



The Village

GARDEN CLUB

of Sevenhampton & District

MAY / JUNE 2022



Paeony

NEXT MEETINGS

Thursday 26th May

Evening Visit to Rodmarton Manor Gardens, Nr Cirencester, GL7 6PF

4.30pm meet at gardens for the introductory talk and tour. Then on to [The Thames Head Inn](#) for pub supper. Menu selection should be pre-booked; own or shared transport. **£9.00** (garden entry)

Wednesday 29th June

Day visit to Highnam Court, & Berry's Place Farm, Nr. Gloucester,

Highnam Court – entrance plus option to purchase refreshments **£5.50 + £3.00**

Berry's Place Farm – entrance includes drink & homemade cakes **£10**; own or shared transport.

Worth a Detour!

Recently I was able to cross something off my 'Bucket List' - the National Botanic Garden of Wales....and what a joy it was.

The garden, of about 500 acres, nestles in a sheltered valley a few miles east of Carmarthen. The site occupies part of the old Middleton Hall estate, which flourished in the 17th Century and was partly landscaped by Capability Brown. Fire destroyed the derelict hall almost a century ago, although many of the outbuildings remain and have been incorporated into the botanic experience.



There are so many different aspects of gardening considered, offering something for all to enjoy. Importantly, to help with identification, plants are well labelled with common and Latin names. Many are also on sale in the plant shop - and I couldn't resist!

Once past the entrance, meadow and marsh plants greet the visitor together with one of the many water features to be found in the grounds. All the water used in the gardens is sourced from a small stream which runs into the valley and which is used to fill all the ponds, fountains, water features and also the gardeners' dipping pool in the

walled garden before wending its way to the sea. The damp soil conditions around the edges of the restored lakes are ideal for perennials such as primulas, iris, astilbes and gunnery.

The first main formal structure to be seen is the double-walled garden, one wall stone, the other brick. The narrow area between the two protective walls provides a microclimate ideal for tender plants and seedlings. A glasshouse lies within the inner walled garden once used for peaches but now housing tropical plants such as orchids, ginger and bromeliads. The rest of the walled garden is divided into 4 distinct growing areas, including a modern organic kitchen garden, which provides produce for the restaurant.

Further on, a stone barn houses a beautifully appointed apothecary, alongside which are grown hundreds of named medicinal plants typically used in herbal medicines, lotions and poultices etc. Even today around 50% of pharmaceuticals are derived or inspired by plants [eg willow (aspirin), foxgloves (heart conditions), yew (cancer treatments)]

At the head of this gentle valley is the garden's 'crowning' glory - The Great Glasshouse. This huge, single-span, glass dome is the largest in the world and its spectacular shape catches the maximum amount of light available. It conserves and displays some of the most endangered plants in the world. Growing in the wild, in their hot climates, these plants may naturally be exposed to long droughts, have impoverished soils, experience fires etc. but they have developed strategies to cope with such extremes. For example, plants that are annuals are often found in these climates - compacting their life cycles to short periods and leaving only their seeds to grow once the rains return. Succulent plants store water, enabling survival during droughts and some shrubs and trees have small, tough often waxy leaves to reduce water loss. Such characteristics can inform a gardener's plant choice when choosing location and considering soil type.



I would definitely recommend these beautiful gardens as a bucket list inclusion!



PAEONY FACTFILE: The Paeony (or Peony) belongs to the family Paeoniaceae & is native to temperate and cold regions of the Northern hemisphere. Most are herbaceous perennials but some are deciduous woody shrubs. [See page 4].

The tree paeony, which was introduced to Europe (from China) in 1789 and planted at Kew, can be propagated by grafting, division, seed & from cuttings, although root grafting is most common commercially. The propagation of herbaceous peonies should be done in the Autumn and is by 'root division'* (re-planting them 2 to 5cms below soil level) or collecting seed. To give tubers time to store nutrients etc for next year's plant growth, avoid cutting down foliage until the late Autumn; then cut to about 2" above soil, which helps to prevent paeony wilt.

Paeonies have large, deeply lobed leaves and flowers are usually single, sometimes double and often fragrant. Flowers, coloured red/pink/white or yellow, bloom in the Spring or early Summer but are short lived, lasting between 7-10 days only. They enjoy full sun and deep, fertile and moist soil.

The peony is named after Paeon a student of Asclepius, the Greek god of medicine and healing. Paeony water was drunk in the Middle Ages for medicinal purposes: the seeds and roots of the plant are also used in traditional medicines. In Japan the petals of *P. lactiflora* are infused and drunk.

