

VOLUNTEER GARDENERS NEWSLETTER



THE
KIRKWOOD
SUPPORT
LIFE.



An update from Volunteer Gardener Linda Roberts

October 2021

Introduction

What an exciting year and how it has whizzed by – I can't believe the gardeners are now thinking about our Christmas walk and lunch already. It will be here before we know it!!

I say exciting, yes, it has been with our very first opening for the **National Garden Scheme** and what a huge success it was too, raising a very commendable **£2200**. A whole new experience for us but I think everyone will agree it was hugely rewarding in so many ways. It uplifted our spirits and gave us all a new challenge and some new diversions. It is true there are ways we can improve to make the whole process run smoother. We are all up for it and keen to do it again next year In fact it is has just been confirmed for Saturday 30th July 2022.

We had some wonderful comments from the many visitors local and further away. The whole atmosphere was upbeat, light hearted and happy. Enjoyed by all ages – even the little ones!!

Prior to the opening we had some lovely donations from the Denby Dale Flower Club and Mr and Mrs Yarrow from Upper Cumberworth, not forgetting the super Hostas from Sue Proctor, Clayton West. Sue houses the National Collection for Hostas in our area – so it is a delight to have some of her very own collection. Most of these donated plants have been planted in our borders and those not planted were sold at **our plant sales – our plant/bric-a-brac stall alone raised over £270!!**

Following our NGS opening a lovely local gentleman came along with some hedgehog homes and more recently a novelty train with carriages to hold small pots of plants. He loves working with wood and this gives him a sense of purpose knowing that we are proud to have them in the Kirkwood Garden. I think he is making a wooden wheelbarrow next!!

Another few highlights for us first of all was Sarah Ferguson visiting our garden again; sadly I was not able to meet her as I was visiting the Tatton flower Show, but lucky Steven had the honour of talking to her about our garden. Overall a thoroughly enjoyable event for him.



Also the whole of the Kirkwood's volunteers were awarded the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, equivalent to an MBE!! Many volunteers were able to meet the Lord Lieutenant presenting the award with a personal commendation from the Queen, which is now on display in the Reception area.

Some of the gardeners were able to enjoy a visit to local area organisers for the NGS, Elizabeth and David's garden at Scape Lodge. A most interesting garden with magnificent views over the Pennines and beyond. We had wonderful tea and cakes on their balconies and we were then able to browse through their plant sales - one or two plants were bought from their collection, an Eupatorium bought now has pride of place in our new Lodge Border!!

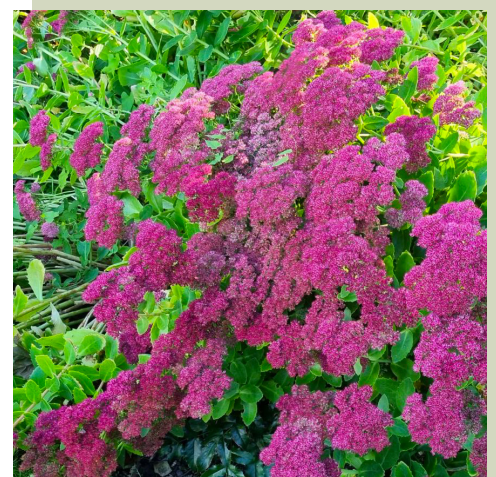
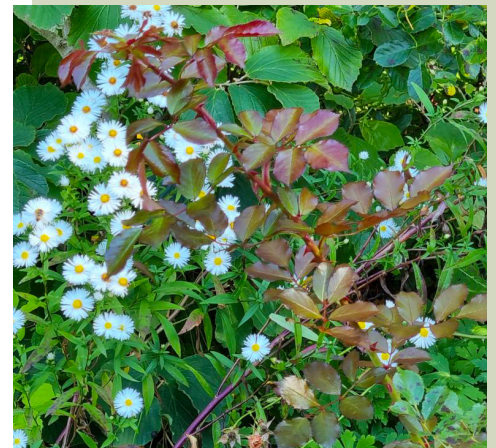
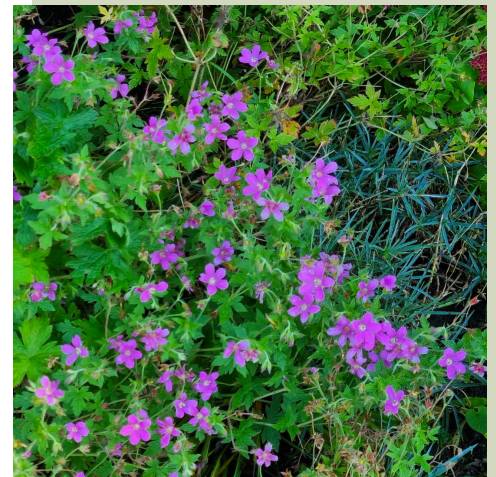
What has been happening in the gardens?

