

COTTAGE GARDEN SOCIETY COTSWOLD GROUP DECEMBER 2025 NEWSLETTER



OUR AUTUMN / WINTER PROGRAMME

Events take place, as previously, at the Abbeyfield Community Centre in Winchcombe on Thursdays between 3.15 and 5pm. There is free onsite parking; refreshments are provided; and there are always plants for sale, free gardening information leaflets and free seeds available.

OUR DECEMBER MEETING HAS BEEN CANCELLED as the speaker has decided to retire from garden group talks. As there is a major Winchcombe U3A event that day, we have decided to put an extra talk into the 2026 programme instead.

15TH JANUARY 2026 THE HONEY BEE AND BEE KEEPING BRIAN MILLER-HALL

Brian has been keeping bees for 16 years and currently manages 12 hives. From that extensive experience, he will give us insight into the fascinating life of honey bees and the role of the beekeeper.



Local hives seen at our Gretton visit in 2023

12TH FEBRUARY 2026 AURICULAS AND PRIMULAS INGRID AND JOHN MILLINGTON

Ingrid and John run Hillview Hardy Plants near Bridgnorth, their specialisms including auriculas and primulas. In 2022 they won their first RHS Gold Medal at Malvern Spring Fair and in 2023 they were the Master Growers at the show. Their talk will look at just a few of the 100's of primulas available, followed by a foray into the lovely world of auriculas.



THURSDAY 19TH MARCH THE STORY OF GOTHERINGTON NURSERIES

Mark will talk to us about his local family business, Gotherington Nurseries, and about his experience of growing and providing plants for both local customers and many shows including Hampton Court.

An online review of Gloucestershire nurseries described Gotherington as “one of those hidden gems that locals love to keep to themselves ...where the focus is firmly on healthy plants and friendly faces.” The Nurseries stock a wide range of plants and horticultural products and online you will also find a store of very useful fact sheets to help you.

NOVEMBER MEETING:

Rosanne, the Groups' Co-ordinator of our national body, the Cottage Garden Society, talked to us about Bodnant Gardens, the splendid National Trust property developed over 150 years in the foothills of Snowdon. Living in North Wales, Rosanne has been a volunteer at the garden for a number of years, but still hasn't tired of the place and is sure there are paths she has not yet taken. Given that there are over 8 miles of paths threading through the 80 acres of gardens, that is understandable!

Established by Victorian entrepreneur Henry Pochin in 1874, the gardens were developed by 5 generations of his family, with descendants still managing the wider estate and living in the grand house he built.



The house and its new conservatory are not open to the public, unlike the Grade 1 listed gardens, in the care of the National Trust from 1949. They are home to historic and national plant collections and heritage trees. There is something to see in every season from the daffodils, rhododendrons, azaleas, magnolias and camellias in spring; quickly followed by the glorious laburnum arch (the longest known); then the roses and herbaceous borders of summer; the glowing autumn foliage; and the Winter Garden. The garden's size enables it to have both formal areas of terraces and wilder areas of meadows, waterfalls and woodland.

While there is something for everyone all year round, Rosanne said that if you were only likely to visit once, it might be best to go in late April or early May. The whole area of the Conwy valley is lovely and makes a good holiday destination.

Roseanne said that Bodnant's Pin Mill was transported from Gloucestershire. Intrigued, I discovered that it was originally a garden house built about 1730 at Frogmarsh, Woodchester, later used by a pin mill and then as a tannery hide store. The 2nd Baron Aberconway apparently noticed it when driving locally and bought the derelict building to be moved to Bodnant in 1938/9 and restored. The fine Grade 2* listed Georgian building now stands at the head of a canal, a thing of beauty once more.

GARDENS OPEN IN DECEMBER

HIDCOTE is closed for most of December, but does open on 26th to 28th of the month between 11am and 4pm.

01386 438333 hidcote@nationaltrust.org.uk

Hidcote Bartrim, Chipping Campden GL55 6LR

CROOME PARK is open every day 10am - 4pm until Sunday 4th January 2026, except 24th and 25th December, and offers you '**Rapturous Delight**', an immersive sound and light experience in the Long Gallery. This event explores Croome's Pages from Nature theme, celebrating the 200-year anniversary of the publication of the Hortus Croomensis. It is complemented by house decorations inspired by Croome's remarkable landscape and plant collection. The grounds, of course, are excellent walking all year round.

01905 371006 croome@nationaltrust.org.uk

Near High Green, Worcester WR8 9DW

HELP / INSPIRATION NEEDED!

- Two keen American women gardeners contacted us via our website. They hope to come to England next year to visit cottage gardens and said that they

understood the Cotswolds to be an area rich in these. Given that their trip will be relatively short – 10 days at most – where would you suggest they go?
Ideas to Sue please – sueatwillowbank@btinternet.com

- On similar lines, please tell us of gardens you would especially like to visit in 2026 to help us plan our programme.

GARDEN FESTIVE EVENTS

This is the time of year when the bigger gardens swing into festive mode with decorated and illuminated walks. Among them are:

- **BATSFORD ARBORETUM** Batsford, Moreton-in-Marsh GL56 9AT **The Big Batsford Elf Hunt** returns daily from 29th November until 4th January (except Christmas Day). There is also **Santa's Grotto** open for small groups of up to 6. Each child will have a chance to ask Santa questions and receive a gift. You need to pre-book your Santa visit on 6th, 7th, 13th, 14th, 20th or 21st December.

For further information: <https://batsarb.co.uk/news-events/>

- **PAINSWICK ROCOCO GARDENS** GL6 6TH has its **Enchanted Garden by Night** until 29th December. Gift shop and café with heated marquee open too.

For further information: www.rococogarden.org.uk
info@rococogarden.org.uk 01452 813204

- **WADDESDON MANOR** Aylesbury HP18 0JH **has a grand festive European tour** – an Outdoor Light Trail and installations in the gardens, as well as decorations and a huge array of festive activities in the house and outbuildings.

<https://waddesdon.org.uk/whats-on/christmas>

- **WESTONBIRT ARBORETUM** Tetbury GL8 8QS will be illuminated with a trail taking you past new light installations including **'Laser Lights', 'Mycelium Network', 'Fireworks Trees' and 'Wicker Animals'**. There are seasonal refreshments, fairground rides – and Santa, of course - until 31st December.

<https://www.forestryengland.uk/westonbirt/christmas>

MEMBERSHIP CARD

N.B. In case you missed it, your national Cottage Garden Society membership card is on the inside of the back cover of the Autumn 2025 edition of the 'Cottage Gardener' magazine.

DID YOU KNOW?

- **GARDENING BADGE:** In response to requests from the young women themselves, there is now a girl-guiding gardening interest badge, aimed particularly at Rangers, the 14 to 18 group. For more information see www.rhs.org.uk/girlguidingbadge
- **A 2025 UPDATE OF RHS PLANTS FOR POLLINATORS IS NOW AVAILABLE.** You can search this either by the insects you are especially interested in attracting (eg bees, moths, butterflies, hoverflies) or the plants and trees which they particularly like. There is a sustainable planting plan and downloadable pdf lists of garden plants, plants of the world and wildflowers. <https://www.rhs.org.uk/science/research/plants-for-pollinators>



TO SEND ITEMS FOR THE NEWSLETTER, OR WITH ANY QUERIES, CONTACT:

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