

COTTAGE GARDEN SOCIETY COTSWOLD GROUP AUGUST 2026 NEWSLETTER



A good year for peonies!

SMALL GROUP VISITS

Our usual programme of private small group visits to gardens was disrupted this year by illness and injury among our core team - and the heatwave didn't help! We hope to get back on track with some visits for the autumn.

It would be lovely to have suggestions for places to visit and help more generally. Please contact Natalie or Sue with your ideas.

Meanwhile:

LOCAL NGS GARDENS OPEN THIS MONTH

The extensive country house gardens at Charlton Down House, Tetbury, GL8 8TZ, are set in a 180-acre equestrian estate. Around the house are formal, colour-themed borders and a walled topiary garden, plus a large, walled cutting garden and glasshouse. Further afield, you can wander through wild flower meadows and the Jubilee copse. The garden will be open on **Thursdays, the 13th, 20th and 27th August** (1-5pm; adult, £7, child, free).

New for this year is Frog Lane Flower Farm, at North Nibley, GL11 6DJ, opening **Sunday 16th August** (11am- 4pm; adult, £6, child, free). As our picture shows, the flower farm and neighbouring garden at Netherfields (where teas will be served) are in a spectacular setting with panoramic views over the River Severn towards the Black Mountains. Visit the long cutting beds of this organically-run flower farm and hear about how the business was set up.



Although not listed in this year's Gloucestershire county booklet, **Tree Hill**, 76 Gretton Road, Winchcombe, GL54 5EL (below), will have a pop-up opening on **Sunday 30th August** (11am - 4pm; adult, £4, child, free).



This remarkable garden, inspired by a holiday in the Caribbean, brings the tropics to the Cotswolds, with planting that includes tree ferns, trachycarpus, coleus and echiums. Leaves have been stripped from the lower branches of the trees to give the impression of a jungle canopy. Also featured in the garden is *Nicotiana glauca*, whose white flowers have become the staple of many cottage gardens in recent years. At Tree Hill, however, its leaves are what catch the attention, planted as they are beside many exotic large-leafed plants. Not to be missed!



FLORAL MASTER CLASSES

Sunday 16th August to Sunday 27th September Floral Masterclasses at Webbs of Wychbold starting with Dahlias with Anna and Hannah. www.webbs.co.uk/whats-on

CHELTENHAM HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY SUMMER SHOW

23rd August 12.30 to 4pm This annual show hosts sales stalls from local nurseries and garden equipment suppliers, as well as showcasing a range of local produce, jewellery and books. Refreshments and free parking. Adults £2.50; children free. Pittville School, Albert Road, Cheltenham GL52 3JD

TRADITIONAL VILLAGE FRUIT AND FLOWER SHOW

Saturday 29th August Great Comberton Fruit and Flower Show at Brailles Orchard, Great Comberton. www.theflowershow.org.uk

FLOWER FIELDS AT COTSWOLD FARM

There is always a wide range of activities to enjoy in the summer at Adam Henson's Cotswold Farm. **Until 31st August from 12pm - 4pm you can explore the flower fields.**

Opportunities for Pick Your Own, as well as photo opps and the ability to book a professional Flower Fields Photo Session. Accessible and dog-friendly.

Flower Field entry: £4.95 adult, child/dog free - with free entry for all on Wednesdays until late.

NB Prices for entry to all other attractions at the farm can be found on the website and should be pre-booked online.

<https://cotswoldfarmpark.co.uk/>

Guiting Power, Cheltenham, GL54 5FL



Carol's summer garden bouquet

NATURE IN ART

Nature in Art hosts many exhibitions and provides art and craft courses throughout the year, some with a botanic focus, for example:

1st August 10.00 am to 5.00 pm Botanical Ceramics with Clare Mahoney

29th August 10:00 am – 4:00 pm Summer Wildflower Watercolours with Holly Foscett-Barnes

For full details of the whole programme and to book: www.natureinart.org.uk

www.natureinart.org.uk/artcourses

A38 Twigworth Gloucester GL2 9PA **2 miles north of Gloucester on A38.SatNav**
Postcode: GL2 9PG. Tel. 01452 73142

MAZES

Mazes have been designed for centuries, the oldest surviving hedge maze in the UK being that at Hampton Court Palace. The word dates back to the 13th century and

meant delusion or bewilderment. Chaucer's 'Legend of Good Women' in about 1386 has the first recorded use of the word 'maze' for a labyrinth. Mazes are usually stone or hedge or willow – and most recently maize mazes have become summer entertainments.

ELTON GIANT MAZES in Gloucestershire, open until 1st September, is a maize maze which offers space-linked shapes this year and 20 challenge zones for children in an activity maze.

Elton Farm, Littledean Road, Newnham on Severn, GL14 1JU

www.eltonmazes.co.uk eltonmazes@gmail.com 07951 864946.

