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Charlton & Blackheath
Amateur Horticultural Society
Founded 1950

www.cabahs.wordpress.com

NEWSLETTER JUNE 2021

Grow Friends, Grow Fit ... Grow a Garden!

This month we welcome Graham Dear, who will be talking to us about the management of Greenwich Park and particularly the impact of Covid.

Our membership has grown very encouragingly and we now have 131 members in the Society, Soon those still thinking of joining will have to be placed on a waiting list! Of course, while talks are being given via Zoom numbers are not a problem, but when we at last hold meetings in Charlton House we will need to ensure that everyone is in a safe and secure environment and that we do not exceed our maximum capacity. Also, as we have not been holding physical meetings, new members have not received a proper welcome. We had decided to send a 'welcome email' to our new members, but then realised that as many of you have joined over the past year and have not been able to attend a 'proper' meeting, we might as well send a 'welcome' to everyone! Please see attached document.

Most of you will by now know that the Plant Sale held by CABAHS on 30 May in the Long Border at Charlton House was even more successful than we anticipated, attracting large numbers of people and earning £1,900, half of which has been donated to Greenwich and Bexley Community Hospice. We can only say a terrific thank you to all those who helped to staff the day and to prepare for the it, who provided plants to sell, who bought so generously and to Kathy for being the focal point of organisation and without whom it wouldn't have happened. We were fortunate with the weather and the photo below captures some of the spirit of the day.



For every event and all the work that we do, we try and get some feedback in order to enable us to improve and build on our experience. A summary of feedback for the Plant Sale is provided below:

KEY TAKEAWAYS

72% came for plants and 26% for cakes

88% bought something

Everyone was interested in seeing other outdoor activities in the gardens, eg 84% supported a Farmers Market.

Only 9% walk through the gardens daily

43% ticked that they only come to the gardens occasionally. This included several people who had come for the first time, usually after their vaccination.

86% have been to Charlton House before, but only 47% would be interested in seeing inside again.

29% were aged over 65, 43% were in the range 35-54

74% live in Greenwich

COMMENTS

Overall very positive, as shown by rating "4" Very Good

Volunteer and community groups clearly much appreciated

Friendly informal atmosphere was a winner.

Negatives:

Advertising of the event and poor signage around the gardens

No Loos, or signs to loos.

No cold drinks/tea & coffee

Nowhere to sit

Not all plants priced

More stalls please - a repeated comment. We were compared with e.g. the HornFair by some people. Need to be clear on the poster that this is an amateur, community event, not a Trust event.

On Friday 18th June a small but intrepid bunch of us braved the weather and made the visit to Beth Chatto's garden. Thank you to Anna for arranging. It's simply unfortunate that the visit planned for last year was unable to go ahead and that we were limited to car shares this year, so that the garden couldn't be appreciated by more.

Anna writes:

The smiles on our members' faces at Beth Chatto's gardens on Friday morning made the horrendous rain-driven journey worthwhile! The rain actually stopped five minutes after we arrived! The gardens were looking absolutely stunning, especially the world-famous gravel garden and the plantings surrounding the chain of pond gardens, all of which are beautifully placed so that one noticed the arrangement of each plant, each grouping, with contrasting leaf shapes, heights, colours, with the emphasis on verticals and horizontals: Beth Chatto became famous at Chelsea for her 'triangular groupings'. We had coffee at tables set out in the large polytunnel adjacent to the cafe and before we all left we all had fun deciding what unusual plants to buy and I overspent, as usual!!!! Do go at your next opportunity. You will want to return time and time again.



Gardening notes

With the current and proposed relaxation of restrictions, there are a huge number of activities to choose from. The list below is just a small selection.

- **The Garden Museum's** exhibition on Constance Spry, '*Constance Spry and the Fashion for Flowers*' runs until 26th September.
- I recently watched a fascinating talk from Tom Stuart-Smith on the renovation project he carried out on a garden in Marrakech (Le Jardin Secret), now open to the public. However, he also referred to another garden he was involved in creating - the **Jellicoe Garden** - in London, in King's Cross. Built on Islamic principles it is another beauty and well worth a visit.

- I recommended the free online talks by **Gresham College** some time ago, but was recently reminded that it is worth drawing attention to these again. They are very wide ranging and there is probably a subject to suit every taste!
- Do continue to check **RHS** podcasts, The **London Gardens Trust** lecture series and Garden Masterclass. Check their websites for details and check out our website for further activities to get involved in.
- The **Open Gardens Festival**, with gardens open across Greenwich and Blackheath organised by Greenwich and Bexley Community Hospice takes place on 26th and 27th June, 2-6pm. Full details are on our What's On page, and we have several members who are involved, so please try to visit their gardens if you can. All funds raised are in aid of the Greenwich & Bexley Community Hospice.
- **Dulwich Picture Gallery** is showing it's first major photography exhibition, **Unearthed: Photography's Roots**, which shows photos from the 1840s to today, told through stunning still lifes of plants and botany. Closed Mondays and Tuesdays. See the website for details and booking.

Pat's 10 jobs for June:

1. Well, the weather for June is wet and warm so number one task is to be vigilant about slugs and snails who make a beeline for tender young shoots. Two of my Nicotiana completely disappeared last night. Make up that garlic spray!
2. Roses are putting on a wonderful show at the moment but keep up appearances by deadheading regularly and cutting back to just above a leaf joint so they can keep flowering.
3. Where space is limited, cut back perennials that have finished flowering to make way for other plants and in the hope they will flower again later in the season. These can include early flowering hardy Geraniums, Brunnera and Pulmonaria.
4. Feed clematis fortnightly with a high nitrogen feed but stop feeding immediately buds are fully formed or you will shorten the display.
5. Remember to tie in shoots of clematis which are fragile and can snap in heavy rain or strong winds. If they do snap pinch back to a leaf joint for later flowers.
6. Prune back early flowering shrubs which are now over such as weigela and early flowering honeysuckle but always checking for nesting birds.
7. Deadhead plants in window boxes and containers to keep the display going all summer. Once they set seed they will stop flowering altogether. And don't forget to feed once the nutrients in the compost are exhausted
8. Remove dead foliage from spring flowering bulbs once it turns yellow.
9. Tie in shoots of sweetpeas to their supports until they learn to climb and use their tendrils to cling on.
10. Once the flowers appear on early potatoes gently use a fork to see if potatoes are ready to harvest. They need to be roughly the size of a hen's egg. Those first earlies are the best!

Happy gardening all!

Contact us on: cabahshortisoc@gmail.com