

The Knoll Gardens Foundation



Summer Newsletter 2011

The Foundation

- Open days in June
- Volunteers

Page 1



Foundation projects

- Interpretation panels
- Website
- Bumblebee research

Page 2



In the Garden



- RHS Chelsea Flower Show - Gold Medal!
 - An update on the Garden
- Page 3

Friends information

- Volunteer support
 - Newspapers
 - Feedback
 - Opening times for 2011
 - Contact information
- Page 5

The Foundation

It has been a quiet Winter for the Foundation but things are starting to pick up in pace, along with the extraordinary weather we've been having! Who would have thought we would have gone from -10C to 24C in 4 months!

Foundation Open Days on 17th & 18th June

We are holding two free of charge Foundation Open Days for Friends and Dorset residents on Friday 17th and Saturday 18th June, with the Gardens open from 10am.

We want to promote the Foundation and our gardening ethos of sustainable, eco and wildlife friendly beautiful way of



gardening that can be achieved by everyone. We will also be joined by The RSPB and The Dorset Wildlife Trust.

We look forward to seeing you!

Do you have spare time, then why not Volunteer at Knoll Gardens

We are looking for Volunteers to join our small "family". We have the following opportunities:

- Garden volunteer - minimum 5 hours a week
- Nursery volunteer - minimum 5 hours a week

- Garden guide volunteer - minimum 2 hours a week

If you are interested then please contact us for a full description of the role you are interested in and an application form by e-mailing us at foundation@knollgardens.co.uk or telephoning us on 01202 873931. Alternatively you can pick them up at our Open days!

Anne Crotty



Foundation Projects

Interpretation panels - enhancing the visitor experience

At Knoll we want to enhance the visitor experience and at the moment we do this through education, such as our Masterclasses and garden tours. We are now looking to take this further by installing what are called Interpretation panels throughout the garden.

The aim of the panels is three fold:

- to educate by explaining what you see, the benefits and how you can do the same in your own garden
- to visually demonstrate the ethos of the gardens
- to blend in with the gardens

Over the coming months we will be working with Hierographics Ltd, who are based in Wareham. Our plan is to initially start with 6 panels which will enable us to obtain feedback from our visitors and make sure we are achieving our goals.

We hope to have the panels installed in the garden by the end of

September, so please do come along and give us your valuable feedback.



New Website

We are currently in the process of redesigning the Knoll Gardens website.

As part of this process we are creating a Knoll Gardens Foundation site that will have all the up to date news about the Foundation, newsletters, Friends membership and renewals and hopefully a whole lot more.

We'll let you know as soon as it's available!



Bumblebee research project

In the last newsletter we told you about a joint project with the University of Bath that we hoped to start this Spring.

Unfortunately we are no longer able to progress with this project due to Dr Bogatyrev being unable to take this forward at this time.

Hopefully we will be able to continue the project at a later date.



RHS Chelsea Flower Show

The sun shone, the grasses looked stunning and the judges smiled on us.

All the hard work preparing for the world's greatest horticultural show paid off in style as Knoll Gardens was awarded its tenth consecutive Chelsea Gold Medal! You can see pictures on our website, just follow the link on the Home page.

We are very proud of our achievements and without the wonderful staff and their commitment throughout the year, we just couldn't do it.

The Garden

I have to say I am delighted to be able to start these notes by saying how early the spring has been this year! In comparison to the last two seasons where the winter gloom and low light seemed almost endless this year has seen a significantly earlier start with the plants, including even the later season grasses, coming into growth weeks earlier. While the warmer temperatures are always important in bringing plants into growth I have come to believe that day length, and even more importantly the intensity



of the light, is what plants respond to. The cold snap before Christmas was a bit worrying, it was the first (and hopefully last) time we have even seen our car park quite literally a sheet of thick ice that lorries could skate on, but as the old saying predicts we seem to have got this cold period out of the system and so made way for an early spring.

On the nursery growing field the last two long hard winters had caused us to lose many more plants than we had become accustomed to, so last autumn after much trial and experimentation Gary, our ever resourceful maintenance 'dept' has devised a system of field frames that we can erect for the winter and store during the summer. They are effectively very large cloches that simply keep the plants dry which means that very low temperatures no longer have the fatal consequences when combined with wet conditions; simple and incredibly effective.

We always used to say that we were a later season nursery, and of course while this is still true as the grasses look at



their best then, we are seeing significantly busier times during the spring period. While it can be relatively quiet actually on the nursery the amount of mail order and what we call trade orders are taking up more and more of our time. London Zoo, Oxford University, RHS Gardens at Wisley and Harlow Carr along with the Central Parks are just a few of our recent 'trade' customers.

In the garden we have been no less busy. The overgrown corner I mentioned in the last newsletter that Luke had cleared out has been planted just recently and I rediscovered one of my favourite shrubs, the golden hop tree *Ptelea trifoliata* Aurea, which in the rather overgrown state of the corner had lost out on the much of the light and consequently it bright golden yellow colour. It was a bit like coming across a long lost friend; it has been hard pruned back to restore its shape and I now wait expectantly for its wonderful deep golden foliage to once again grace that corner of the garden.



The other project we are working on is the extension to the Gravel garden. Friends will recall we had removed the adjoining overgrown shrubby area and are now in the process of re-soiling the border. This always takes a bit of a time as we use (recycle) soil and compost not only from the nursery but also from our stockpile in the compound. A lot of this soil moving has to be done by hand and as and when soil becomes available so it takes a time. But as with all such projects it is far better to take time to do the job properly than to rush it and regret it later! When it is finished the Gravel will have been significantly extended and we will have made space for some of the plants that revel in hot dry sun baked conditions.

It has been an interesting year for the woody members of the garden so far. As usual we are very lucky that most of the

plants carry on seemingly very little effected by wet and cold or hot and dry but there are occasional casualties. On the edge of the Lower Lawn by the old stone seat is a very lovely specimen of *Crinodendron patagua* the more delicate white flowered cousin of the popular *Crinodendron hookerianum* with its striking red fuchsia like flowers that hang from its branches. I first came across the white species in sheltered gardens in Cornwall, often against a wall so was surprised and delighted that our plant here had attained such a size in the open and colder parts of the garden. In the 17 years I have been here I have seen cold winters seemingly kill this plant, but I have learnt patience and left it, and have been rewarded by seeing it recover during the summer and live to flower another day! This winter the same has happened again but already I think I can detect signs of life so we will

watch and wait with a gardeners optimism for the ever continuing cycle of life.

Neil Lucas

P.S. This is a picture of *Magnolia macrophylla*, the big leaf magnolia, on the Long Walk which has flowered for the very first time in the garden since I planted it some years back!



Friends information

We want to thank all our Friends for their support and look forward to seeing you in 2011!

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
- Brenda
- Karen
- Renata
- Anita
- Helen
- Julia

Feedback

Let us know what you would like to see included in this Newsletter, it is for you after all!

Please send an e-mail to foundation@knollgardens.co.uk or send us a letter with your ideas.

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 now available direct from Knoll Gardens for just £18 +P&P. Order online at

www.knollgardens.co.uk or call the nursery on 01202 873931.

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.



Board of Trustees

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

Contact Us

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The Knoll Gardens Foundation

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Opening Times for 2011

We will be open:-

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

Last entry to the Gardens is 30 minutes before closing.

Also open Sundays in September & October

Closed Sundays & Mondays. except Bank Holidays

Closed from December 18th 2011 Re-opening February 1st 2012