



# Potting Shed News

The fortnightly newsletter of Cliveden Gardens

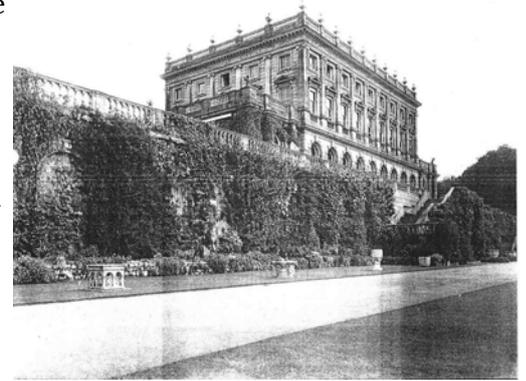
## Lower terrace project



Despite the rather awful weather conditions of late, the team made the most of a few days of sunshine last week to begin planting over 1,100 yew trees to form a hedge on the lower terrace. This area looks remarkably different to how it did a year or so ago (or even how it did in 1934—see below right). This is the last part of the huge south terrace project which began five years ago. We are re-instating the ribbon beds that John Fleming—Head Gardener at Cliveden in the 1850s—planted up. This summer, they will be filled with 1,600 marigolds—planted in ribbons of four different colours: gold, orange, yellow and vanilla. We will soon be turfing the area in front of the ribbon beds and the well heads will be returning to the stone plinths. These well heads will in fact be sited in the same position as they were at the beginning of the 20th century. By planting up the ribbon beds, we are linking the bedding planted in the Duke's Garden to our colourful biannual displays on the Parterre.

We will be planting up the slope at the eastern end of the lower terrace with a

dwarf variety of laurel *Prunus laurocerasus* 'Polster' which will only achieve a height of between 50 and 75cm after ten years. The completion of the project after five long years involving cross-team working as well as specialist contractors will mean that the south terrace has been fully restored and is prepared for another 351 years!



## Know your Narcissus

There are plenty of opportunities to “wander lonely as a cloud” and spot crowds of golden daffodils around the estate. As well as being the national symbol of Wales, daffodils really do herald the sign of spring and there are thousands in bloom right now around the gardens. Planted in autumn (usually October), they spend what seems like an age growing their roots underground before bursting into bloom from February onwards. Daffodils don't always have to be big and yellow and in fact, they are identified by 'divisions' including trumpet, *poeticus* and *cyclaminianus*. But let's not get too bogged down with technicalities.

We've picked out some of our favourites that are flowering now including 'Rijnfeld's Early Sensation' (which can be found along Dog Walkers' path in the Water Garden). As the name suggests, it is an early flowerer and in milder winters can bloom in early January. *Narcissus* 'Ice Follies' has a frilly edged trumpet which initially opens as a buttery yellow, but with time it fades to cream (see below left). *Narcissus* 'Jetfire' is a strong growing dwarf daffodil which has swept back yellow petals and a fiery orange trumpet (see right). We planted hundreds of *Narcissus bulbocodium* in the Water Garden on the island under the magnolia last autumn. Although the area is currently closed off due to waterlogged ground conditions, you may be able to spot their dainty little flowers from afar. This low growing variety is commonly known as the hoop petticoat daffodil and is best suited to an alpine or rock garden.

Just a polite reminder, please avoid the temptation to pick daffodils (or any other flowers for that matter) and however enticing the opportunity may be to take a photograph of your child or pooch in the middle of a clump of daffs, please refrain from doing so. Our flowers are here for everyone to enjoy. Thank you.





## Spring flowers out and about

Spring is definitely here, even though the weather may feel more like winter. There is colour in abundance to be found around the garden, particularly in the Water Garden. Our first pick is the rather fascinating *Petasites japonicus* (or to give it its common name, giant butterbur—see far left). This rhizomatous perennial from China, Japan and Korea prefers damp conditions. It seeds rapidly and so can need controlling. Our next choice is also native to Japan. *Corylopsis spicata* is a hazel-like shrub which has pendulous pale yellow, sweetly scented flowers and is another candidate for providing beautiful early spring colour (see 2nd from left). Its common name is the spike witch hazel and the flowers are produced on bare stems. Continuing the Japanese theme, camellia flowers are plentiful in the Water Garden, particularly either side of the gate as you enter from the Walled Garden. We spotted *Camellia japonica* 'Tricolor' in full bloom (see 2nd from right). Finally, away from the Water Garden on the lawn in front of Blenheim Pavilion, you won't fail to notice *Rhododendron macabeaenum* with its enormous creamy yellow bell-shaped flowers and large glossy, green leaves (see far right). It was introduced to the UK by Frank Kingdon-Ward (1885-1958) a botanist and explorer who was famous for his many plant hunting exhibitions to Tibet, India and China.

## Dates for your diary

We will be running our usual free guided tours of the garden every Tuesday in **April**. There's no need to book, just meet outside the Information Centre at 2pm. Please look at our website for more information on these and many other events taking place across the estate over the next coming months: <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/cliveden/whats-on>

## April is the month to:

- Look out for lily beetle during March and April. These bright red beetles, up to 1cm long, will begin to emerge and can be very destructive to leaves of *Fritillaria sp.*, lilies and *Tricyrtis sp.* (toad lilies). Check the undersides of leaves regularly and the beetles should be picked off immediately and destroyed. P.S. the *Fritillaria imperialis* (see right) are beginning to colour up, particularly in the Water Garden, Long Garden and at the back of the Forecourt borders.
- Prune Forsythia after it has flowered, cutting back to strong, healthy shoots (see right—our *Forsythia x intermedia* 'Spectabilis' is looking colourful in the Long Garden.)
- Feed trees, shrubs and hedges with a slow release fertiliser eg. fish blood and bone—fork it into the surface of the soil.



We say Welcome (or should that be Bienvenido?) to our newest member of the team Ruth Gomez Martin. Although originally from Spain, Ruth has spent almost twenty years in England. She has lots of experience in the horticultural industry and has most recently been working at Brighton College.