

The Knoll Gardens Foundation



Summer Newsletter 2012

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The Foundation

It has been quite a busy spring and summer organising the Open Days, working on our new Foundation website project and the general day to day running of the Foundation. Sometimes I just don't know where the time goes!

Foundation Open Days

We have held five Foundation Open Days since March, with the next one being held on Friday 31st August from 10am to 4pm.

The remaining open days will be on Friday 28th September and Friday 26th October. We hope to see you there!!



We are so pleased that again this year we have had the company of the RSPB and Dorset Wildlife Trust, who have planned activities at each event. We have also had the pleasure of Brian Chard's company, a local award winning amateur wildlife photographer. His photos and cards are truly beautiful and he has a real talent for capturing our native wildlife.

We have a new Kids Activity Trail leaflet for the garden, for which we are charging £1 (all proceeds to the

Foundation). It has been great to see children engaged with the wildlife and plants in the garden and hopefully this will go from strength to strength.

Foundation website

I am so pleased to tell you that we now have our own website www.knollgardensfoundation.org.

It's been quite a journey! I've not done anything like this before, but working with Bob Clarke (a graphic designer and artist) who did all the "pretty" things, I've learnt a few more skills! We do hope you like it! Please let me know if you have any ideas or suggestions for content and things you'd like to see.

I hope to see you soon!

Anne Crotty



In The Garden

Our first masterclass of the year has already taken place in the gardens, in the latter part of July, and I am delighted if not actually relieved to report that it was a lovely sunny dry day. Why? Well it was a Drought Tolerant masterclass (!!!) and ever since we decided to hold them back in the early part of the year, - which was then sunny and full of hosepipe bans – it has been cold and very wet!!

Preparing for the class, I was looking at the rainfall records that we have kept here since I first came to the gardens in 1994 and was reminded that while the gardens are in something of a rain shadow (as well as a local frost pocket) the annual rainfall totals varied over the 18 years from a



minimum of 30 inches to just a shade under 48 inches. So in fact the gardens are well used to quite a variation in annual rainfall and this is something as gardeners we need to be aware of especially when it comes to planting.

Indeed shortly after we first announced these classes I was invited to go onto Radio Solent's 'The Good Life' with Georgie Windsor to talk about plants that cope with drought conditions and

I can still remember the drive to the studio through severe pouring rain and the number of listeners contacting the studio to say their gardens were flooded not drought prone !! Sounds like a recipe for a disastrous interview I know, but in fact it went very well as I was able to make the important point that it is no good planting drought tolerant plants in dry waterless conditions as even they need sufficient water to get established. Our seasons go through wet and dry periods and it is important to time our planting to coincide with the wetter periods – not the dry ones! A good example is our recent planting in a section of the Mill End borders which in more dry times we would not consider; but as it has been such a wet spring and summer it does at least offer the advantage of being able to plant now.

We have a good number of excellent volunteers working in the gardens on Fridays and it is they who have been responsible



for several projects this season including the replanting of the Gravel Garden as well as the Mill End only completed in the last few days of July. Sadly a mature *Sorbus xkewensis* which had fantastic large bunches of tasty fruit beloved by redwings, fieldfares and thrushes died and had to be removed leaving a big space effectively empty. As this formed an important part of the Mill End borders it was important to replant as soon as practical and so we took advantage of the damp weather to make it happen. I am delighted with the extended Gravel Garden as it makes a great feature in the garden but it has also provided homes for many new plants that I have been keen to find homes for. *Pennisetums*, *persicarias*, *agapanthus* and *salvias* to name but a few.

Friends who have known the garden for some years might recall the wonderful display of candelabra primulas in the Damp garden before the soil became



tired and the plants died out. Having re-soiled the area and replanted last year the spring display of dazzling red primulas was a sight to behold. Ferns, sedges and astilbes take over for the summer and are currently looking pretty wonderful.

Our experimental shady meadow, close by Four Oaks walk, has not yet been planted 12 months but is showing signs of settling down. This area is very dry and shady so this is a real experiment to see

what survives and even enjoys this area. Perhaps the plants establishment has been helped by the wet season so far, although the accompanying low light levels cannot have been a good thing.

Having been especially hard hit by the last few winters the Summer Garden is in need of a 'refurbishment', and given the continuing problems we continue to encounter with the ageing water gardens immediately adjacent we are beginning to wonder if these two areas shouldn't be combined as our next major project. It makes a lot of sense in many ways to deal with both areas at the same time. We just need the opportunity to make it all happen!

Neil Lucas

Friends information

We want to thank all our Friends for their support and look forward to seeing you in 2012!

Friends and Donors

"Thank You" to all our Friends and Donors, we couldn't do this without you!

Volunteer support

"Thank You" to our wonderful volunteers:

- Anne Morris
- Brenda
- Anne Crotty
- Renata
- Helen
- Judy
- Val
- Mary
- Lynda
- Roy
- Martin

• Will

They have been working hard in the garden and done great work, as well as helping out at the open days!

If you would like to volunteer, or know someone who would, we'd love to hear from you. Just send an e-mail or letter to the Contact Us details below and we'll send you details of the roles available and an application form



Neil's Book - Designing with Grasses

Beautifully illustrated, Designing with Grasses shows you how to bring the magic of grasses to even the smallest of gardens creating show-stopping appeal for remarkably little work. With over 200 photographs, it

not only provides expert advice at your fingertips, but also offers an essential guide to the many ways that grasses can be used to best effect, frequently at low cost and always with an incredible beauty.

Signed copies are available direct from Knoll Gardens for just £18 +P&P. Order online at www.knollgardens.co.uk or call the nursery on 01202 873931.

Broadsheet Newspapers Wanted

Thank you to all of you that have been bringing your newspapers along, it is very much appreciated! As you know we use the newspaper as packing material for our mail-order boxes. The broad sheet size is a perfect fit, which is why we don't want the tabloid size newspapers. It's great recycling and a very worthwhile cause! Please keep reminding all your friends and neighbours.

Opening Times for 2012

We will be open:-

Tuesday to Saturday 10am - 5pm (4pm From 1st November to March).

Also open Sundays in September & October.

Last entry to the Gardens is 30 minutes before closing.

Closed Sundays & Mondays, except Bank Holidays

Closed from December 16th 2012 Re-opening February 1st 2013



Board of Trustees

Neil Lucas — Chair
Amanda Walker
Ross Humphrey
Colin Clark
Andrea Flude

Contact Us

E-mail: foundation@knollgardens.co.uk

Website: www.knollgardensfoundation.org

Telephone: 01202 873931

The Knoll Gardens Foundation

Hampreston
Wimborne
Dorset
BH21 7ND