



MALVERN RHS FLOWER SHOW

Come and see us at Malvern in the Floral Pavilion, between the Fuchsia and Dahlia Societies, at the Northern Gate end of the marquee.

Malvern's theme this year is 'Gardening for Change' to celebrate evolution in the world of horticulture, embracing the positive impact it has on the environment, people and wellbeing. Cottage Gardening certainly has that at its core!

Our stand wants especially to highlight traditional plants, easily grown from seed, cuttings or division and grown with care both for wildlife and human benefit, whether in a pot or the bigger plot of a garden or allotment. We will have seeds, plants and information as well as our display.

The show is on from Thursday 9th May to Sunday 12th, 9 to 6 every day.

SMALL GROUP VISIT

On a cool April day we went to a lovely 1 acre garden, at Whitcombe House, in Overbury, where the warmth of the welcome was matched by the splendour of the cakes! Although early in the season, there was plenty to see: euphorbia griffithii at full glow; the lovely fresh foliage of smilicina; gnarled Bordeaux vine trunks and the usually gentle stream which now rushed through the garden with water from Bredon Hill.



If you missed out, try it yourself on Sunday 26th May between 2 and 5pm when it opens for the NGS!

Our May visit has had to be rescheduled, so our next scheduled visit now is on Wednesday 26th June to **Bolters Farm, and King's Cottage, Chilson, Chipping Norton**, Oxfordshire OX7 3HU at £8 a head.

Bolters Farm has a cherished old cottage garden restored over the last 17 years. Tumbly moss-covered walls and sloping lawns lead down to a stream with natural planting and quirky characterful moments.

King's Cottage comprises an old row of cottages with mature trees and yew hedging. Over the last eight years a new design and planting scheme has been started to reduce the areas of lawn; bring in planting to complement the house (not

open) and setting; introduce new borders; and encourage wildlife. A work in progress!

On a July date (to be set nearer the time) we will visit the National Plant Collection of Penstemon - 40 Evesham Road; Bishops Cleeve GL52 8SA

Suggested donation of £5 to Plant Heritage. National plant collection of historic cultivars displayed in a garden setting.

Thursday 15th August Charlton Down House, Tetbury GL8 8TZ (An NGS Open Day) £7

Extensive country house gardens in 180 acre equestrian estate. Charlton Down has formal terraces, perennial borders, a walled topiary garden, enclosed cut flower garden and a large glasshouse. There are also rescue animals and a Jubilee copse to admire. Ample parking and refreshments available.

Please book your places with Natalie so we can confirm numbers in advance with the garden owner. Email: natalie@lestones.plus.com or telephone 01242 602384. (Your friends and visitors are welcome at all events.)

AN OLD FAVOURITE OPEN UNDER THE NGS THIS MONTH

Trench Hill at Sheepscombe offers 3 acres set in woodland with panoramic views and a variety of herbaceous and mixed borders, rose garden, tulips, extensive vegetable plots, wildflower areas, woodland walk, and two small ponds, a waterfall and larger conservation pond. There are interesting wooden sculptures, many within the garden which is cultivated on organic principles.

Open on Monday 6th May from 11-6. £5 Adult; child free. Refreshments.

HANLEY SWAN OPEN GARDENS

For the past 15 years the gardeners of Hanley Swan, a small Worcestershire village in the foothills of the Malvern Hills, have opened and welcomed visitors to their gardens. (SatNav WR8 0DN) This year they open on May 4/5/6th. Doors open at noon until 5pm. Tickets are £7.50, but children under 16 are free, and you are welcome to use the tickets on all 3 days.

Light lunches, afternoon teas and various cakes from noon.

www.hanleyswanopengardens.co.uk

For something challenging, try the ultimate food challenge – a chilli-eating competition!

Visit Eastnor ChilliFest at Eastnor Castle on Sunday 5th and Monday 6th May between 10.30am and 5.30pm

Try all things chilli-related, with a wide range of food and drink. There is a children's cookery school and cookery demonstrations, as well as entertainment including dance and live music.

All of Eastnor's usual attractions will be open too: the Knight's Maze; the junior obstacle course; and adventure playground. Stroll by the lakeside and through the woodland or take the rope swing route through the trees!