*Herbaceous paeonies have root tubers, able to store nutrients needed for regrowth in the following year, like a bulb. Thin roots grow from the tuber absorbing water & nutrients, take care not to damage them.

Some American researchers have been looking at ways gardeners can get rid of slugs and snails. Metaldehyde-based pellets (now illegal in the UK) are effective but can harm other animals, including cats and dogs that may accidentally ingest them. Parasitic nematodes are used with good effect but there is evidence that they may harm earthworms. It was identified that a much simpler method is to attract the snails and then dispose of them manually.

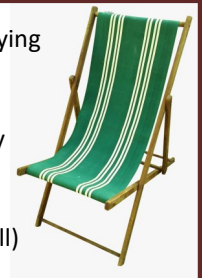
Many different 'attractants' were used in the tests: potatoes, lettuce, cucumber, cat food, fruit and several different types of beers (no mention is given of what happened to the surplus ales!). But bread dough gave the best results by far; it's suspected that the fermentation process in the dough is the main source of attraction. Simple to make - just mix flour, yeast and water together, shape the resulting dough into balls and place in the garden to attract the slugs and snails ready for hand collection. What happens to them then is up to the individual gardener!



A few years ago our Garden Club had a splendid evening visit to Miserden Gardens and the adjacent nursery. Now, after six years operating there, the owners of the nursery are relocating to a new site, moving to the hugely popular [Painswick Rococo Garden](#).

The move will allow the business to expand and develop their nursery, which it will be doing under a new name, "[Exedra](#)," inspired by the iconic white folly that sits at the head of Rococo's herbaceous borders.

If anyone is thinking of holidaying in Cornwall this summer, here are some gardens to visit as recommended by our February speaker, Richard Harvey.



- Hidden Valley (near St Austell)
- Eden Project
- Pinetum, St Austell
- Lost Gardens of Heligan, St Austell
- Enys Gardens (near Penryn)
- Lamorran Gardens, St Mawes
- Trebah Garden (near Falmouth)
- Tremenheere Sculpture Gardens, Penzance
- Minach Theare (near Porthcurno)
- Tresco, Isles of Scilly

Other highly recommended Gardens:

- Caerhays Castle, St Austell (Open till 12/6/22)
- St Michael's Mount
- Tregrehan House, St Blazey, St Austell
- Exbury Gardens, near Southampton
- Trelissick Gardens, near King Harry Ferry
- Tregothlan, Truro
- Highnam Court, Gloucester

SOME VILLAGE 'OPEN GARDENS' IN OUR AREA.

- Over 15 gardens open this weekend, 1st & 2nd May, at Eastcombe & Bussage, Nr Stroud. Cost £8 click [here](#) for more information.
- Open Gardens (25+) & Flower festival in Eckington, Worcestershire on 14th & 15th May. Cost £7, click [here](#) for more information.
- Ashton under Hill have over 20 gardens open on 11th & 12th June. Entry is £8 for both days. Click [here](#) for more information.
- Stanton Village Gardens are open on 12th June. Cost £7.50. More info [here](#).

Many groups of gardens have public openings, including those under the National Garden Scheme (NGS). A link to their website is [here](#).

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



The Birds & The Bees – Natalie Mignotte

(notes kindly taken by Yvette Ruggins at our March meeting)



How to attract wildlife into your garden

There is limited flowering at this time of year but consider *Clematis urophylla* 'Winter Beauty' or rosemary; *Lonicera x purpusii* 'Winter Beauty' (honeysuckle) or *hamamelis x intermedia* 'Winter Beauty' (witch hazel)

Don't be too tidy – be a messy gardener! Leave some fallen fruit on the ground

See what pops up and leave it to flourish e.g. poppies

You don't need much space – just a trough or a window box with some wildflower seeds

Moss attracts ladybirds, birds take it for nests so don't remove it all

Pop a Saxifrage in a pot

Insects – bees; hover flies; ladybirds

Insects attract birds and bats

Bees are attracted to yellow flowers e.g. *Lonicera officinalis*; *hamamelis* (witch-hazel)

Nectar/pollen rich shrubs include *Pieris japonica*; *Pieris* 'Forest Flame'; *Daphne bholua* 'Jacqueline Postill';

If you plant blue or green flowers, make sure that the pollen can be easily accessed (eg avoid double flowers)

Plant wildflower seeds

Bumble bees love hellebores; buttercups and daisies; cultivated *Leucanthemum vulgare* (Oxeye daisy); *Trollius*; Cow parsley; Fennel; Solidago (goldenrods); Rudbeckia; Echinacea (coneflowers); ragged-robin; cornflower; wild orchids

If you have a large(ish) area of wild flowers then create a path when the flowers are small, scythe mid-summer, then rake

Pollinating insects are essential if you want to grow fruit. The insect pollinates and fertilises.

