

VOLUNTEER GARDENER'S NEWSLETTER



THE
KIRKWOOD
SUPPORT
LIFE.



Garden update from Volunteer Gardener Linda Roberts

May 2022

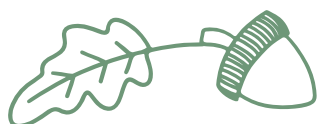
Introduction

Alas we are continuously surrounded with sad news as the pandemic lingers, we learn more of the harrowing reports of war in Ukraine. It is difficult witnessing such injustice happening in neighbouring Europe and as the news coverage continues it also reminds us of how fortunate we are to have our special gardens and open spaces for escapism in a calm healing environment to enjoy quality time with our loved ones. Whether that be as a spectator able to sit and take in the beauty of nature or like most hardy gardeners, finding enjoyment in the development and improvement of our gardens, transforming it into a space of joy for visitors. At The Kirkwood we know how much pleasure our garden brings to so many people. How lucky we are to bring joy to the patients and visitors of The Kirkwood and also enjoy all the special gardens throughout our lovely country.

Garden update

It is particularly lovely to be back in the The Kirkwood Garden with 'old friends and colleagues' after our very long break. Time has flown since our Christmas activities, preparing with families for the festivities after two years of the ongoing pandemic. Spring is most definitely here and it is a joy to be back with the full team all working together.

The garden is awakening with an abundance of colour and scents from the Daphnes, Jasmine, Honeysuckle and Magnolia. Did you know you can eat, pickle and preserve the petals just like ginger? Amazing! The wild garlic is in profusion, it is a great alternative to basil pesto. Enjoy the recipes at the end of this newsletter. The scent of Rhododendrons waft across the labyrinth as their flowers emerge. You can't help but see the Forsythia bursting with the most wonderful bright yellow flowers and more or less right beside it is the very old fashioned Ribes Sanguineum in the most shocking bright fuchsia pink (some of you know this better as flowering currant). There are many clematis in the garden, some in bud, some yet to show any flowers and the increasing amount of roses are working hard making buds.





Peonies are bursting through the soil with vengeance, they do fantastically well in the garden with plenty room for more. Not forgetting, the lovely Pulmonaria now popping up everywhere around the garden, bees love them.

Sometimes it is easy to get stopped in your tracks around the garden seeing something forgotten erupt; one such plant is Smilacena racemosa, luckily saved from the skip when the labyrinth was created. It has just emerged showing its wonderful pale green feather spikes soon to be followed by scented creamy/white/green tinged flowers, and later by red berries. A beautiful specimen doing remarkably well in pretty much full sun, it is really a woodland shade loving plant showing that plants can do well in other spots too! It gives us the confidence to add this to the many shady borders being created. Also the Kerria Japonica, with magnificent displays of stunning yellow flowers, an old fashioned Spring shrub just emerged brightening up the Long Walled Border under planted with Arum Italicum marmoratum and pulmonaria a really lovely combination for this shady border.

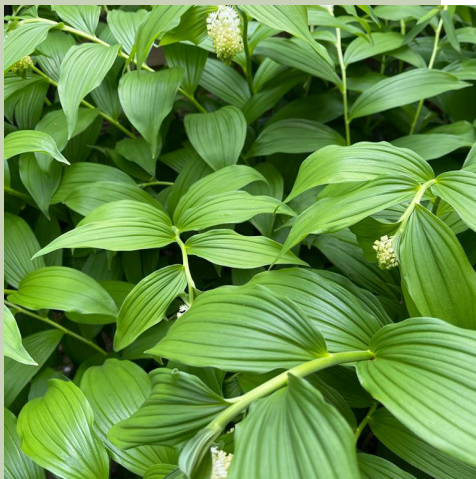


Spring an exciting and probably the busiest time of year in the garden, when there is so much to do making it hard to prioritise. It is a balancing act juggling whether to split plants now or in the autumn, watering, vegetable bed preparation and getting supports in place before they are needed.

At the moment sowing seeds is taking a lot of time, juggling space in our own greenhouses and windowsills protecting and keeping seeds, cuttings, corms and bulbs healthy and alive. Definitely not an easy task.

Supports have been built ready for the brassicas, onion sets have been planted as have French beans, radish, beetroot. The Rhubarb is also growing well.

Bugingham Palace is now complete and has pride of place along the wild flower border. The wild flower meadow seems to be emerging with interesting flowers and hopefully this year it will be a haven for wild life.



The pond has now come alive again with frogs, tadpoles, ducks and the first newts of the season have been spotted. There has been much clearing around the pond to make way for more interesting plant specimens. The pond lilies we thought we might have lost are just showing their pads. The Zantedeschia lilies have survived too.

Lots of lovely Primroses and spring flowers are providing colour and soon the candelabra Primulas will provide a lovely show, these are really special. The Hellebores also have been magnificent this year and many still in flower since January.



