

# The Knoll Gardens Foundation



## Spring Newsletter 2013

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## The Foundation

It has been quite a busy start to the year as we have been organising events for 2013.

We will not be holding free open days this year but in partnership with the RSPB, Dorset Bat Group and Keith Powrie, have focused on holding wildlife based events that we hope will be of interest to all and demonstrate how gardening the 'Knoll way' benefits not only ourselves but the wildlife too.

Full information can be found on our website [www.knollgardensfoundation.org](http://www.knollgardensfoundation.org) under the News & Events tab and



tickets can be purchased on-line by using the links provided or you can call in at Knoll. Details are on the following page too.

We are also just planning a big event in August and as soon as I have full details I will be letting you know!

Following on from the excellent feedback we received from our visitors who went on the garden tours undertaken by our wonderful volunteers Anne and

Judy during last year's open days, we want to extend the offer of free garden tours to all our visitors irrespective of the day and so are actively looking for volunteer Garden Guides who may have time to spare any day of the week between Tuesday and Saturday. If you are interested and would like more details, please contact me as per the details under the Contact Us on page 4 of this newsletter.

I hope to see you soon!

*Anne Crotty*



### **Dawn chorus**

**Saturday 11th May  
4.30am – 6am**

Price: £10 per person to include refreshments.

Early morning is the best time to come and listen to spring bird song, as the Garden's inhabitants start to wake up. Join us afterwards for refreshments and a chat about this early but wonderful start to the day.

Age 12+. Please make sure you wear warm (and waterproof if needed) clothing, and sensible footwear. refreshments.

### **Creatures of the Night**

**Saturday 25th May  
9pm until late**

Price: £10 per person to include refreshments

As the sun sets some fascinating creatures come out to play and we will be looking for newts, moths and bats. Investigate what can be found in our ponds as we do some newt lamping, see and hear the bats, and find out what they are feeding on by looking at what we find in a moth trap. Join us afterwards for some refreshments and a chat about these amazing creatures and their night time activities.

Age 12+. Please make sure you wear warm (and waterproof if needed) clothing, sensible footwear and bring a torch.

### **Nightjars & Bats**

**Saturday 15th June  
9 pm until late**

Price: £10 per person to include refreshments

As the sun goes down join us for a stroll on Ferndown Common to experience the eerie calls of the nightjar and hopefully catch a glimpse of this magical heathland bird as it hunts for moths. Then take a walk in the Gardens to observe some amazing aerobatics, and listen to the bats that live and feed here nightly. Join us afterwards for refreshments and a chat about these fascinating creatures and their night time activities.

Age 12+. Please make sure you wear warm (and waterproof if needed) clothing, sensible footwear and bring a torch.

### **Butterfly, Dragonfly and Damselfly Walks**

**Saturday 20th July**

Morning walk: 11am - 12.30pm

Afternoon walk: 2pm - 3.30pm

**Friday 2nd August**

Morning walk: 11am - 12.30pm

Afternoon walk: 2pm - 3.30pm

Price: £7 per person to include refreshments.

Join Keith Powrie, an expert in lepidopterology and odonatology, for a stroll around the Gardens to spot the wonderful variety of butterflies, dragonflies and damselflies that live in and visit Knoll Gardens. Find out what they feed on and how you can encourage these beautiful creatures into your own garden. Join us afterwards for some refreshments.



## In The Garden

You may have noticed without my mentioning it, but this spring has so far not been the same as the rather warmer and sunny version we had last year! Late March saw some very cold temperatures and winds but as much of the country was being affected by snow at that time I guess we got off lightly on the whole. Of course we will all recall that in 2012 after a super start the rest of the year was pretty poor. So on balance I am hopeful that we will slowly creep into what I am sure is going to be a warm and pleasant summer!!

Luke our gardener, ably assisted by our team of volunteers, prepared the garden for summer this year in fact in record time. We usually expect to complete our annual spring clean, when all the grass and perennial borders are cut down and mulched, by the end of the first week in April. But this year it was finished just before Easter which was towards the end of March. Excellent work by all!

As I write this our marvellous young Magnolia raffilli has well over 100 large pink blooms bursting from its otherwise bare stems. Of course with the late frosts many of the flowers have a brown tinge whereas they should be a deep and luscious pink but nonetheless it continues to produce new flowers which are much appreciated.



I say 'young' when in fact it was planted by the gardens creator John May back in the early 1970's; which I guess is still relatively young for a tree magnolia! This was the plant that had never flowered until just a few years ago; I can recall us standing under the tree one autumn and deciding that it was probably just as well to remove it as it wasn't really earning its keep. The following spring we had a wonderful display of 8 inch wide pink flowers that were simply gorgeous and so of course the tree survived; and is yet another reminder to me that patience is an essential tool for the gardener.

Late last year we lost one of our largest eucalyptus, *E. perriniana*, which was the rather large tree leaning over almost at 45 degrees towards the water garden to make a rather wonderful natural archway. It was a real shame to lose such a character but nonetheless its absence has opened things up and created a lot more light for the other plants in the area.

We also had a full tree survey conducted by a consultant arborist later in the autumn who looked at every tree in the garden and created a detailed report on their health and condition. On the whole our trees were very healthy but one rather wonderful beech tree close to our office and the drive was found to have very severe root rot and had to come down. This was a huge shame as it was a fabulous specimen that according to the surgeons was about 160 ish years old, though we were just beginning to detect from its foliage that it was not very happy. While I hate having to lose any tree it is always fascinating to watch tree surgeons at work; moving around the trees with seemingly little or no effort though we all know how skilled a job it is.

Rather than take the beech down to ground level as it had a massive central trunk, the last 6 metres or so have been left as a 'habitat pole'. This was a rather new term for me but it basically means leaving the trunk of a tree intact, which while admittedly looking a bit odd at first, is of benefit to wildlife which will feed or make a home on the gradually decaying timber for some years to come. The tree is thus still of use and I have no doubt our ever increasing population of woodpeckers will approve !

Neil Lucas

# Friends information

*We want to thank all our Friends for their support and look forward to seeing you in 2013!*

## 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!

They have been working hard in the garden and done great work, especially in the horrible weather conditions we’ve had!

If you would like to volunteer, or know someone who would, we’d love to hear from you. We are especially looking for people who

would like to be Garden Guides, offering free tours of the gardens to our visitors.

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

## Trustees

We are currently looking for new trustees. If you are interested then please contact us and we will send you more information.

## URGENT - Broadsheet Newspapers Wanted

We need your **broad sheet** newspapers!  
Our stocks are getting very low and 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.  
Its great recycling and a very worthwhile cause!  
Please tell all your friends and neighbours.

## Opening Times for 2013

**We will be open:-  
Tuesday to Saturday 10am - 5pm (4pm From 1st November to 31st March).**

**Last entry to the Gardens is 30 minutes before closing.**

**Closed Sundays & Mondays, except Bank Holidays**

**Closed from 21st December 2013 Re-opening 4th February 2014**



## Board of Trustees

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

## Contact Us

E-mail: [foundation@knollgardens.co.uk](mailto:foundation@knollgardens.co.uk)

Website: [www.knollgardensfoundation.org](http://www.knollgardensfoundation.org)

Telephone: 01202 873931

## The Knoll Gardens Foundation

Hampreston  
Wimborne  
Dorset  
BH21 7ND