

COTTAGE GARDEN SOCIETY COTSWOLD GROUP DECEMBER 2023



FESTIVE GARDENS

Painswick Rococo Garden: “The Enchanted Garden by Night” from Thursday 7th December to Saturday 6th January.

Westonbirt Enchanted Christmas runs until 23rd December. It is an illuminated trail with Father Christmas, a Christmas village and seasonal food carts. The restaurant and Smokehouse will be open too. Visits are from 4 to 9.30, but **you need to book** entry slots between 4.40 and 8.20 in advance to keep numbers manageable and prices vary according to date.

Did you know that Westonbirt was included in a recent top ten of UK gardens to visit in winter months?

Batsford Arboretum has **Santa’s Grotto** for children in groups of 6 or fewer, all of whom will receive a gift. Open on 2nd, 3rd, 9th, 10th, 16th and 17th December with 30

minute slots available between 10am and 2.30pm which **must** be booked online in advance.

The Big Batsford Elf Hunt requires no advance booking. It runs from 1st December to 7th January – but not on Christmas Day! £3 per child (on top of the usual admission fees.)

GENERAL GARDEN OPENINGS

Most gardens are now closed for the winter, but you will find some, like Hidcote, partially open, e.g. at weekends, but they may be closed then too, if weather is bad making access unsafe. Check websites or telephone before setting out.

A WHATSAPP GROUP?

What is WhatsApp?

It is a safe messaging service, end-to-end encrypted for security. You just need a smart phone and internet access. WhatsApp lets you post and receive messages; make phone and video phone calls; and send photos and video clips.

What does it cost?

It is free and is unlikely to cost you anything, unless you are on a limited data contract and start making long or international video calls, for example, when near your limit.

Why are we trying it?

This is an experiment to see if it would be useful for us. We see it as a forum for exchanging surplus plants, seeds, garden equipment and books etc, or simply good tips.

How do I get started?

1. You need a smart phone.
2. You then download the free WhatsApp Messenger app from your Playstore, install and open it.
3. Make sure Sue has your mobile smart phone number so she can put you in her Whatsapp contacts. (Email sueatwillowbank@btinternet.com or text 07796106579.
4. Sue will then include you in the Gardening Friends WhatsApp Group.
5. You will be able to see messages on the Group and respond if you wish or put your own message on.
6. When new messages appear on the site, you may hear an alert on your phone, but you can turn alerts off if they irritate you.

7. If you prefer looking at a bigger screen, you can link your phone WhatsApp to your computer – you will find instructions for this online.

What is on at the moment or coming shortly?

Some young houseplants; spare veg and flower seeds, including Molly the Witch peony; plastic pots, and young verbena bonariensis and Japanese anemone plants. All free!

MALVERN SHOW 2024

At the time of writing, options are being explored to have a cottage garden stand at the Malvern Spring Show from 9th to 12th May 2024. We await the results of an application made by the Cottage Garden Society HQ to the Royal Horticultural Society. For more information, or to get involved, contact Robert robert@lestones.plus.com

GARDENING GROUPS

In 2024 we hope to develop more close links with other gardening groups for our mutual benefit. If you would like to share information about your local gardening activities, just tell us!

MUNSTEAD WOOD NEWS

“No greater example of a classic English garden” Andy Jasper, National Trust’s Head of Gardens.

Gertrude Jekyll’s home and garden, Munstead Wood near Godalming in Surrey, came into the care of the National Trust in June this year. This garden was at the heart of her garden design business and plant nursery, inspiring much of her writing. Many of us today still aspire to her naturalistic yet colourful planting schemes. Edward Lutyens designed her house which is now Grade 1 listed.

Keep an eye out for updates on the restoration of Munstead Wood and when it will be open to the public. www.nationaltrust.org.uk/munstead-wood-project

STROUD VALLEYS PROJECT

Stroud Valleys Project runs numerous environmental projects, including the development of a **sensory garden in Stroud’s Stratford Park**. The latest good

news is that the National Lottery Community Fund is going to fund the sensory garden for the next two years.

Children of all ages are welcome in the garden and it is wheelchair accessible. The design and planting are designed to provide scent, colour, texture and sounds for visitors, especially those with a sensory impairment. Feedback from visitors inspires further developments – such as enlarging the Barefoot Trail.

More volunteers are sought now to help look after the plants. Contact tamsin@stroudvalleysproject.org if you might be interested.

Browse the site www.stroudvalleysproject.org or phone 01453 753358 to find out more about events and projects – or call in at their Eco shop at 8 Threadneedle Street, Stroud. ***Their next seed swap is scheduled for Saturday 10th February 10 – 12.30.***

If you go down to Stratford Park, don't forget to visit the Walled Garden next to the Museum as well or to go inside the Museum to learn more about Edward Budding, the inventor of the lawnmower!

Many of you will sympathise with their problem of Box Moth in the Walled Garden. They report that with the cooler weather, the Box Moth caterpillars seemingly disappeared. However, following advice from local nurseries (and Monty Don) they are removing their Box, replacing it with a mixture of Ilex Crenata, Lonicera, Yew, Euonymus and Osmanthus. They know the caterpillars will return, but for now they have left the topiarised Box, because they have been encouraging it to grow for seven years, and just want to give it one last chance in the hope that it escapes the attack. Things don't look promising, however: in October a moth trap near the Box collected 137 moths in just 3 days...

Museum in the Park, Stroud GL5 4AF is usually open from Tuesday to Friday - 10am to 4.30pm; and Saturday and Sunday 11am to 4.30pm

NB The museum will be closed from Monday 4th December to Friday 26th January 2024, but after the winter shutdown they will be “Celebrating Snowdrops” on the weekend of the 27th and 28th January 2024.

THE GENEROUS GARDENER

If you are feeling indulgent, bookings open on **Friday, 8th December** for the lecture days run by the Generous Gardener at Rodmarton Manor and Gardens near Cirencester, GL7 6PF. Each day costs £135 per person plus £1.99 p&p or you can buy gift vouchers. For more information, contact sarah@thegenerousgardener.co.uk

Each day begins at 10.30am with coffee and tea before the first talk at 11.00am followed by a two-course lunch with wine and elderflower. There is then time to explore the garden, before the second lecture starts at 2.00pm. The days end at around 3.30 to 4.00pm with tea and homemade cake.

Speakers for 2024 include:

- ❖ **Troy Scott-Smith** from Sissinghurst and **Charlotte Harris & Hugo Bugg** of Harris Bugg Studio on ***Thursday, 7th March 2024***
- ❖ **Nick Macer** of Pan Global Plants and **Marian Boswell** of Marian Boswell Landscape Architects on ***Thursday, 4th April 2024***
- ❖ **Polly Nicholson** of Bayntun Flowers and **Jamie Butterworth** of Form Plants and BBC Gardeners' World on ***Thursday, 18th April 2024***
- ❖ **Kate Stuart-Smith** of Serge Hill Garden and **Arthur Parkinson**, container gardener, podcaster and author on ***Thursday, 2nd May 2024***

NB Their programme of specialist Plant Sales starts again in March.