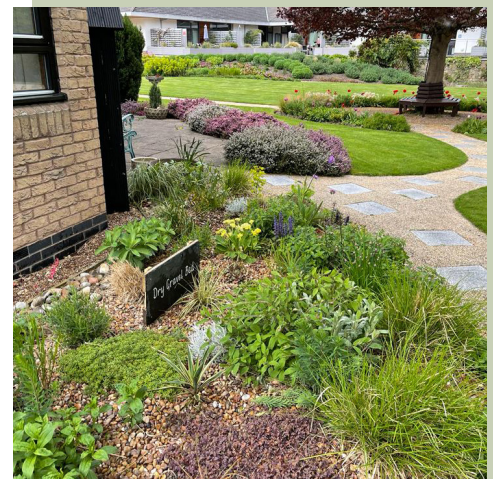
Luckily there are lots of little seedlings about for us to prick out and pot on ready for the nursery bed to develop or to sell hopefully at the National Garden Scheme opening in July.

The compost and leaf mould bays have been re-built improving the quality of the compost which has been spread around the borders adding much needed nutrients to the soil. Especially needed on the Summer Herbaceous border which has sadly suffered several casualties over the winter months. Replacements will be needed.

The Auricula Theatre is now full, another lovely point of interest around the garden. The young specimens are planted in clay pots as is the norm for these special treasures.

The aim is about maintaining and constantly improving the garden adding points of interest here and there to keep it fresh and to have this special sense of place and atmosphere aiming to keep it alive and interesting giving the visitor a surprise with these new additions. Work is ongoing on the front garden and entrance, the new fence border has been created adding plants from volunteers own gardens and adding some plants that had outgrown their space from around the Kirkwood borders, nothing gets discarded and plants are used where possible around the garden or saved and potted on for future plant sales. Added also are plants from our own gardens. This is still very much a work in progress but already has made an impact. Other plants include Crocosmia, Astrantia, Heuchera, Asters, Pulmonaria.. The intention hopefully is to plant perhaps 4 large Hydrangeas (perhaps Limelight) as well as Hostas and Ferns which will add some stability to the border. The grass verge, as you enter, is one of the areas needing change with this idea given to Facilities Team for their approval... also the many trees lining the drive which are believed to have TPOs. They are all in need of some essential pruning with one or two branches on some of the trees ideally require complete removal. Many branches during the storm were damaged and fell into the grounds.

The existing fence backing this new border is steadily being painted and hopefully will be complete shortly. Next painting projects are pond fence, Light up a Life tree seat, and some of the furniture around the garden – no pressure!!





Garden jobs for May – both at home and The Kirkwood!

It is evident there is much new growth of plants, but along with that are both annual and perennial weeds. Quite a few of the borders have been mulched but there are areas where the hoe has to come out too. Early eradication of the weeds are necessary as they soon take over.

Time to feed roses and container plants, take cuttings of Lavender, Salvias, Hydrangeas, Fuchsias, Perlagoniums

Events to look forward to this summer

There is some anxiety knowing we have to prepare again for the Yorkshire in Bloom event and open The Kirkwood garden for the National Garden Scheme on the same weekend, however, now in our second year, knowing what to expect this time has taken a bit of the pressure off even though there is an awful lot to do to be ready in time.

There are now 17 other Hospice gardens who have committed to opening for the National Garden Scheme. To date the scheme has raised over £60 million and although it is a hugely challenging event, the impact this kind of fundraising contributes to the nursing institutions, Hospices, Cancer support, Carers and many more it makes it all worthwhile.

Garden wish list

We always have a wish list of plants that we would love to add to the garden. Thank you to all those who have donated previously, your generosity is greatly appreciated. Every plant donated is so special to us and takes pride of place in The Kirkwood Garden.

So many of our friends and supporters often ask if we are seeking any particular plants so that they may donate to us from time to time. If you could help us achieve our vision, see our wish list below:

- Roses
- Hostas: Rainforest Sunrise, Sum and Substance, Remember me, Singing in the rain or any others
- Ferns
- Epimedium x versicolor sulphureum: red beauty
- Hydrangeas: Limelight
- Thalictrums: Splendide White, Eli, Black Stocking
- Aстранtia: Roma, Hadspen Blood, or any other
- Sanguisborbas
- Persicara amplexicaulis
- Campunala Latifloras
- Penstemon: Garnet
- Euphorbia wulfenni
- Bulbs for winter flowering like snowdrops

Recipes to try from the garden

Wild garlic pesto:

- 150g of wild garlic
- 50g parmesan
- Half a lemon - zest and add a few squeezes of the juice
- 50ml rapeseed oil

Chop leaves and blitz with all other ingredients in the blender to a rough paste. Add oil and season with blender still running until all combined. Pour into clean jar, keeps two weeks in fridge.

Wild garlic butter:

- One handful of garlic
- One handful of parsley
- 250g of good quality butter
- Zest of one lemon

Blanch a handful of leaves in boiling water for 20 seconds, refresh in cold water. Squeeze out water chop with parsley, beat everything together with butter lemon zest salt and pepper roll into log shape and pop in the fridge to set.

