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Charlton & Blackheath
Amateur Horticultural Society
Founded 1950

www.cabahs.wordpress.com

NEWSLETTER August 2022

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

Monday's meeting is when we host our annual Gardener's Question Time, with a panel comprising Joe Woodcok (local horticulturalist), Pat Kane (CABAHS committee member) and your CABAHS Chair. Nicolas Bevan, our President, will chair the event. With a heightened focus on gardening in dry conditions, this interest may feed through to your questions.

August Plant of the Month from Anna.

Sollya heterophylla is another climber classed as 'half-hardy' but our London gardens provide their own micro-climates and, as such, protect these various climbers from harsh conditions experienced further north of the country. I first encountered a Sollya happily climbing over an archway in a west-facing Greenwich garden 30 years ago and I was enchanted. My climber, which I have been growing for some years now, did suffer a little (one or two side branches turned brown) from a late frost in 2021 but that was all. Sollya is native to southern and Western Australia. My plant has attractive, evergreen foliage and small but very pretty bell-shaped, pale-blue flowers. These, seemingly, are followed by edible blue berries (I must look closer!) A deeper-blue variety is now on the market, called 'Ultra Blue' which looks stunning and a white variety is also available. This climber suits growing through tripods

or arches where it can distinguish itself and likes rich, well-drained soil (with a mulch in winter) in sun or semi-shade and a protected location. Sollya is an under-rated climber that deserves to be noticed.



Visiting Great Comp this week, I purchased from Dysons Nurseries shop (located just inside the garden entrance) Salvia 'Animo' which I think is a miniature of Salvia 'Black and Blue' and it goes beautifully with the paler-blue Sollya flowers. This salvia is new in 2021 and labelled "outstanding", flowering during the summer and autumn and classed as hardy. As Salvia 'Black and Blue' stops flowering and rests between July and November, when it resumes flowering once again, having Salvia 'Animo' to flower in its place in the summer is the perfect solution. The deep, royal-blue flowers with black calyces are a wonderful substitute.

Salvia 'Animo' in foreground with Sollya in the background

Gardening notes

- The Gardens Trust has a series of online lectures called **The Fabric of Flowers** Mondays, 6pm, 19 Sept - 24 October. Tickets: £5 for an individual talk, £24 for the series of six. Check The Gardens Trust website for details.



This image is from Janet Haigh's 'Flora' series. Check out her beautiful work at <https://janethaighherwork.com/about/>

- From 6 July to 4 September **The Garden Museum** is hosting an exhibition based around Frances Hodgson Burnett's book *The Secret Garden* looking at how different artists have brought the book to life.
- For those of you who have SKY, a new series has begun on Sky Arts called **The Art of the Garden**. It begins with Dan Pearson, and also includes Arabella Lennox-Boyd and Cleve West in later episodes.
- Hole Park is hosting the **Plant Fairs Roadshow** on Sunday 21 August.
- Rose Cottage Plants have their **Dahlia Open Weekend** on 28 and 29 August.
- Mottingham Horticultural Society is hosting its **Autumn Show** on 27 August at Eltham College.
- Constance Villiers Stuart's archive (1876-1966) has been acquired by the **Garden Museum**. It includes some fabulous paintings by Constance and a new book documents her garden records and visits to gardens around the world.
- Now open is the garden space which Adam Frost has designed for **University Hospital Lewisham** as part of the RHS Healing Garden programme.

Out and about with Anna.

Great Comp Garden is an utterly fabulous garden and I'm a huge fan. Perhaps I can entice you to visit if you have not visited before? (It is an hour door-to-door from south-east London). The seven-acre garden surrounds a 17th century Manor House (being refurbished) and includes large lawns, garden rooms, exotic planting among 'Roman' ruins, formal beds, and many winding paths leading through to a variety of planting combinations and styles. Paths wind through the mature woodland, also planted with magnolias, azaleas, and flowering hydrangeas. In every direction there are splendid views and many shady dells in which to stroll and sit. As we are in drought conditions, we were amazed how fantastic the garden was looking. A gardener advised us that very little watering takes place: the hydrangeas and annual planting mainly, and this was due to an annual mulch of mushroom compost and leaf mould added to the beds. There were two or three small areas in full sun that had suffered, but on the whole the garden plants were thriving splendidly. Afternoon tea, supplied by the on-site Old Dairy Tearoom, was enjoyed outside, with both of us relaxing at a table shaded by an umbrella, with a view of the exotic gardens and majestic tetrapanax. Bliss!



Great Comp

Kathy adds: "Some of you may remember the CABAHS trip to Great Comp just after the first lockdown, in September 2020. You can see the video of that visit on our website. The link is below, or you can always type Great Comp into the search box on our website to go straight to it. :

<https://cabahs.com/2020/09/26/a-visit-to-great-comp/>

I should point out that the Dahlia name suggestion on the video was wrong, I think they are Magenta Star and not Mystic Dreamer. But how to edit that video now is a step too far for me!

