



Potting Shed News

The fortnightly newsletter of Cliveden Gardens



A rainbow of colour

We decided that we would fill up the front page of this edition with plenty of colourful photos to highlight just how wonderful the garden is looking right now. We seem to have spent an age waiting for warm sunshine and then all of sudden it came along and made everything grow (including the weeds!) We are particularly pleased with the 11,000 *Bellis* 'Bellissima mixed' that are blooming in the Long Garden (see left). Considering the weather conditions the plants have suffered over the past few months, it is

an incredible feat of nature that they could put on such a great display. Visitors are already asking what we will be replacing them with when we undertake the bedding changeover in late May/early June. This summer, the four beds will be filled with 11,000 *Salvia* 'Vista mixed' providing a carpet of pink, red, white and purple.



Down on the Parterre, over 3,000 tulips are looking colourful. Four of the sixteen beds are filled with *Tulipa* 'Yellow Mountain' planted with blue pansies (see left) and a further four beds contain *Tulipa* 'Red Impression' with *Polyanthus* 'Banana Cream' (see top right.) We are particularly pleased with the planting combination in the newly restored Duke's Garden—*Tulipa* 'Uncle Tom' (a stunning double red-purple late tulip) with more *P.* 'Banana Cream' (see below right). It certainly is a transformation from how the garden looked a few years ago. Carpet bedding will once again be making a

return to the Duke's Garden in June this year with a display to represent the letter H for Harriet, Duchess of Sutherland. As the owner of Cliveden in the 1850s, she worked with Head Gardener John Fleming

who was seen as a pioneer of formal, seasonal bedding schemes including carpet bedding.



On the lower terrace, we have been able to complete the planting of the yew hedge (see left) now that the ground conditions have dried out and we have begun planting up the slope on the eastern end of the lower terrace with a dwarf variety of laurel *Prunus laurocerasus* 'Polster' which will only grow to a height of between 50 and 75cm. In front of the yew hedge, we are re-instating the ribbon beds which are inspired by Fleming's design. These will be filled with four different colours of marigolds over the summer months: gold, orange, yellow and vanilla. We have also been levelling the soil in the area adjacent to these ribbon beds in preparation for the arrival of a lorry load of turf which arrives this week. The re-instatement of the seasonal ribbon bedding scheme will provide a visual link between the newly restored Duke's Garden and the Parterre. As we explained in the last edition, this is the last part of the huge south terrace project which began five years ago and it will be great to see it completed.



Water Garden wonders

The Water Garden is so full of scent and colour right now that it's hard to know what to pick out as our highlights. At the top of the steps down to the pagoda, on your left hand side you will notice what at first glance appear to be snowdrops. In fact *Leucojum aestivum* is commonly known as the summer snowflake (see far left). It is later flowering and taller than a snowdrop and has strappy foliage with nodding white flowers. It will grow up to 60cm tall and naturalises well. If you stand in the same position, but look to your right, you can't fail to see the mass of colour from *Rhododendron augustinii* (see 2nd from left). With its striking blue flowers, it is a must for any woodland garden. Next up, are the nodding bell head flowers of snake's head fritillaries blooming in the grass as you enter via the black bamboo gate (see 2nd from right). Botanically known as *Fritillaria meleagris*, they are a feature of damp lowland meadows and are great for naturalising in shady moist woodland and wildflower gardens. A lot of colour at this time of year comes courtesy of bulbs and one such example is *Erythronium* 'Pagoda' (see far right). The flowers of this hardy dog's tooth violet resemble those of Turk's cap lilies and these plants prefer to be in a shady area in free draining soil.



The mammoth task of pea-sticking

Gardener Jen and the team (including Wednesday volunteer Anne—see left) have this week begun pea-sticking on the herbaceous borders. This is the process of using branches of coppiced hazel to make basket-like frameworks to support taller perennials such as achillea, phlox and bergamot. The plants will grow through the structures, meaning that you won't actually see them at the height of summer. It is worth remembering that this will only be the case if the frameworks are at exactly the right height. This method saves the need for bamboo canes and string and although it takes a few weeks to complete both sides of the border, it is certainly a talking point with our visitors.

Jobs to do in April

Now the weather has suddenly warmed up, there is no excuse for not getting out in the garden!

A few jobs you could be getting on with if you haven't already done so include:

- Feed trees, shrubs and hedges with a balanced, slow release fertiliser by lightly forking it into the soil surface. It's also an opportunity to feed roses as they come into growth.
- Sow lettuce and salad crops every three to four weeks to ensure succession of cropping.
- Take basal cuttings from dahlias that have started to shoot. Place these in a propagator or greenhouse with a bit of bottom heat if possible and they should root within two to three weeks. They can then be potted on to flower in the autumn.

Dates for your diary

There is only one more Tuesday in April for you to enjoy a free guided tour around the gardens. There's no need to book, just meet outside the Information Centre at **2pm on 24th April**. 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>