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Charlton & Blackheath
Amateur Horticultural Society
Founded 1950

www.cabahs.wordpress.com

NEWSLETTER January 2022

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

This month we welcome Anne Barnard from Rose Cottage Plants to talk to us about dahlias. Many of you might remember that Anne was due to come and talk to us last year, but had to cancel due to the circumstances in which we found ourselves so she is especially welcome!

Good news that a horticulturalist has been recognised in the Queen's New Years Honours 2022: Dan Pearson has been awarded an OBE for services to horticulture.

Members will remember Graham Blunt of Plantbase Nursery who presented to us at the start of 2020. In this month's issue of *The Garden* he comments that in 2021 everyone was wanting to grow ginger and he predicts that jungle and house plants will still be star performers this year. Perhaps think about reserving your seats for our exotics talk later in the year! And Anna Panait, RHS Young Designer of the Year finalist, predicts there will be a return to crazy paving as people move to recycle more. Let's wait and see!

Check out our website for the list of talks in 2022, some exciting ones for your diary!

January Plants of the Month chosen by Anna: Daphne bholua 'Jacqueline Postill' and Rosa x odorata 'Bengal Beauty/Bengal Crimson'

I think every garden should have a Daphne and Daphne bholua 'Jacqueline Postill' is particularly special as it flowers in late winter, during January and February. Seeing this shrub in flower lifts the spirits and makes us want Spring to hurry forth. And it encourages us out into the garden to potter around and see what else is emerging. Its habit is upright, compared to the more rounded Daphne shrubs we usually see in gardens. This species is ideal for small gardens as it doesn't take up much space, being narrow, slow-growing and eventually reaching 2-3 metres in ideal conditions. It is considered a choice shrub so it's often difficult to purchase.

D 'Jacqueline Postill' flowers are the highlight at this time of the year, opening paler than the deeper pink buds, but, when open they look gorgeous, emitting an utterly delicious clove-like fragrance. Heavenly!!! My 'Jacqueline Postill' grows directly under a mature mimosa (18 inches from the tree) in dappled shade, but this variety is happy to also grow in full sun and is not really fussy about soil conditions. Other species, though, like more moist soil conditions.

Anyone considering planting a Daphne should take my advice and plant it adjacent to a path or patio to benefit from their fragrant flowers and not at the back of the border like I did! Adjacent to 'Jacqueline Postill' is Rosa x odorata 'Bengal Beauty/Bengal Crimson' an utterly beautiful China shrub rose, single, crimson in colour, which compliments the pink clusters of flowers of the Daphne at this time of the year. This lightly fragrant rose flowers all year round - twelve months of the year! And it can also be

trained upwards, reaching 1.5-2m in height. Another 'must' for any garden but I would like to plant another in a sunnier location for more flower buds in future. Growing nearby are several crimson Cyclamen Coum and I definitely think a smattering of these corms growing directly beneath these two shrubs sets them off nicely.

Daphne bholua 'Jacqueline Postill' and Rosa x odorata 'Bengal Beauty/Bengal Crimson' in Anna's garden.



Gardening notes

- Fergus Garrett is giving one of his excellent talks online, *Painting Pictures with Plants*, looking at combinations of colour and foliage, on 28 January. Book online, £15. Check the website for more talks and events, online and in the gardens. A number of their online talks from last year are now on Vimeo - do have a look.
- *Fabergé in London: Romance to Revolution* exhibition at the **V&A** includes The Basket of Flowers Egg commissioned by Tsar Nicholas II as an Easter gift for his wife. The exhibition continues until May.
- **The Gardens Trust** is running several series of interesting online talks which include *Forgotten Women Gardeners*, *The Landscape Garden* and *Early Illustrators of Natural History*. There are several talks in each series and you can either book for all or just individual talks. Check their website for details. Additionally, regional groups are also offering talks - Sussex GT are running four talks on Sussex gardens.
- Also at the **V&A**, *Beatrix Potter: Drawn to Nature* begins on 12 February and includes some lovely images of gardens.
- For those of you who like to see landscape in art, the **National Gallery** has an exhibition of the late works of John Constable, 30 October until 13 February. Tickets must be booked in advance.
- Keep an eye on the lectures (in person and online and free!) offered by **Gresham College**. There is one in early 2022 on 'Averting the Insect Apocalypse'. With the current focus on sustainability this looks like compulsory viewing!

Pat's 10 jobs for January:

1. Make sure to recycle your Christmas tree by using the spent pine needles as a mulch around your ericaceous shrubs like Camellia, Azalea and Rhododendron.
2. After Christmas cactus has flowered move it to a cool room for a rest period before new growth starts in the spring.
3. When working on your beds try not to stand on them which compacts the soil and maybe work off a plank or remember to lightly fork over the soil afterwards.
4. Inspect tubers of cannas and dahlias for signs of rot and dispose of any soft or unhealthy ones.
5. Cut back stems of perennials down to soil level if they are tatty or diseased. I always leave on the ground for a while in case there are any overwintering insects which need to relocate.
6. Now is a good time to prune any deciduous trees removing any diseased branches.
7. Remove last years leaves from Hellebores to prevent carrying over fungal leaf spot and for showing off the blooms too.
8. Move any scented plants in pots such as Sarcococca, Viburnum bodnantense and Daphne to either your front or back door so you catch the scent each time you go out.
9. For an early harvest of rhubarb cover plants with straw then cover with a forcer or upturned bucket until new shoots have sprouted.
10. Make sure to clean out bird boxes if not done already to be ready for any new inhabitants.

Regarding Pat's first tip above, Kathy walked her dogs through Mycenae Woods and noted this wonderful idea for using up the old Christmas tree - the Friends of Mycenae have lined the wildlife hedges with them. It makes a great barrier, dogs and kiddies won't venture into the wild parts with these in the way!

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Object of the month



Silene painting by Jane Loudon
From fineartamerica.com

In addition to writing extensively, Jane Wells Webb Loudon (1807-1858) was also a talented illustrator. Many of her works included at least 300 illustrated plates. In these, plants are grouped according to the natural system, instead of the conventional habit of depicting them singly. Her typical style grouped the flowers to form bouquets, making her designs popular to copy as well as being used for decoupage on trays, lampshades and tables.

Next meeting

Our February 21st meeting will be a talk from our very own Melanie, on the Rothschild Legacy in Horticulture. February is also for membership renewal and AGM business including the appointment of new committee members - please consider whether you can offer to help on the committee - we particularly need a Membership secretary but any help is appreciated.

Happy gardening all!

Contact us on: cabahshortisoc@gmail.com