

A special friend? - say it with flowers!

My undying love this spring has to be my parrot tulips. I know I can be fickle and I love so many things one day and not the next but the parrot tulips did it for me this Spring, so much so that my first port of call at Chelsea was to the Bloms stand and there I gazed at the most beautiful specimens before choosing for Spring 2005. It is so much better to see them in the flesh, so to speak, than from a catalogue and if they are half as good as this year's, I will be a happy bunny.

For thirty-two years (excluding the year Joshua was born) I have always gone to Chelsea on the first day at eight in the morning. This year I went for the afternoon stint and was pleasantly surprised. The number of people dropped dramatically by 7 pm and I was able to study more carefully the show gardens without resorting to my usual kicking and pushing. Green seemed to be very popular colour this year which is nice for those of us who have grass and a hedge, and I still think it's amazing what you can do with two to three hundred thousand pounds. The Horticultural Society committee is considering plans to enter a garden at Chelsea for our Centenary Year in 2007; watch this space for developments.

In June we had another glorious coach trip; the organiser

obviously knows her stuff! We went to Hidcote and then Kiftgate gardens. My goodness me, what a treat! The beautiful gardens of Hidcote contrasting the intimacy of small garden rooms with larger scale vistas and woodland areas had something for everyone. At Kiftgate, the famous rose scampered 100 feet high into the surrounding trees. The steeply wooded slopes, planted with a profusion of golden philadelphus and other shrubs, led down to a delightful pool which led ones eyes over the surrounding countryside.

The coach came home laden with plants and someone who shall remain nameless bought a Kiftgate rose to adorn her Suburb garden!

A few weeks ago I was reading an article on poisonous plants and it's amazing how many there are, so I am passing this information to you all just in case you want to buy a present for that special friend. The Horticultural Trades Association (HTA) has split garden plants into three categories: Category A poses the greatest and most serious risk; category B presents a lesser but quite significant hazard while category C plants are far less hazardous but need specific precautions. I should also point out that risk levels could vary from person to person,

garden to garden and also according to the time of year.

Category A has only a few plants and because of the risk to humans they are very hard to come by: *Rhus diversiloba*, *R. radicans*, *R. rydbergii striata*, *R. vernix*, *R. succedanea*, *R. toxicarium* and *R. verniciflua*. Poison Ivy and Poison Oak, which are from North America, are not available here, Category B: *Aconitum*, *Arum* [cuckoo pint], *Datura* [brugmansia], *Colchicum* [autumn crocus], *Lily of the Valley* [convallaria], *Daphne*, *Foxgloves*, *Euphorbia*, *Laburnum*, *Oleander*, *Rue*, *Taxus* [yew]. Category C plants come under the heading of 'handle with care' as they can cause dermatitis or other skin reactions: *Alstromeria*, *Anthurium*, *Delphinium*, *Euonymus*, *Weeping Fig*, *Gaultheria*, and *Lupins*. I have written a selection for you here; some cause skin problems and others have poisonous seeds. If anyone would like a more comprehensive list ring the H.T.A. on 0118 9330 8940.

Now I have put the fear of God into you, I suppose the next best thing is to chuck out all plants and just to have a nice lawn.

Which takes me on very nicely to Mr Greenthumb and my front lawn. As some of you may know, it has been scarified, aerated and given a special treatment every few

months. I am not over the moon with the results and it doesn't look like the advert in my magazine. However, as Rome wasn't built in a day, I will carry on for another year so watch this space.

My little allotment is going great guns and is as pretty as a picture. I have broad beans - mmm - carrots, climbing beans, potatoes, very spindly tomatoes, beetroot, sweet corn, mangoes and guava. It's not a very big plot so I just grow enough for two dinners.

This year I have planted osteospermums in containers in my porch. Goodness me, never again! I have had only one flush (not a hot one!) in spite of deadheading, feeding, and reading them stories and I'm still waiting for more flowers. I think I know a few people like this, all show on the outside but with no staying power.

All for now, until next time. Good gardening.

DIANE BERGER



Pet responsibility week



Garden Suburb Junior School had a special visitor recently - Sam, the beautiful greyhound and his owner, Kathryn Salomon. Kathy, who lives on the Suburb, brought in her 'Pat' (Pets as Therapy) dog.

During Pet Responsibility Week the children are taught how dogs and cats help in society. Pets are widely used

today in a therapeutic way, supporting people in personal distress. Kathryn spent some of the day telling the children how the pets have to go through temperamental tests as part of their training. The children were taught how to be responsible around dogs, A most successful visit.

KATHY BRODBECK

Craft Fair at Bigwood House

The North London Friends of the Family Holiday Association have taken over the organisation of the very popular November Craft Fair at Bigwood House.

In addition, there will be a valuation table at which North London Auctioneers will inform you if you are sitting on a fortune by keeping that odd looking

vase that you inherited stored away in the back of the cupboard.

Potential participators (£40 per table) should get in touch with Patrick or Joan Laurance, 8455 1777.

The fair takes place on November 20. Further details will appear in the next edition of *Suburb News*.

Wine Club moves

St Mary's Hall, Hendon Lane, Finchley Central, N3 is the new venue for Institute Wine Club meetings. The club meets on the third Thursday of every month except July, August and December.

Wines of Burgundy Sept 15; Sparkling wines Oct 21; Fortified wines Nov 18. Cost: £15 a meeting. New members including beginners welcome. Call Valerie Cowan on 8458 4508.

HGS rainwatch

Rainfall from April to June, at almost seven inches has been slightly below average. Similarly, for the first six months of the year rainfall, at just over 13 inches, has been only somewhat below the mean of just over 14 inches. So the interest this quarter lies not in the overall figures but in the detail.

April was a wet month with over 3 inches of rain. However, following the 2 dry months of February and March, this total was perhaps, not enough to refill the soil for a really good growing season. It was distributed fairly well throughout the month, unlike May where half the total of 2¼ inches fell in the first five days. From 7

to 31 May there was only a ¼ inch so the ground really dried out. Again, after the ½ inch on 31 May and 1 June, there was virtually nothing for almost 3 weeks. Then 1¼ inches in the last 10 days. A benefit of this pattern is that the water can really penetrate the ground, not dissipated on leaves and litter and evaporating before

reaching plant roots. At least, that must be the hope of lazy (or ecologically minded?) waterers. It is just a pity that the welcome water for thirsty plants came accompanied by the strong winds that normally blow leaves off the trees and shrubs in October rather than June.

DIANA IWI

sat+el+lite n. a celestial body orbiting around a planet or star. dish n. an informal name for parabolic aerial. Brit. slang. to ruin or spoil: he dished his chances of getting the job (Sp in Hampstead Garden Suburb - dishing the roofline amounts to an in+'fringe+ment

Now you see it - now you don't

It's not that we have anything against satellite dishes. It's just that in a conservation area they need planning permission like any other addition or alteration from both the Trust and Barnet. Dishes will not be approved where they are visually prominent. Ideally, and it is accepted it's not always possible, they should be at ground level and out of sight.

Any alterations to houses on the Suburb must be approved by the Trust and Barnet

Householders who carry out unauthorised alterations can, and are, legally obliged to undo the work, to rectify the 'infringement'.



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862 Finchley Road, Hampstead Garden Suburb, London NW11 6AB