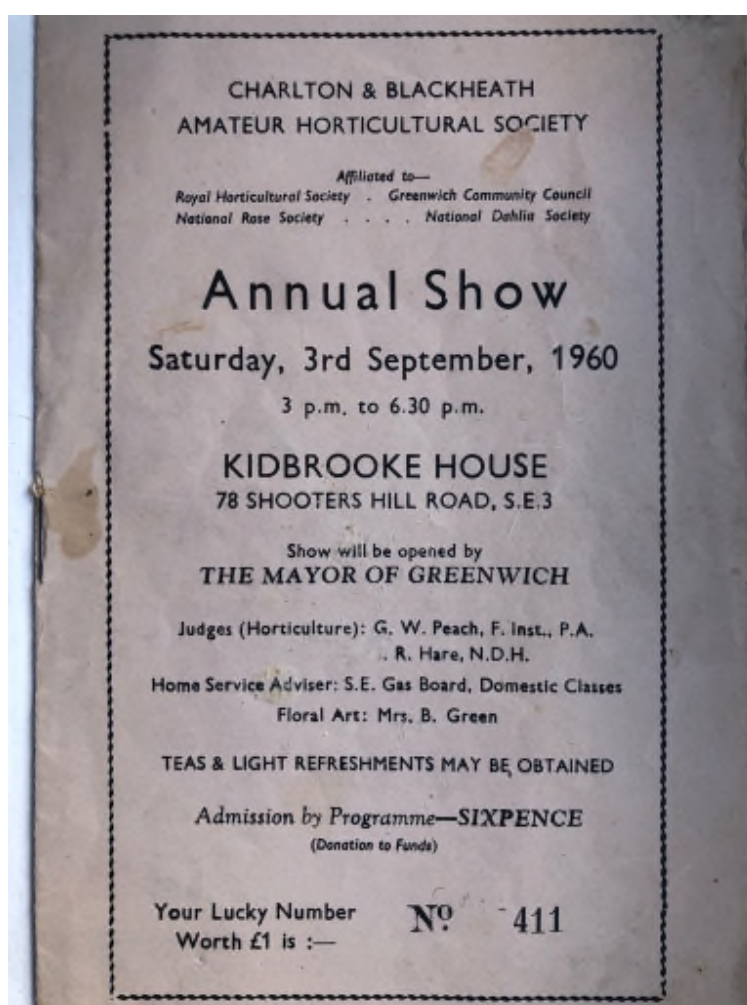
Pat's 10 jobs for August:

Due to the hot weather and lack of rain the usual gardening jobs just don't apply as it's impossible to get things done in the heat of the day and the best time is very early in the morning or late in the evening unless you have a very cool shady garden. Those that face due south are really in trouble with no respite from the glaring sun. I have a bank at the back of the garden which at the best of times is difficult to water and as it's now bone dry any water fails to penetrate and just runs off. It looks like a desert and there's clearly a lot of dead things that I've sadly had for years and now lost, but maybe it teaches us a lesson about the importance of 'right plant, right place' Beth Chatto's mantra. So here are just a few things you may want to do once it cools and in the light of a hose pipe ban which looks imminent.

1. Chop down anything that has turned brown and crispy in the hope you can save it from disappearing altogether. I visited Sissinghurst last week and have never seen it look so bare, but this is what they've done to try and save things.
2. Aim any water directly at the roots and don't sprinkle the soil as it will dry out in no time. Try and use your grey water from the house too,

3. If time and energy are limited only water your favourite plants as you can always buy new things from our sales tables in the future, or from the Plant Sales at the Horn Fair or next year at our plant sale at Charlton House!
4. Take cuttings now to fill any gaps next year, but remember these will only really work if taken from healthy plants. Keep them in a shady spot until you are sure they have taken then pot up individually.
5. When weeding, place weeds on top of the soil around your plants to use as a mulch but do remember that if they have set seed you will be doing plenty of weeding next year!
6. Tomatoes are growing at a rate of knots as they love the conditions, so will probably need extra staking and try and pull off some of the foliage, especially lower down the stem, to allow the sun to ripen the fruits.
7. I invested in some Strulch for the allotment, supposedly to deter slugs and snails which hasn't worked too well, but it does keep the ground damp underneath and acts as a good mulch.
8. Don't waste water on your lawn, it will survive once the rains come, hopefully next week.
9. Don't forget the wildlife. I have 5 small birdbaths round my small garden and I top them up every day for birds and insects.
10. And don't forget to collect seed from your favourite plants, which of course will hopefully save you money next year.

Object of the month



This is the cover of CABAHS' leaflet for the Autumn Show in 1960. Readers will note that the Mayor of Greenwich opened the Show. Note too the societies to which we were affiliated and the value of the winning ticket!

Happy gardening all!
Contact us on: cabahshortisoc@gmail.com