COMING SOON

Sunday 27th September 2026: Hardy Plants and Bulbs for the Autumn and Winter Garden at Arley Arboretum, Near Kidderminster.

This is a new event for the Alpine Garden Society in partnership with the Arboretum and is about much more than Alpines.

The Arboretum is an RHS Partner Garden and RHS members and AGS members benefit from the same ticket price with non-members very welcome too for a bit more.

See the link below for details of the speakers, the programme, specialist nurseries, and how to book.

<https://alpinegardensociety.net/ags-event/autumn-delights-at-arley-arboretum-gardens>

Any questions, contact the event organiser, Gail Devries: gaildevries79@gmail.com

DID YOU KNOW?

- **Wildlife Watch is the junior branch of The Wildlife Trusts and the UK's leading environmental action club for children and families.** On the website you will find all kinds of garden-based, environmental activities you can do with children of various ages: <https://www.wildlifewatch.org.uk>
- **40% of life on earth is in earth!** This was one of many interesting facts alongside practical projects to improve biodiversity in your garden which featured in the latest Our Co-op (previously Midlands Co-op) online seminar with Garden Organic. A previous session featured bee-keeping – which the Co-op encourages in its own property with hives at its Coventry headquarters. These occasional talks are illustrated and practical, focusing on environmental issues with time

allowed for questions and answers. They are free to Co-Op members who register their interest.

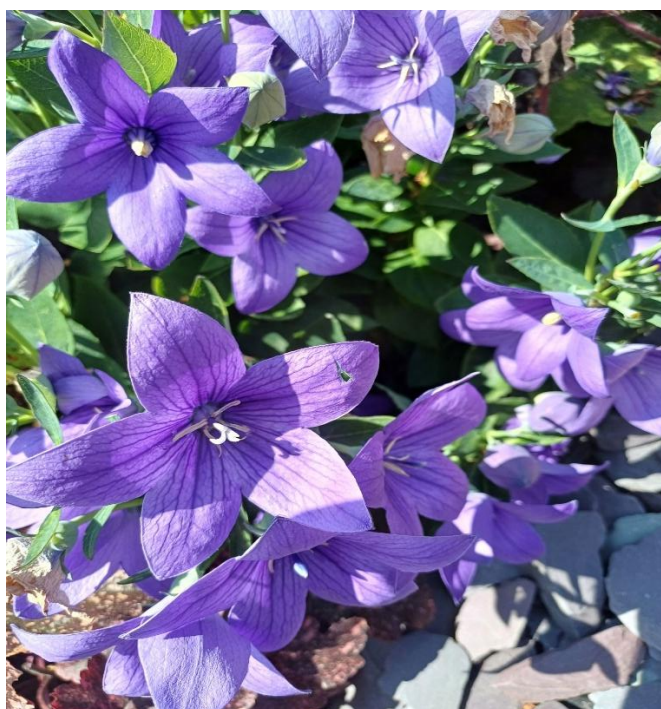
<https://www.co-operative.coop/get-involved/memberevents>

- **Sunflowers** were grown for food by Native Americans over 5,000 years ago. The current record for the world's tallest was one grown in Indiana in 2025, reaching an amazing 35 feet 9 inches. At a more modest level, growing sunflowers from seed makes a great family competition.
- **Nailsworth-based Austin Design Works' Artisan Woodland Craft Garden** won both an RHS Gold Medal and the 'Best Artisan Garden' at the Badminton RHS Show in July.

Rachael Austin was inspired by the local Ruskin Valley, its woodlands and the therapeutic work there of the Ruskin Mill Trust. Rachel's first-ever show garden reflected those woodlands in her naturalistic planting and included demonstrations of the therapeutic crafts its students are taught.

MEMBERS' GARDENS

We would like to feature some members' gardens in future newsletters. If you let Sue have some brief details of your garden (e.g. village or town location, rough size, key features, how long you have gardened there, what you especially like - or dislike - about the garden and a few photos), we'd love to include it. No addresses or full names needed!



THRIVING OR SURVIVING?

The balloon flower, *platycodon grandiflorus*, pictured above, has been very happy this year. What plants have done well for you, or have at least survived, despite – or because of – the very hot, dry weather? We'll happily compile a list of those that have done well in our area to share for future planning. Send your suggestions and any photos to Sue.

TO SEND ITEMS FOR THE NEWSLETTER, IDEAS FOR VISITS OR SPEAKERS - OR WITH ANY QUERIES, call 01242 602384 or email:

Natalie: natalie@lestones.plus.com

Robert: robert@lestones.plus.com

Sue: sueatwillowbank@btinternet.com

Or text 07796 106579 to join our **WhatsApp** group



NB Photos in our newsletters are either from members or from the NGS. We would love more of your photos to use in the newsletter or in our show displays or information leaflets. This month's are from Carol, Nan, Vanessa and Sue. Email yours to Sue!