



Potting Shed News

The fortnightly newsletter of Cliveden Gardens

From this...



We have now begun the biannual task of bedding changeover on the Parterre and in the Long Garden. In total, we will be planting a staggering 37,350 bedding plants with 14,800 bulbs. The process is hard work but good fun and sees the whole team work together. So what does the process involve? The first stage is to remove all of the summer bedding (see below left: Thursday

to this.....



volunteers in the Long Garden). We make sure that weeds are removed along with all the debris. The next stage is to use a rotary cultivator (this is far quicker than digging over the beds by hand) and then we level the beds with a rake in preparation for planting. We then wait with great anticipation for a lorry to deliver the first batch of plants. Visitors often ask us if we produce our own plants. They are actually contract grown for us by a peat-free nursery in Kent. The plants need constant monitoring for light and temperature and we just don't have the time or the space.



The first plants to arrive this week were 7,500 blue forget me nots which have already been planted in the semicircle at the southern end of the Parterre (see top right). Next month, we will add 3,500 *Tulipa* 'Angelique' in between the rows of plants. This summer the semicircle was ablaze with colour, courtesy of 6,300 red salvias and an



edge of 1,200 *Senecio cineraria* 'Cirrus' (see top left). It seemed a shame to have to remove them, but sadly, we have to keep going. All the plants have been composted and will eventually end up on our beds as mulch.

The central beds that were filled with a rainbow of gladioli this summer are gradually being lifted and sold in the shop at £2 for a bag of 10 corms (see above right). This is a new breed of dwarf hybrid that grows to around 60cm. A mixture of strong colours, they look great in a pot or in the ground and will flower from July to September. If you are tempted to purchase some, allow the leaves to die down and then snap the corm from the stem. Leave the corm to dry for a couple of weeks then remove the new corm from the old (discarding the old). Corms must be kept frost-free and dry until they are planted. Plant in the spring (ours were planted by volunteers in early May).



Whilst we are getting on with the bedding changeover, other jobs need to continue to run concurrently, such as hedge cutting. It took almost two weeks for us to complete the 2.5 miles of box hedging on the Parterre and we were joined by our General Manager Mark Bradshaw who took time out of his busy schedule to join us. Judging by the spirit level in the photo (see left) he did quite a good job! We then moved on to the box hedge in the Long Garden and now that is all cut and cleared, we can prepare the beds for planting up with 11,000 citrus coloured polyanthus. Another job we will start next week is the cutting of the yew obelisks on the Parterre.



In the pink in the Long Garden

As you walk along the Long Garden, the colourful herbaceous border hopefully makes up for the fact that we have now removed all of the annual bedding. At the front of the border, you will notice the bright pinky-red flowers of *Achillea* 'Paprika' (see far left). Ideally it likes to be grown in full sun (so this south facing border is ideal) and in a well drained soil. Did you know that *Achillea* is commonly known as yarrow and that its name derives from the Greek hero Achilles who first used the plant as a herbal remedy? Flower stems can be left in situ over winter for architectural value. It is such a valuable plant in a border with its feathery foliage and flat, colourful circular heads that will flower all season. There are several clumps of asters in the border spreading a little autumn cheer. They begin flowering around September 29th, the day of St. Michael, hence their common name of Michaelmas daisy. The one we've picked out has a ridiculously long name: *Symphyotrichum novae-angliae* 'Andenken an Alma Pötschke' (see 2nd from left) which has bright pink flowers. This bushy, herbaceous perennial is very upright with narrow green leaves and prefers a well drained soil. Now is the best time to admire the bold, colourful displays of dahlias. It was hard to pick a favourite but we went for two contrasting types. Firstly *Dahlia* 'Sorbet' (see 2nd from right). This medium sized semi-cactus dahlia has white petals that are tipped with dark pink. It certainly has the wow factor! Finally, look out for several clumps of the miniature ball *Dahlia* 'Mary's Jomanda' (see far right) which has been awarded the RHS Award of Garden Merit.



Hidden under trees around the garden, you may spot the odd autumn crocus (see left). Botanically known as *Crocus speciosus*, they are ideal for naturalising in a sunny border among deciduous shrubs. They look slightly different to the larger flowered *Colchicum autumnale* which are also sometimes referred to as autumn crocus, but in fact their common name is naked ladies.

Over the next few weeks, look out for the bright pink flowers of *Nerine bowdenii* (see below right in October 2017) outside the Dovecote café.

They produce umbels of pink flowers in the autumn with strappy green leaves appearing after the flowers die down. Commonly known as the Cornish Bowden lily, they are in the amaryllis family and do particularly well in full sun and a well drained soil.



Staff news

We welcome Catherine Barlow (see left) to the team as a full time Gardener. Previously Catherine worked part time as an Assistant Gardener at Hughenden

whilst running her own gardening business.

Next week, we will say goodbye to Gardener Emma Massey who leaves us after just over a year to spend more time with her family.

Guided tours are back!

Get your diaries out and make a note that our free Tuesday tours are back. Meet outside the Information Centre at 2pm every Tuesday in October. No need to book, but please do turn up early as places are limited to 18 on a first come, first served basis.