Now it is that lovely time of year (a favourite) Autumn! It is the best time both to plan and plant. Our days are shorter and the sun casts longer shadows; the light softens, still warm days (sometimes) and cool nights it is simply magical.

"the gardens bringing a bounty of treasures and a wealth of beauty"

Walking through our Hospice garden (and indeed any good garden) in Autumn is inspirational; clearly demonstrating that gardens can continue to delight right throughout the year. Walking through the Hospice gardens recently it is amazing just how much is in flower. Pictures attached. Now that we are adding other seasonal interest we will very soon have a garden that truly delights and is colourful for 365 days of the year.

Another wonderful bonus for us this year was the tremendous donation of £500 from one of the Masonic Lodges in Huddersfield recently closed. With this money we will create a new border now to be named The Lodge Border. The plan for this border is possibly a hot border but maybe in the Prairie style (this was the intention for the gravel border but a donation of alpines were used here instead).





Prairie plants and grasses mixed with interesting perennials fire up the imagination creating depth and movement and are incredibly tactile - wonderful for patients and their families to walk closely by and be able to feel the grasses and watch their movement with the breeze. Big, tall, bold and beautiful plants planted closely together will make this space truly magical.

Where are we up to?

Some over zealous pruning of the *Garrya Eliptica* brought to our attention that really this shrub was outgrowing its space and was beginning to block the view from the patients area - so it has had the chop!! Next to this were some really tall *Echinops* which required a huge amount of staking and they very quickly got out of hand . So they've gone too!! Making way now for a maintenance path at the back of the border where we can easily get to the roses etc to prune without getting trapped in the greenery!! The tap and hosepipe that are situated here are going to be moved lower down so as not to damage any of the planting.

Again this is giving us a chance to freshen up the borders with more floriferous colourful planting. Some volunteers came forward with ideas of plants they would like to see incorporated into this area.

Our kitchen garden worked reasonable well and the chef was supplied with rhubarb, assortment of herbs, some super tomatoes, baby cucumbers, chillies, French beans, runner beans, potatoes and onions. Still to come are sprouts and kale. As yet we have still not planted any winter vegetables. Perhaps we need to plan with the chef what he wants next year.

Can't let Autumn pass without mentioning the wonderful plant *Salvia*. Fastly becoming a favourite for us all. It's the right time now for taking cuttings - so this will be one of our many projects over the coming weeks. We have only a few varieties but we are keen to increase and start a collection.

Our Wild Flower Meadow is only a marginal success. Newly mown, scarified and re-seeded. I am sure next year with all the love and attention it is getting the Meadow will have more impact.

What a wonderful success our annuals were...

The Tithonia - Monty's favourite still flowering their heads off with a lovely brash orange.

Everyone is asking what the tall plant with the dangly white flowers are...

Nicotinia sylvestris - they certainly have caused a stir, so another definite to plant

next year, the *Cosmos* still flowering on and of course not forgetting *Ammi*. They look wonderful now with their seed heads on!!



Thanks and reflection

A huge thank you to Terry and John who miraculously produced an Auricula Theatre from wood found round about the garden. It looks fabulous . New Auriculas are currently being propagated and hopefully the Theatre will be full before the end of October (no pressure then)!! Their next project a Bug Hotel!!

As Monty told us this week

“The beginning of October is New Year’s Day for the Gardener and time for preparing for next Spring and Summer for our gardens to look as good as they possibly can”

Let’s wish ourselves a Happy Gardening New Year!!!!

“The love of gardening is a seed once sown that never dies”

- Gertrude Jekyll

Enjoy your own gardens as well as The Kirkwood’s.

Linda x

