Beware when mowing as you might spread the disease across the lawn