

OXENHOPE GARDENING CLUB

NEWSLETTER

September 2008

Tonight we welcome Linda Smith

So How did Your Garden Grow

So how did your garden grow during summer months without much sun, and rain that came in buckets full? Ever since the drought a few years back when everyone was telling us we would have to change our ideas on gardening and develop gravel gardens, we have had not just wet summers but floods. However, I am predicting 2009 summer will be a scorcher at least during Wimbledon fortnight since there will be a roof over Centre Court for the first time ever.

Now is the time when an untidy garden is acceptable. It is end of summer and autumn is approaching, but somehow it just makes you want to clear up the mess. Shrubs and trees have grown at such a rate with all the rain, they seem to have now outgrown a small garden and its which to chop out and which to cut back to create that much desired space. Our abies koreana Silberloc has already had the chop- apologies to the coal tits who loved it. Furthermore the original design of that particular bit of garden has reappeared. We have discovered a low section of dry stone wall and some paving that had been covered with a foot of soil and various plants for a good many years.

The area above this had been cleared at the end of last year of herbaceous plants that had grown too big and the idea was to create a meadow effect with specially selected white annuals – nicotiana sylvestris, cosmos, ammi majus (bishops flower), cleome spinosa Helen Campbell and orlaya grandiflora (white lace flower). Sadly the lack of sun meant very little flower, in fact only the cosmos and ammi showed any inclination. The orlaya grandiflora was a dismal failure. We'd seen it at Chelsea in Tom Stuart-Smith's gold medal garden where it looked superb and seemed to be a good filler. Our packet of seeds produced two plants and they turned out to be yellow and not white presumably weeds but not recognisable! So do we try the same idea next year and hope for the benefit of sun or try something else – what decisions!

However, some plants are 100% reliable, Cyclamen hederifolium with erigeron karvinskianus will always lift the spirits and agapanthus have had a good year especially a relatively new variety called Midnight Blue, a particularly dark, almost navy blue, but the slugs and caterpillars have also had a good year –how about your garden?

This evenings talk by Linda Smith from Leicestershire on Bog Gardens seems particularly appropriate.

Anne Collinson

Pams Gardening Diary

Hope springs eternal through every garden year, but by now we will be grateful for warmth to dry out the soil. I will take you on a walk round the garden where the plant combinations please me. One of the Euonymus, grown for its berries, hangs onto its copper foliage during and after Liliun lancefolium flora Plena has died down by the side of it. This was no clever ruse but a desperation to plant the trees. I dug a Phlox paniculata out last week in order to see the whole glory of Clematis heracleifolia. I would recommend seeing the flowers before buying. The flower is hyacinth blue in colour with hyacinth shaped petals. The sepals reflex from mid way down the tube and roll back on themselves creating a charming ruffled effect. In the front garden are hot beds with several new crocosmias. One is similar in colour to a large helenium. These have been separated by replanting Eupatorium rugosum "Braunlaub". This is a superb foliage plant. This crocosmia is called "Zambezi". The flower stalks turn upward and over exposing extremely large and lovely heads. I was so tired of seeing Ligularia "Britt-Marie Crawford left and abandoned behind the bungalow. We all have these plants. As yet it has never flowered but the leaf structure is easy. Richard had moved trees which had overgrown the back garden. Now it looks good amongst yellow ferns.

I wonder how many members visit early gardens? Those who do see another world. As a child I was restricted to English woodland plants – violets, wood anemones and beloved primroses and cowslips with an occasional oxlip in between. In botany we had been taught the oxlip was a X between primrose and cowslip. Well I have got news for you – it is a species in its own right.

I love my spring garden and see it as a jewelled carpet each time I open the front door. Dicentra "King of Hearts" has been on the go for three months. A collection of corydalis have exciting colours as do wood anemones. My favourites are bulbs. They all have to live outside. Over time my interest has been in bulbs including Trilliums and Erythroniums. One of these was a present to me in 1979. The donor had no clue as to what it was. It was planted in the scree at Old Allen where it flowered and died the first year. Now is the time to buy bulbs as presents. They certainly please the male gardeners in my life.

Pam Greenwood.

Dear Member,

Do you have any garden tips, news, information you would like to share with other members, if so do contact me and I will include it in the next newsletter. Remember no item too small.

Lynda Yewdall.