

Window-shopping in the 'Garden of Eden'

In April I went to Cornwall on a gardening holiday, not to garden but just to look! I decided that Cornish rain would make a pleasant change from London rain and I was right. I wanted to see lots of gardens but top of my list was the Eden project. What an amazing place, even on the approaches overlooking the biomes, it seemed very eerie looking like an alien landing site with lots of ant-like workers scurrying around. The whole set up is quite fantastic, everything has been so carefully thought out, even to the number of loos, which I think is important. Following the trails through the biomes you are shown different climatic regions and mans interactions with them. Even the outside landscaping is to die for! I am glad I saw it in its infancy and I will return in a few years to see how it has matured.

My next stop was to Heligan, another gem, quite different but very magical. There is a walled garden and woodland walks but the boardwalk took my breath away. It winds its way down a valley past three lakes and the whole area is stuffed with tree ferns and chusan palms. It must have been wonderful to have owned such a garden. There are many more great gardens in Cornwall to visit and just to see magnolias 60-80ft tall in full bloom is something I will never forget.



Halfway through May it stopped raining and after a few days of sunshine a miracle happened and the garden burst into life. I really was quite relieved as I had organised a trip for the horticultural society to Goodnestone Park and I was getting very concerned but I needn't have worried, my mum always says "the sun shines on the righteous" and she was right. We had a lovely day out. Well I did but I am sure I speak for everybody who came.

It is a stunning garden, so very quiet and peaceful and lots of areas to visit. A wonderful walled garden with long herbaceous beds not quite ready but with a little imagination you could visualise what they would be like in a few weeks time. The wisteria was to die for and the entire garden just exuded an overall feeling of peace and tranquillity. Lady Fitzwalter organised lunch for us and the sun shone all day. What more could we ask for?

Whilst I am on the subject of the horticultural society, I am organising a trip on August 22 to Wisley, the home and main show grounds of the Royal Horticultural Society and, for all you keen gardeners out there, a real treat. As well as the arboretum, rockery, lakes, glasshouses, woodland walks and herbaceous beds there is also a flower show which just happens to be on when we are

going. The cafeteria has a very good selection of food from about £5 or, for those who want the Full Monty, there is a very nice restaurant, probably about £20 plus. Last but not least, to end a good day, is the plant shop. Heaven. For those who wish to come the cost is £10. Entrance to the gardens is £4 to non-members and free to members. If you are interested phone me on 8455 0455.

Now for Chelsea. Last year for me was, as you know, very disappointing but I thought I would give it one more try and I am very glad I did. The teething problems with the new marquee had been sorted out and I had a very enjoyable day.

Blue and purple flowers are the colours to have and aliums of all descriptions were everywhere but Purple Sensation was the most popular. Another plant which popped up all over the place is the purple thistle *Cirsium Rivulare Antropurpureum* to give it its proper name. Well, of course, Mrs I-must-have has ordered hers already. I wonder if they are going to seed all over the place and become a curse like ground elder. Watch this space!

Apparently tulips have done extremely well this year and I can vouch for that. I thought they would have just rotted away and I think Bloms, the tulip specialists, were also quite surprised. They had their usual magnificent display, there is always a crush around this stand, tulips are always so popular. It is so nice to be able to choose from the real thing rather than a picture in a catalogue. I have made my choice for next year and I am going for orange. Yes I know I always say how I dislike orange but this particular bowl of tulips really smacked me straight in the eyes. It is called World Favourite and I am going to make it mine.

I have been quite happy with my garden so far this year. I grew lilies knowing that lily beetle was a possibility and it was. Every morning and evening I went out and caught them, they look like thin ladybirds but without spots. I caught them and took them to the Heath to release them - no not really, I crushed them between my nails



Over 60 visitors joined Abbeyfield residents and volunteers to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the opening of Abbeyfield House on June 21. Guest of honour was the Mayor of Barnet, Cllr Anita Campbell, pictured here with Michael Milner (Chairman of the HGS Abbeyfield Society) and some of those present including, to the right of the Mayor, Wendy Hewson, Susan Sainsbury (Chairman of Abbeyfield's London region), Dawn Orr (Secretary), Rudi Vis MP, Tony Thornley and Josephine Bruegel (two founding members).

and then had to check for the children. They hide them in this disgusting black stuff which is rather like tar. I removed the leaves and yes it was worth all the trouble, the perfume of roses and lilies as I stroll through my arbour is just truly wonderful.

August is the time to prune the wispy side shoots of Wisteria back to five or six leaves (the second prune is Jan/Feb). Dead-head repeat flowering roses to encourage more blooms and what ever you do don't forget to water tubs and hanging baskets. It's almost impossible to get them back once they have dried out. (Rather like my skin!) I also liquid feed pots/baskets once a week, we do expect so much from quite a small amount of soil. I never tell you much about vegetables, my knowledge starts at the door of Marks. There seems to be so much to do in August that you might as well pitch a tent, move outside and stay there. I did quite well with my clematis this year and I went out every morning and religiously checked and tied in the stems. It is scary how quickly they grow on a day-to-day basis.

In September you can feed your lawns or prepare to seed or lay new turf. If you leave it much later the weather is not good enough to encourage the seed to germinate or the turf to settle. It is also time to give the hedges the final trim of the year and if you have a twitten at the end of

your garden, don't forget to cut that side as well. I popped down to the post box the other day using my twitten as a short cut, it was so overgrown that by the time I hacked my way through I could have delivered my letter in person!

It seems to be all over by October, quite sad really. Lift and divide perennials if necessary and clear away faded bedding

and move containers with tender plants to a safe place before it gets too cold. Winter containers can be planted now, just to cheer us up in the coming winter months and last but not least, put your mulch or muck down now and let the worms take it down for you. Remember to enjoy your garden, it really is good fun. Good gardening.

DIANE BERGER

Suburb Rainfall

For once a (sort of) forecast has not gone wildly astray. The very wet twelve months of April 2000 - March 2001 have been followed by a drier period. Summers that were reasonably dry was my hopeful prediction and May and June have been just that.

While April's rainfall of 3.4in was above average and the ground remained extremely wet, May 3 saw the start of a complete change. There was about 1.3in over three days in the middle of the month, accompanied on one day by a maximum temperature of 47°F. However, apart from this, there was virtually no rain, leading to

a monthly total of under 2in, appreciably below average.

Similarly, June had nearly 1.3in on three days in the middle of the month, but little else. The resulting total of under 1.5in compares with an average of 2.5in. Combined with three days of shade temperatures in the eighties (F), this constitutes a reasonably good English summer. We now wait for thunderstorms to water the increasingly dry gardens at night while hoping for a continuation of the high temperatures and dry weather during the day.

DIANA IWI

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