Roses – single or semi-double not floribunda

Nasturtium – sacrificial plant, attracts aphids

Put Calendula (marigolds) next to tomatoes instead of using pesticide

Cosmos; salvias; verbenas; English lavender (cut back on 8/8 to 8")

Simple Irises (not bearded)

Butterflies

Buddleia attracts butterflies and moths. If possible choose those with yellow or orange centres



Insects and hedgehogs

Wood piles attract wood lice; earwigs

Allow wood to decompose encouraging worms, slugs and snails

Toads

Toads like a damp place in the shade with ferns where they can hibernate e.g. near water butts

Birds

Blue tits eat aphids so may not have to use pesticide

Moss is great for nests

Cotoneaster berries are favoured by blackbirds as are other yellow, orange and red berries

Woodpeckers like ants

Bird feeders in Winter

Violas attract sparrows and fieldfare

Small Rodents

Dianthus 'Mrs Sinkins' provides ground cover for field mice & shrews

Water Feature or Pond

Doesn't have to be big – a half barrel is enough

Planting – try a mix of high and low plants: primulas; water lilies; water hyacinths; water ranunculus; mint; arching plants for insects to sit on & drink

Damselfly and dragonflies feed on frog and toad spawn

Ensure larger expanses of water have a ramp to help animals that have fallen in, get out

Planting along stream helps stabilise the banks but not allowed to change the course of a stream

Extra Tips

Rosemary thrives in raised beds with good drainage



AS IF WE DIDN'T ALREADY KNOW.....

A recent newspaper article reported that:

"Middle-aged women who like to be surrounded by plants and flowers are less likely to suffer depression or dementia, according to a study." The findings, published in the American journal *JAMA Network Open*, bolsters previous research that has linked exposure to parks, community gardens and other greenery with improved mental health.

So now it's official - you don't need to have an excuse to go out into the garden!

(Note from Ed: I'm sure this would apply to people of all ages!)

Coming soon..

BBC Gardeners World Live is returning to the NEC, Birmingham in June 2022. Get your tickets now. [Read more on the NEC, Birmingham](#)

The [NGS Garden Parties](#) will officially (but not strictly) be during 16th - 24th July. Whatever your garden size, you can help raise funds for nursing & health charities by holding your own tea-party/BBQ/supper party etc. The above link gives full information if you are interested in planning an event.

Although there is some dispute about exactly how many species of paeony there are, here is a list (with web links) of those agreed upon.....

Herbaceous Paeonies (about 30 species)

[Paeonia algeriensis](#)

[Paeonia anomala](#)

[Paeonia arietina](#)

[Paeonia broteri](#)

[Paeonia brownii](#) (Brown's peony)

[Paeonia californica](#) (California peony or wild peony)

[Paeonia cambessedesii](#) (Majorcan peony)

[Paeonia clusii](#)

[Paeonia coriacea](#)

[Paeonia corsica](#)

[Paeonia daurica](#)

subsp. *macrophylla*

subsp. *mlokosewitschii*

subsp. *wittmanniana*

[Paeonia emodi](#)

[Paeonia intermedia](#)

[Paeonia kesrouanensis](#) (Keserwan peony)

[Paeonia lactiflora](#) (Chinese or common garden peony)

[Paeonia mairei](#)

[Paeonia mascula](#) (Balkan, wild or male peony)

[Paeonia obovata](#)

subsp. *willmottiae*

[Paeonia officinalis](#) (European or common peony, type species)

[Paeonia parnassica](#) (Greek peony)

[Paeonia peregrina](#)

[Paeonia sterniana](#)

[Paeonia tenuifolia](#) (Steppe peony)

[Paeonia veitchii](#) (Veitch's peony)



Woody / Tree Paeonies (about 8 species)

[Paeonia decomposita](#)

[Paeonia delavayi](#) (Delavay's tree peony)

[Paeonia jishanensis](#) (Jishan peony)

[Paeonia ludlowii](#) (Ludlow's tree peony)

[Paeonia ostii](#) (Osti's peony)

[Paeonia qiui](#) (Qiu's peony)

[Paeonia rockii](#) (Rock's peony or tree peony;

synonym [Paeonia suffruticosa](#) subsp. *rockii* (Chinese tree peony, known as "moutan (moutan peony)"