

150th edition

# Potting Shed News

The fortnightly newsletter of Cliveden Gardens

Before:



## All change please

Our bedding changeover process is well underway with both the semicircle at the southern end of the Parterre and the Long Garden now planted up. The latter has been filled with 11,000 citrus coloured polyanthus (see right) and it won't be long before the four beds are filled with shades of orange, yellow and white.

After:



Moving on, we have begun emptying and preparing the sixteen triangular beds on the Parterre ready for planting—each bed will be planted with approx. 850 plants. A range of bulbs will then be inter planted amongst the bedding next month. There will be four planting combinations: *Polyanthus* 'Banana Cream' with *Tulipa* 'Sunlover' (see left), blue pansy with *Narcissus* 'Verger', orange pansy with white *Tulipa* 'Mount Tacoma' and finally *Bellis* 'Bellissima mixed' without any bulbs. Our visitors often ask us where our bedding plants come from. They are contract-grown for us by a nursery in Kent. The plants require constant monitoring with regards to light, heat and water and we simply have neither the space nor the time here or the specialist equipment to do this and sometimes it's best to leave it to the



professionals! It is a continuous process making sure that enough beds are ready to plant before the lorry turns up with a delivery (see right).

Elsewhere on the Parterre, Mark and the team have been giving the 18 yew pyramids on the Parterre their annual trim (see below left). As with many jobs we do here, the preparation takes most of the time. Mark starts by setting out a base line using string in line with the box hedge. He uses this line to set out four wooden boards around the base of the pyramid to ensure that he has a totally square base that is parallel with the hedge. Then he is ready to start cutting. Using a wooden triangular frame and a spirit level, the four edges of the pyramid are cut with a pair of sheep shears with the rest being done with hedge trimmers. The top is left until the



very end, when he will tie it in with string to ensure that he gets the pointiest of points possible. The sharpness of these pyramids really does add to the dramatic effect of the Parterre but it's definitely not a simple task.

We should add here that some people think that yew is slow growing but some growth that we have been cutting off has been 50cm long and that is just in one year.

There are still roses flowering away in the Rose Garden, even though it's late October. Two that are looking particularly colourful at the moment are the highly fragrant 'Lady Emma Hamilton' and 'Munstead Wood' (shrub roses—see right). Do take a moment to pop into the Rose Garden and admire the blooms.





## Colour around the garden

There is plenty of colour to be found around the gardens at the moment and not just from the leaves that are starting to turn. In the Water Garden, look out for several clumps of *Liriope muscari* which does a great job at the front of a border (see far left). This useful evergreen will start to flower its socks off just as colour in the herbaceous borders begins to fade. It will tolerate a range of conditions and you can easily produce more plants by dividing larger clumps. Also in the Water Garden, look to your left as you descend the steps to the pagoda and you can't fail to miss *Nandina domestica* 'Fire Power' (2nd from left). Despite its common name, heavenly bamboo, it is not related to bamboo but is in fact a member of the berberis family. It produces small white flowers in summer while in autumn, the leaves turn shades of red and copper. We have a wide variety of perennial salvias in flower around the garden. Whilst walking along the Long Garden walled border, look out for *Salvia* 'Phyllis Fancy' which is quite a late-flowerer (see 2nd from right). Bushy, upright and growing up to 2 metres tall, it produces white flowers that have a slight lavender tint that becomes darker as the season progresses. An altogether different salvia can be found at the very western end of the Long Garden herbaceous border—*Salvia x jamensis* 'Hot Lips' (see far right). With fragrant leaves that have a hint of blackcurrant and bi-colour eye-catching blooms, it's a great addition to any border or pot. Although half hardy, it will benefit from protection during cold winter months.



## Leaves at Cliveden

It's that time of year when the leaves are starting to fall and unfortunately it's not long before they begin to make a mess. Look out for autumn colour around the gardens—*Acer griseum* (see far left) towards the back of the Water Garden. Commonly known as paper bark maple, it is known for its stunning red leaves as well as decorative exfoliating-like bark. Also while you're in the Water Garden, look out for the leaves of *Liquidambar styraciflua* near the pagoda steps as they start to turn (this picture—see left—was taken last year. This tree is native to North America and parts of Mexico and its common name is sweet gum. It has maple like leaves and is known for holding its autumn colour well. Its name derives from the Latin word *liquidus* meaning

liquid and the Arabic word *ambar* meaning amber which refers to the resin that exudes from the bark.

Once we have completed the bedding changeover process, we will spend the month of November clearing leaves from lawns which will allow the grass to breathe in readiness for spring. Leaves can also quickly turn into a health and safety hazard when they become slippery on steps and paths. We are fortunate to have a lot of machinery here which helps us to get the job done quicker than if we were just using rakes!

## Guided tours

There are only two more Tuesdays left in October to join us for a free guided garden tour. Meet outside the Information Centre at 2pm. No need to book, but please do turn up early as places are limited to 18 on a first come, first served basis. Our new Head Gardener Anthony Mason will be leading the last one on October 30th.