

NEWSLETTER

JULY FRUIT -STRAWBERRY

The garden strawberry, *Fragaria* × *ananassa* was first bred in Brittany, France in the 1750's via a cross of *Fragaria virginiana* from eastern North America and *Fragaria chiloensis*, brought from Chile in 1714. Cultivars of *Fragaria* × *ananassa* have replaced, in commercial production, the wild or woodland strawberry (*Fragaria vesca*), that has occurred naturally in the British Isles since the Ice Age. The name strawberry probably does not relate to the practice of covering the fruit with straw but more likely from the term 'streabariye' used by a Benedictine monk in AD 995 to describe the straying habit of the runners. The name of the genus is derived from the Latin word *fragum*, which means fragrant.



The strawberry is not, from a botanical point of view, a berry. Technically, it is an aggregate accessory fruit, meaning that the fleshy part is derived not from the plant's ovaries but from the receptacle that holds the ovaries. Each apparent "seed" (achene) on the outside of the fruit is actually one of the ovaries of the flower, with a seed inside it.

Links with Wimbledon

What food always springs to mind when it comes to Wimbledon? - yes it's strawberries and cream. This combination was served at the first Wimbledon tournament in 1877, when 200 spectators came to see the Championships. Last year it was estimated that 10,000 litres of cream and 34,000 kg of strawberries were eaten during the competition.

But it didn't start there. Historians believe that the tradition was started by Thomas Wolsey, an extremely powerful figure in the court of King Henry VIII. In 1514 Wolsey built a grand palace along the riverside, which today we know as Hampton Court. It is believed that he first served strawberries and cream at a banquet in 1509. Back then dairy products were seen as peasant food by the upper class. It's not clear why the head chef thought to serve it to the King's court alongside a handful of strawberries.

Researchers think it was down to logistics, as Thomas Wolsey would entertain at least 600 guests at a time, being fed extravagant feasts twice a day, so a dish that didn't need much preparation would have been appealing to the palace staff. The palace had a tennis court, where staff also served strawberries and cream to spectators. It's thought that this is the reason why we now associate Wimbledon with the dish.

BHS News

Using this space to tell you more about our Summer Party at Sue's in August with afternoon tea and a glass of Prosecco. Once again we would like you to bring your own cup and saucer or mug. We won't be judging them this year but it will just make it simpler. If you forget, we will have spares though.

However, we will be having a competition - this year its to be the 'best summer garden hat' - completely freestyle, simple or Ascot lookalikes. Gentlemen are not exempt. £10 garden voucher up for grabs.

We would also like to do a plant/produce sales but please take home what doesn't get taken.

Barbara

Strawberry Leaves and Rank

Strawberry leaves adorn the coronets of Dukes (8 leaves), Marquesses (4 leaves alternating with 4 metal 'pearls') and Earls (8 leaves and 8 'pearls'). So if you get an invite to the next coronation you will be able to tell them apart! This is the only time coronets are worn in Britain.

The precise symbolism of the 'strawberry leaves' has long been a source of debate but look closely at the Duchess of Sussex Coat of Arms and she has 2 strawberry leaves on the coronet as well.



WHAT'S COMING UP AT BHS IN 2019

Summer Garden Visits

Tuesday July 2nd - easy local self drive

Morning visit to Monks Lantern, Chertsey
 Optional pub lunch at The Jovial Sailor, Ripley
 Afternoon visit to Stuart Cottage, East Clandon
 Cost £12 for both gardens including am tea/coffee/biscuits and pm tea/cake

Wednesday 31st July - all day Coach Trip

Morning visit to Fittleworth House, Pulborough
 Tour with Head Gardener, tea/coffee and biscuits on arrival
 Afternoon visit to Parham Gardens
 Cost £20 if member of RHS or HHA (if joint members only primary member free)
 £24.50 for non members

Thursday August 15th - Summer Garden Tea Party

Sue V's garden in Pyrford 3pm - 5pm
 Cost £4.50 prebooked or prepaid or £5 on the day

Email Me



N.B. We did not have a signup sheet available during our evening meetings, so just email Barbara to say you are coming (other halves as always very welcome) and the cost will be £4.50 paying on the day or on the next 2 garden visits.

