



Max Traegar, whose mother Nancy handles Institute publicity, and Jake Morris

Rev Chris Spring makes a point to Sylvia Pace with, beyond them, Fay Naylor and David Bogush in celebratory mood



Molly Trapp

## Institute's 90th birthday year

This year's Institute Open Day, as well as showing the extraordinarily varied work of students and attracting enrolments



Hedy Freedman and Cllr Jack Coben in his first official mayoral engagement on the Suburb

for the new season, was also a celebration of the 90th birthday of the Henrietta Barnett inspired Institute. Molly Trapp and Edith

Lock who live in the Orchard and Hedy Freedman from Grey Close who were born in the same year were joined by the

new mayor of Barnet Cllr Jack Cohen and Principal Fay Naylor for a strawberry tea and a huge birthday cake.

I am writing this article whilst sitting in a French farm house at the base of the Pyrenees. The peace and tranquility is truly amazing. Not a sound anywhere, no traffic, only birds and other noises I really can't identify.

There is an enormous solanum jasminoides scrambling over the side of this converted barn, it must be thirty feet high and a mass of delicate white blossom. Mine at home (when I last saw it) was 5ft and spindly; patience is a virtue.

The countryside on the drive down was beautiful and so very lush with roses growing in abundance along the motorways. The villages which we passed

through were smothered with geraniums, petunias and good old purple verbena. I visited a garden centre at a near by village just to compare like for like. Isn't it clever that the plant names are all the same, it makes life a lot easier!

Chelsea once again did not disappoint me, after twenty-four years I still find the whole experience quite magical and exciting. If I come away with one new idea I always regard it as a success. This year I spotted a range of plants from a specialist plant firm near Bath. It was a collection of plants with almost black flowers or black foliage. Aquelegia 'Magpie', Iris

## Summer gardening

chrysographes black form, Dianthus barbatus 'Darkest of All' and Anthriscus 'Ravens Wing' to name but a few. If these were planted in aluminum containers the contrast would be perfect, but equally good in the ground, planted as a group. If anyone is interested, the firm is called Special Plants 01225 891 686.

Once again we have had a lot of rain in May and the earlier part of June and interspersed with bouts of sunshine, things literally burst through the soil at an alarming rate and in a relatively short time the garden

was transformed. This was the time to keep on top of the weeding but as I have said in the past, a mulch in May keeps the weeds at bay!

I am so very happy with my decked area. It has opened up a whole new dimension to my garden. I colour-washed an old bench in a shade of blue/grey and planted containers with plants of a similar hue. A beautiful grass Helictitrichon and a fern Athyrium Niponicum off-set with a pot of purple dianthus.

The wooden surface holds the heat and it is very pleasant to sit there early in the morning or at sundown.

On the periphery there are perfumed shrubs which come into their own at various times of the year. Philadelphus, Chimonanthus praecox and Hamamelis Mollis. Added to the spring and summer containers of lilies etc. I hope to attain an all year round haven of perfumes.

August brings a plethora of choices. Hibiscus in many shades of purple, blue or white and late flowering ceanothus 'Gloire de Versailles' for those of you who missed out in spring.

Hydrangeas also flower at this time and I never realised how diverse this plant was until I read an article in the July edition of Gardeners World.

The colour shades and flower heads are quite beautiful but I think top of my list would have to be Hydrangea macrophylla 'Rotschwanz' a lace cap with the darkest of plum purple florets, yes please!

If you have nothing better to do this month you can prune your summer-flowering shrubs

and rambler roses or, like me, stretch out in a deck chair with a glass of wine and browse through the bulb catalogues and make your selection for spring.

I am going for tulips (if the squirrels allow). A particular tulip caught my eye at Chelsea called Queen of the Night and I shall plant two layers of bulbs so that when they flower the blooms will just burst out at you. Well that is the general idea, anyway. Another bulb to look out for is Allium 'Purple Sensation', when planted in the ground through a haze of forget-me-nots this has to be the best spring tonic ever. I have noticed I am choosing plum purple colours an awful lot, I think the trip to 'Great Dixter' last year must have turned my head.

September plants seem to have purple pink or blue tones. Verbena bonariensis, a very useful plant, apart from being very attractive it has the added use of being very tall (4-5ft) and planted through lower growing plants for example 'Echinacea purpurea' a rather large pink daisy with a furry plum centre makes a bold statement in the herbaceous border this time of year.

Keep up the mowing and clipping and start thinking about

how you want to change things for next year and don't forget we can have an early frost so look after the pots of tender plant geraniums and fuchsia for example.

As we creep into October I always wish I had more plants with good autumn colour. Because I grow a lot of herbaceous I don't have the space in the summer for shrubs in the autumn, that is because I am greedy. Parthenocissus is the true Virginia creeper but if you don't like the idea of this quite invasive plant wreaking havoc with your pebble dash or grouting, it can be grown through an established tree where it will hang in festoons of glorious reds and golds. Another striking climber is Vitis Coignetiae, this is a vine and the green leaves turn the most beautiful shade of wine red similar to a Cabernet Sauvignon!

Try and squeeze in a trip to Wisley or if that is too far, Kew or even Golders Hills Park. Failing that the Heath extension; the colours are there for all of us to see and absolutely free.

Wisley are having an Open Evening on 24 August. You do not have to be a member of the R.H.S.

Good Gardening.

DIANE BERGER



## Suburb rainfall

Unusually, it is difficult to grumble seriously about rainfall this year. No sooner was the last report written, wondering about watering the garden, than down came the rain. So April had a respectable total of 1.96 ins, compared with a North London mean of 2.13 ins. May, at 1.67 ins was rather drier than the average of 2.25 ins. However, this was not a problem as the rain was reasonably well

distributed throughout the month.

It was June that provided rather more excitement on the weather front. On the night of the first day an inch fell in a thunderstorm. Although nothing too unusual, this does not happen frequently. The middle of the month became drier so that offers of help with watering the garden were forthcoming before we went away on the 20th. However,

1.43 ins fell in 24 hours on the 29th, when apparently it rained all day. (Many thanks to the editor for recording it.) This unusually large amount brought the monthly total to 4.18 ins, compared with a North London mean of 2.63 ins. It was enough to make the clover in the lawn a bees' paradise by the time we returned on June 30.

DIANA IWI

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