

## Cottage Garden Society Cotswold Group August 2023 Newsletter



**Our July talk** was on Seed Saving with Zoe Brooks from the local Seed Savers Group. Zoe will be running a practical workshop, probably on the new Winchcombe allotment site, later in the year.

Zoe is also a poet with a new book ***Fool's Paradise*** out now and a debut collection ***Owl Unbound*** (pub 2020). Contact Zoe to find out more.

<https://zoebrookspoetry.bigcartel.com/products>

### **Zoe's top seed saving tips**

- Save seed from your best plants. (Don't, for example, collect seed from the first lettuce to bolt – that is not a characteristic you want to encourage.)
- The easiest seed to collect is from pods, such as beans or peas or poppies. Ripe pods rattle!
- Test if your bean or pea seed is ready to save by tapping lightly with a hammer. If it squashes, it wasn't ready!
- Seed which always comes true to the parent is from self pollinators such as tomatoes.

- Remove the jelly from around tomato seeds by washing and then drying to save. If you dry tomato seeds on paper, they may stick to it – either avoid that or plant the seeded paper!
- Hybrids will not come true to type.
- Wind-pollinated seed and insect-pollinated seed may not come true to type and can be produced by a different plant from the same family.
- Check out plant families.
- Take seed from the middle of clumps as they are more likely to be pollinated from the same variety or species. If in doubt, consult the experts!

### **The experts:**

The best guide to vegetable species is: <https://vitalseeds.co.uk/growing-resources/seed-saving-resources/vegetable-species-list/>

The best easy guide is the Real Seeds site:  
<https://www.realseeds.co.uk/seedsavinginfo.html>

### **Sources of cheap or free seed:**

You can get interesting seed free or cheaply from seed exchanges or swaps.

<https://www.facebook.com/wincombeseedswap/>

<https://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/what-we-do/hsl/seed-swaps>

**CGS Seed Exchange** <https://www.thecgs.org.uk/event-details/9>

### **Other useful sources of information and help:**

#### **Community Allotment**

<https://www.facebook.com/Winchcombe.CAO/>

#### **Heritage Seed Library**

<https://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/what-we-do/hsl>

**OUR SEPTEMBER SMALL GROUP VISIT WILL BE ON THE AFTERNOON OF TUESDAY 26TH SEPTEMBER (Exact time to be confirmed)**

**COURT HOUSE, STRETTON ON FOSSE NR MORETON IN MARSH GL56 9SD**

Court House is a continually evolving, 4-acre garden with year-round interest and colour. It has a wide range of planting divided into garden rooms with extensive and varied spring bulbs; herbaceous borders; a fernery; and a rose garden. The walled



kitchen garden has recently been redesigned and restored and the winter garden newly planted. There is also a pond area and paddocks which are gradually being established with wild flowers.

£8 including tea and cake



***Please book your places with Natalie so we can confirm numbers in advance with the garden owner. Email: [natalie@lestones.plus.com](mailto:natalie@lestones.plus.com) or telephone 01242 602384.***

### **NGS GLOUCESTERSHIRE GARDEN OPEN IN AUGUST**

**Charlton Down House, Charlton Down, Tetbury, Gloucestershire, GL8 8TZ**

Extensive country house gardens in 180 acre equestrian estate with formal terraces; perennial borders; walled topiary garden; enclosed cut flower garden; a large glasshouse; and a newly-planted copse. Rescue animals. Ample parking.

**Sundays 3<sup>rd</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> August 1pm – 5pm Adult £7, child free. Home-made teas.**



## OUR SMALL GROUP VISITS IN JULY



**Our first July visit was to White Cottage in Gretton**, which will open under the NGS for the first time next year. The garden is well worth a visit, now covering an acre and a half, having expanded over the years that its owners have been there. The result shows their thoughtful planning and understanding of their plants.

As well as flower beds and shrubs around the house, there is a thriving herb garden; a woodland area of interesting native trees; a fernery; a large pond; a small orchard; an immaculate vegetable garden; and a wildflower meadow. There is also an extensive and colourful apiary on the western side. The work involved in creating and maintaining the garden is very impressive.

Seats and benches around the site provide places to stop and rest and admire the work and planning. The garage takes its style from cricket pavilion with a sheltered seating platform overlooking the garden.

You may be startled suddenly by an enormous noise as a steam train goes past. The Gloucestershire Warwickshire Steam Railway runs along the embankment at the bottom of the garden!

We were happy to give Judith very positive feedback and wish her well for her NGS opening next year.





**Our second July visit was to garden designer Sue Bradbury's home in Lower Chedworth**, a small tranquil cottage garden on the side of a peaceful valley. The very colourful garden features topiary and a rose arch walk, dividing the formal garden from the orchard, which is home to chickens, with spring-flowering bulbs and wildflowers. The choice of planting and water in the garden make it a haven for wildlife and pollinators. A fernery is planted around the facade of a bothy and Scottish stone recreated from Sue's 'Highland Retreat' award-winning design at RHS Chelsea 2006.

Sue's neighbour's garden at Cobblers Cottage is similar in style, but is more exposed on the slope. It curves around to a property still being completed. This has formal terraces with a natural spring feeding through its vegetable garden and into the sheep trough in the field below.

Both gardens were immaculate and clearly benefited from the two neighbours and their gardener working well together. Sue was generous with her time and her hospitality was splendid with beautiful cakes served inside the oak-beamed kitchen-sitting room.







## COMMERCIAL GARDEN TRIPS:

If you don't drive, don't forget that you can still venture further afield using local bus or coach services. Marchant's Coaches, for example, offer trips in August to the Shrewsbury Flower Show on the 12<sup>th</sup>, Westonbirt Arboretum on the 14<sup>th</sup>; Bournemouth (– yes, gardens as well as sea and shops!) on 17<sup>th</sup>; and in September Kew Gardens on 9<sup>th</sup>; the Lost Gardens of Heligan on 17<sup>th</sup>; and the Malvern Autumn Show on 23<sup>rd</sup>. Look at their website [www.marchants-coaches.com](http://www.marchants-coaches.com) or ring 01242 257714 or call in to their Clarence Street office in Cheltenham or your local Tourist Information Centre

## GERANIUMS

We circulated the Cranesbill Nursery (the geranium specialist) guide to growing geraniums last year. Back in April, Gary of Cranesbill Nursery was interviewed on the popular MicThe Gardener Podcast by Mike Palmer. Mike quizzed Gary on all aspects of growing Hardy Geraniums, and he covered most of what he talks about when presenting talks to gardening clubs. You can listen in by following the link to the 24<sup>th</sup> April 2023 release:

<https://podcasters.spotify.com/pod/show/michael-palmer07>

If you have any problems with the link, just Google 'Mike the Gardener Podcast' and you'll be able to find it via his website.

## HERBS, HEALING & THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AT THE MUSEUM OF GLOUCESTER IN AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER

**Local herbs for local people for local healing.** Learn more about the plants that grew in Gloucester .Explore how we can use plants to heal ourselves. Discover art inspired by sacred geometry and understand medicine and history with community practitioners.

**Not just an exhibition, but walks and workshops on mushrooms, foraging, herbal remedies, Qi-Yong, culinary herbs and much, much more!**

Book tickets for workshops or walks at:

<https://museum-ofgloucester.arttickets.org.uk/museum-of-gloucester/2023-08-05-healing-herbs-exhibition-workshops>

. You can book multiple workshops/walks on the same transaction. All events cost just £1.00 each for a ticket.

Museum of Gloucester Brunswick Rd, Gloucester GL1 1HP Tel. 01452 396131