If you don't let us know you are coming then it will be £5 as usual

Sign Up ▶

Thursday 5th September - all day Minibus/Coach Trip

Morning visit to Borde Hill Gardens, Haywards Heath
 Afternoon visit to Sussex Prairies Gardens, Henfield
 Cost £18 if member of RHS (if joint members only primary member free)
 £26.00 for non members)

8th October, 2019

Peter Almond
Gardening for Wildlife

12th November, 2019

Andrew Halstead
Bugs that Bite Back

10th December, 2019

Rosemary Horton
**Cheese and Wine Party and
 'A Lighthearted look at Cheese Making'**

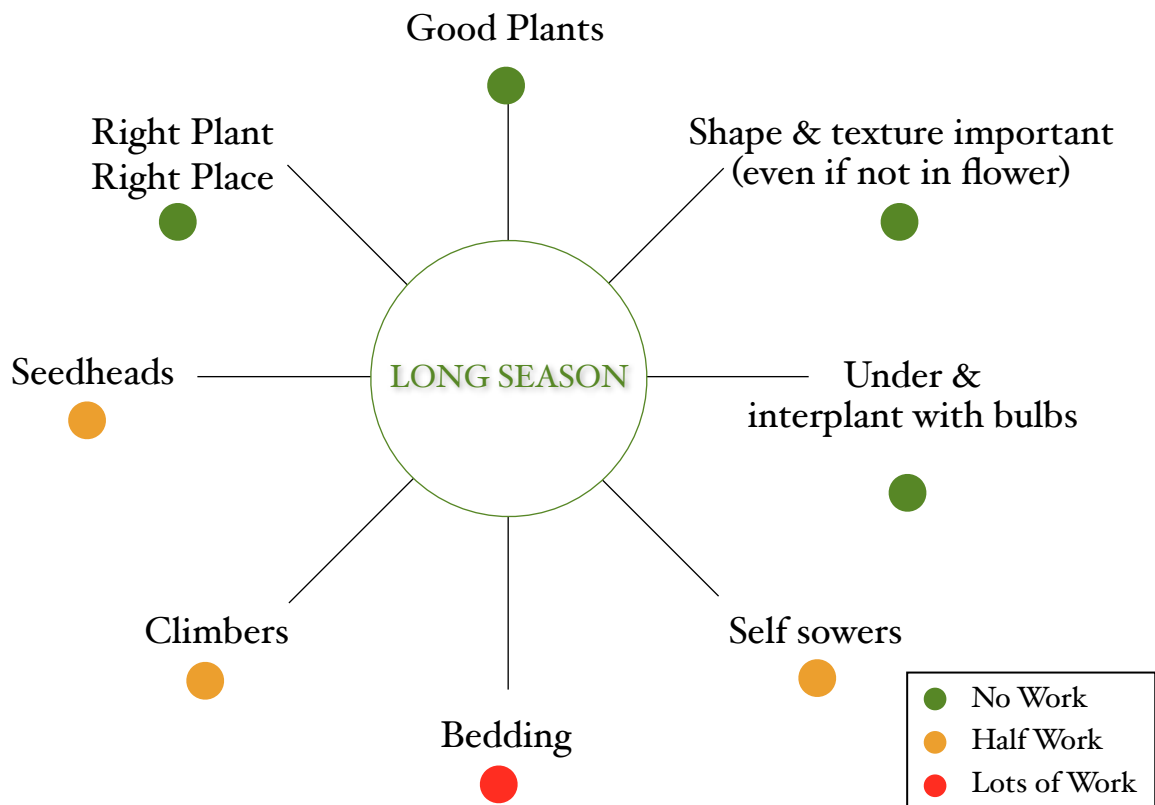
Barb and Sue V do Succession Planting: A Great Dixter Study Day

A couple of weeks ago, Sue and I ‘treated’ ourselves to a day of learning from Fergus Garrett at Great Dixter. We had planned to drive there, without a lot of thought beforehand that we needed to be there by 9.45am on a Monday morning via the M25!! Google maps suggested up to 2 hrs but this was made more daunting by an email the day before telling us a 5 mile detour around country lanes would be in operation starting that day. So... we treated ourselves a lot more by taking a very relaxing (but expensive) private taxi.

The morning started with welcome coffee (no biscuits!). There were 2 morning lectures by Fergus, illustrated by 237 slides. Sounds far too many but somehow it wasn't. There was a break during the morning and this time there were flapjacks they were so gooey they were impossible to eat - although 2 resident dogs were there to Hoover the bits up. Lunch followed the talks and was definitely NOT the highlight of the day. It was served in the wonderful setting of the Great Hall and was veggie soup (apparently tasty), homemade bread with absolutely no taste, and about 5 different cheeses - and water!

The Morning Lecture

Fergus is a very accomplished and obviously knowledgeable speaker. He made use of flip charts to outline what he meant by SUCCESSION or LONG SEASON planting. Over the 2 hrs he developed the diagram below to explain this. He used the slides to illustrate each of the headings with suggested planting schemes.