Tickets must be booked online in advance via eastnorcastle.com/eastnor-chillifest.

£14 for adults and £8 for children aged three to 15. (Children aged two and under go free and don't need a ticket)

Telephone (01531) 633160 Email: enquiries@eastnorcastle.com

DID YOU KNOW?

Plant Heritage has awarded HMP Eastwood Park Women's Prison in Gloucestershire National Plant Collection status, the first prison to achieve that status. The extensive tulbaghia collection in the prison grounds is tended by two of the women prisoners.

The Fresh Designer of the Year Award from the Society of Garden Designers has gone to Gloucestershire's Emily Crowley-Wroe with a design for a modern Cotswold cottage garden. Described as "*A cleverly laid out space that has led to a dramatic transformation and the creation of a very welcoming garden. A bold, seductive design*" by the judging panel, Emily's design stylishly combines both traditional and modern elements. Have a look at Emily's work on Instagram or at www.april-house.co.uk

Stroud Brewery gives free root hop cuttings to local gardeners every March and in return the gardeners bring their plants' harvest to the brewery in September for use in a pale ale, 'Brewer's Garden'. The hop picking is a festive occasion with a local jazz band there. The growers belong to Stroud Brewery's Hop Club which started some 15 years ago and is now some 60 strong.

A seed potato is the centre of attention in a rare 17th century wool and silk tapestry made by the Mortlake Tapestry Works in London in about 1650 as part of a series to illustrate the months of the year. The tapestry can now be seen in the Garden Museum which is housed in the church and burial ground where the famous

Tradescant father and son are buried, both gardeners to King Charles. The tapestry is also very unusual as it shows a woman working in the garden, the earliest example in the museum's collection.

The RHS has a Bumbles on Blooms project running until the end of May finding out which flowers in gardens and parks are most visited by bumblebees. You can help by recording your bumblebees' favourites. Go on your smartphone to RHS Bumbles on Blooms on iNaturalist.

Ghostly happenings in Stroud! A ghost slug has been recorded for the first time in Stroud. This unique non-native slug was recorded by homeowners who contacted Gloucestershire Centre for Environmental Records (GCER). The ghost slug (*Selenachlamys ysbryda*) was first recorded in South Wales in 2008, and two specimens were found in Crimea in Ukraine, which is the species' likely native range.

Young tree planters! About 70 pupils from Cam Everlands Primary School at Cam have helped plant trees in the Silk Wood area of Westonbirt Arboretum, as part of a project to grow 9,000 trees to replace those lost to ash dieback and cut down as a result in 2021.

Contest of the Giants! Malvern's Autumn Show always has fabulous displays of vegetables. This year Ian and Stuart Paton of Southampton are aiming to set a new world record weight for pumpkin Atlantic Giant, and hope to be the first to reach 3,000lb – the current record is 2,907lbs for a perfect pumpkin.

GET STUCK IN!

Join the Stroud Valley Project's free Pollinator Patch Planting at Elm Road playing field on Saturday 4th May from 1pm to 3pm or at the Top of the Town Community Hub on Saturday 18th May from 10.00am to 12.00pm. Activities for children; no need to book or stay for the whole time. www.stroudvalleysproject.org

Book with Stroud Valley Project for Mini Beasties – Seeds and Flowers with toddlers and pre-schoolers on Friday 17th May 10.00 to 11.30 £3 per family with up to 2 adults and 2 children – who must be accompanied!

COURSES

Nature in Art is not just worth going to for the great exhibitions (and the very good cafe!) but it also runs art and craft courses. These are taught in their purpose-built education centre with class sizes of 8 –12 people.

4th & 5th May

7th May Helen Lomberg *Willow and Hazel Garden Structures*

For full details of the programme of some 40 courses throughout the year and to

book go to www.natureinart.org.uk

Nature in Art, A38 Twigworth Gloucester GL2 9PA (2 miles north of Gloucester on A38. SatNav Postcode: GL2 9PG.)

<https://natureinart.org.uk/> Tel. 01452 731422



All photos in this newsletter taken in Whitcombe House garden.