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Charlton & Blackheath  
Amateur Horticultural Society  
Founded 1950

[www.cabahs.wordpress.com](http://www.cabahs.wordpress.com)

## NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2021

### *Grow Friends, Grow Fit ... Grow a Garden!*

For the first time for well over a year we have planned a meeting in person to be held in the walled garden at Charlton House. At the time of writing the weather looks set fair and we are making arrangements to ensure our meeting is as convivial as possible. However, this year much can change. Our panel will be comprised of Joe Woodcock – our special guest this evening; Pat Kane and myself. Joe is a local man, with a wealth of experience in horticulture. Thank you to everyone who has sent in questions.

Pat and I visited **Sarah Raven's garden at Perch Hill**. As it was my first visit I was not quite sure what to expect, having had my expectations set high because of the lush images I had become used to of her garden online. Like most gardeners this year I have suffered considerable plant losses because of the awful weather and pest damage. (My third planting of French beans has been mowed down by slugs and snails, for example). It was interesting, therefore, to see that in the garden at Perch Hill Runner Beans were only just making their way up the canes and peas were only about 3 inches tall. The dahlias were barely in flower. I took some (only some) comfort from all this, as it is clearly not only we amateur gardeners who are suffering.





Typically, one gets inspiration from visiting other gardens. I have never grown Arctotis before, but particularly liked the effect of this one in the trough. One for my list next year!

On the visit to **RHS Garden Hyde Hall Flower Show**, Anna writes:

Coffee on the sunny terrace in front of the Visitors' Centre at about 10am was a very nice place to be for our shared-car party. Our members, upon arrival at the designation point, were greeted and led through a separate entrance directly into the cottage garden, which was magical: tall, lush and blowsy. And all the gardens were equally a delight, particularly the south-facing, sloping, Dry (rock/boulder) Garden. There was a large selection of plant stalls and a variety of food outlets, with tables and chairs spread out over a large, green space. We finished our day with tea by the lake and we could see that all the visitors, like us, were having a wonderful day out. I imagine this Flower Show will become a yearly event as it was so popular. The journey home took much longer as a vehicle had caught fire on the Dartford Bridge. Next year, garden visits will be south of the river!





This month, we are introducing a new feature for the Newsletter: *Plant of the Month*, selected by Anna.

### August Plant of the Month: Clematis

1) *Clematis texensis* 'Viorna Kiau'



2) *Clematis viticella* 'John Treasure'



3) Clematis texensis 'Queen Mother'



4) Clematis 'Princess Diana'



5) Clematis 'Madam Julia Correvon'



All the above flower from July onwards, with C 'Queen Mother' flowering until Oct-Nov. C 'Princess Diana' is prone to Clematis Wilt but mine has recovered and is flowering again. These climbers were fed very generously with a clematis feed in April-May and it's paid off, with the plants flowering more vigorously this summer.

### Gardening notes

- **The Garden Museum's** exhibition on Constance Spry, '*Constance Spry and the Fashion for Flowers*' runs until 26<sup>th</sup> September, but this is now also available online for those who may not be able to visit in person.

- **Dulwich Picture Gallery** is showing its first major photography exhibition, **Unearthed: Photography's Roots**, which shows photos from the 1840s to today, told through stunning still lifes of plants and botany. Closed Mondays and Tuesdays. See the website for details and booking.
- **The Swing Bridge** in Crystal Palace Park provides access to Dinosaur Island, but has been designed in the shape of a bony fish skeleton. When not in use it becomes a sculptural work of art.
- **Brightling Down Farm** in East Sussex is hosting a guided tour of the gardens in aid of the garden charity Perennial. 9 September. Tel 08000938510. A bit expensive at £65 but a good cause.
- **The Garden Museum** is hosting a talk for those interested in flower arranging "The Fine Art of Flowers" Tues 31 August 7pm, either in person at the museum or online.
- **On The Ledge** - one of several excellent podcasts. This one is by Jane Perrone, previously garden editor at the *Guardian* and now freelance writer and broadcaster. She covers a whole range of indoor plants from balconies, to bathrooms to conservatories. Released weekly at [janeperrone.com](http://janeperrone.com).
- After a brief hiatus (due to the arrival of babies and workload!) the **gardening blog** will be back again on the CABAHS website. Do have a read and add your comments or, even better, write a quick few lines yourself!

### Pat's 10 jobs for August:

1. Cutback lavender hard but don't cut into old wood to allow new foliage to re-establish before winter and hopefully get a second flush of flowers.
2. Do save seeds of annuals like poppies, Nigella, Cerinthe and others and from some perennials too including grasses. Collect seed on a dry day and maybe leave on a windowsill to dry out completely before storing in envelopes and naming and giving the date when collected. Nothing as hopeless as a packet of seeds without a date!
3. Water camellias and rhododendrons well in containers or if the ground is dry as flower buds form now for next springs blooms and will drop off if the roots are dry
4. Continue taking cuttings of perennials and make sure to keep in a shady spot until established. They strike particularly well during August and September.
5. This is really the last month for pruning rambler roses that flower only once as our recent rains have meant they have put on an enormous amount of growth. Tie in new shoots as they appear for next years display.
6. Stop cordon tomatoes after four trusses have set outdoors by pinching out the growing tip of the main stem. On indoor tomatoes you can allow up to 6 trusses to form. At the first sign of blight destroy plants immediately and there's an awful lot about this very wet summer.
7. Cutback fruiting canes to the ground on summer fruiting raspberries and tayberries and tie in new shoots to their supports.
8. Harvest spinach, cut and come again lettuce and chard regularly to prevent it going to seed.
9. Feed courgettes and tomatoes weekly with a high potash feed or home- made comfrey feed.
10. Allow some flowering and vegetable plants to run to seed to provide food for birds and other wildlife. Onions and leeks can have particularly attractive seedheads.

Next month's meeting will be our Autumn Show, and we aim to hold this in the Long Gallery at Charlton House, Monday September 20<sup>th</sup> 7.30pm. Classes are on the website, please enter as many as you like.

Happy gardening all!

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