When you think about this, it's pretty obvious and straightforward but until he pointed it out it wasn't. As I am spending all my time at the moment deadheading my annuals I grew from seed I definitely realise that bedding is a lot of work! Also realising I hadn't tied in the clematis properly and seedlings are appearing everywhere.

Afternoon in the Garden

We were split into 4 groups (nearly 50 people attended). One group had free time to visit the nursery (plants were 10% off). There were a good variety although not everything from the garden was available which was disappointing, and on the whole good value.

We then rotated around with Fergus and 2 other gardeners for 30 minute sessions with tours of the main areas of the garden and explanations on the practical aspects of keeping the garden looking good all year round. There was a huge amount of talk about the use of snowdrops and other Spring bulbs so imagine that early Spring would look quite spectacular. The garden is probably just about at it's best at the moment and also has a very impressive display of wild orchids in the wildflower meadows.

Fergus's session laid out a plan for an approx 8ft square border

He included: Snowdrops and early bulbs, followed by hellebores, primroses, forget me nots and Lunaria, then daffodils. The basic perennial/shrub structure which would follow was made up of Miscanthus x 2, Helenium x 3, Rosa Florence Mary Morse, Cornus alba, Agastache black adder x 7, Spirea golden flame, Bronze Carex, Geranium Roxanne x 2, Geranium Ann Thompson x 2, Sedum x 2.

In other words apart from possibly December and early January the border would be in flower.

Top Tips

Throughout the day, many little words of wisdom were passed along. Here are a few in no particular order that I can remember!

- Mix long season plants with short season ones e.g. Ann Thompson geraniums (4 mths) with snowdrops and primroses (a bit obvious)
- If you want to use self seeders, mulch in the new year and then 'tickle' the mulch where you want them to germinate
- Mimic the wild for succession
- Don't feed herbaceous plants much - mulch and possibly bonemeal
- Take care with Alliums as their leaves may smother emerging plants. Use alliums that don't self seed so you always know where they will come up
- If using annuals, thread them through the mixed border in 'waves'. Don't put them the same distance apart and vary the density. Plant an odd one here and there.
- It's OK to plant in 2's. The 3 or 5 rule doesn't have to be followed!
- Sow lupin seeds now for next year.



All in all a very worthwhile day. Check out their website for more courses. Think about how you are going to get there though - maybe combine with a trip to Hastings or Rye and an overnight B and B.

9 Reasons Why Gardening Is Great For Your Health



The next 3 reasons from the Benenden Health newsletter highlighting why pottering about in the garden can protect the heart, reduce stress and is great for your emotional wellbeing too

4. Can be very sociable

To reap the health rewards of gardening, you don't even need your own garden. Contact your council about allotment availability or seek out a community garden in your neighbourhood and dig in. RHS has some great tips for setting one up.

Read more at www.rhs.org.uk/get-involved/community-gardening/resources/community-garden



5. Speeds up recovery

Gardening can ease the pain associated with serious health conditions, and help to restore motor and cognitive skills following accident or injury. Thrive, a gardening charity, runs courses for people recovering from cancer, stroke and lung conditions. Macmillan Cancer Support also views gardening as beneficial during or after treatment.

Read more at: www.thrive.org.uk



6. Eases effects of dementia

Learning new things keeps the brain active and there are always skills to be acquired in gardening. For patients with dementia, the garden environment has been shown to ease associated behaviour such as pacing and agitation. Late-stage dementia patients may also respond better to sensory stimulation, such as scents and birdsong, than they do to words, according to Alzheimer's Society.

Read more at: www.alzheimers.org.uk



Bits and Bobs

Are you sitting on a garden goldmine?

You may often wonder how much your house is worth – maybe your car too. But have you ever stopped to think about the value of your garden? Some of the most common trees found in UK gardens could be adding thousands of pounds to the value of your property, without you even realising it.

That’s why ShootGardening.co.uk has partnered with Tendercare.co.uk to compile a list of the most valuable trees that you could have in your garden, along with some pesky plants that have the potential to cause damage to your house. Not sure if anyone has a mature Chinese magnolia (*M. soulangeana*) worth £8,500 but even a 13 ft grandiflora species is worth £1,500. They estimate an 8ft Acer at £1,200 and 20 ft flowering cherries at £1,800. Even a 5ft Camellia is £120 (I have got £1000 there already).

Gardeners Answers June Issue

Correct Pruning of Conifers



Having seen the ‘pigs ear’ my neighbours across the street have made of their Leylandii hedge, I was interested to see the pruning of the

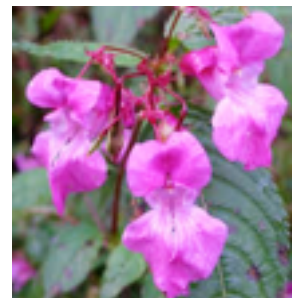


Irish Yew at Montacute House in Somerset. Probably you all know this - but I didn't - that Yew is one of the few conifers that can be hard pruned into old wood. Their hedges are looking very bare, but will according to the gardeners, be back to their former glory in a few years.

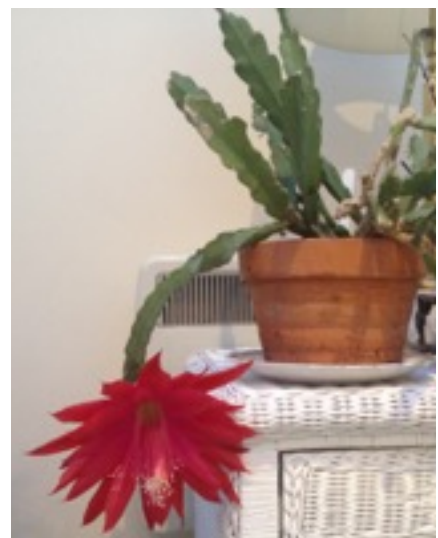


Or will your garden deter buyers

The RHS and the University of Reading are surveying future plant invaders. We all know about Japanese knotweed, but surprisingly the survey is highlighting Japanese anemone, *Alchemilla mollis* and *Crocsmia*. I have got all of these, plus I would like to add Himalayan balsam to the list.



Sue V’s cactus



More Bits and Bobs

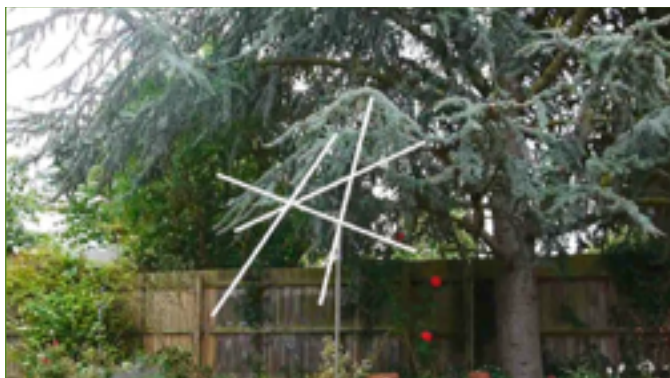
Yellow and black: KEEP WELL BACK



Just as humans use colour coding to signal danger, so does nature. Yellow and black striping, as worn by insects such as bees and wasps, says 'Danger - try and eat me and you'll regret it'. As a result, the awful-tasting yellow and black caterpillars of large white butterflies can brazenly sit on brassica leaves in large groups, unmolested.

However, many insects wear this same jazzy 'hazmat' suit as a trick to put off predators. Hoverfly species have evolved to look like hornets, bumblebees, honey bees and social wasps, but have no sting. Although they are palatable to (birds!) they're untouched thanks to their disguise.

Gardeners Answers July issue

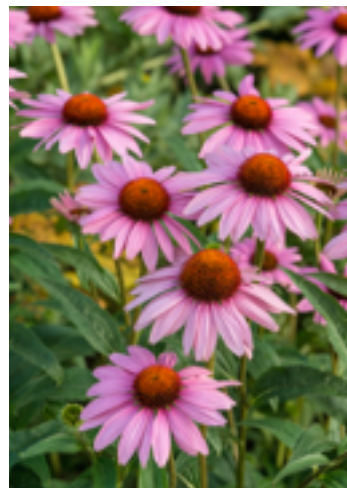


Those of us who visited Vann Garden last month, not only admired the fabulous garden, but also were fascinated by the many sculptures dotted around. Not the usual static ones, but kinetic ones made to move in the breeze. The artist is Andrew Jones from Cambridgeshire: www.rhobile.com

His work isn't cheap - minimum £300 - £400 but really unusual stuff - maybe for a big birthday present!

Georgina J

Buying Echinaceas



Echinaceas are perennial plants, but are not long lived, so you may be planning to replace yours about now from plants available in the garden centres that are in full bloom.

However, this does not always give the plants enough time to establish their roots and make basal shoots with leaves. When buying plants, it is recommended to seek out clumps that have these basal shoots with leaves, in addition to flower stems. Small plants, comprising solely of flower stems, will bloom if watered well, but are unlikely to reappear the following year.

Alternatively, grow from seed. The 'new' colours being sold are not available but the common ones are. Sown now and you will have strong plants by the autumn ready to flower next year.

Landscape Magazine July issue