

GARDENERS REPORT



HISTORY IN THE MAKING - THE FIRST EDITION



Head Gardener

STEPHEN J. WARD

Welcome to the first edition of the Himalayan Garden & Sculpture Park Monthly Garden Report.

The aim of this and future reports will be as a form of reading entertainment and to keep everyone regularly apprised and up to date with events in the gardens. Also, hopefully such reports will act as an historical record and provide specific data, that may assist existing and future Himalayan Garden team members to undertake their work successfully and professionally.

I personally have been in the post of Head Gardener now for the past six months, albeit that two of them months were in lockdown due to the corona virus. During this time, I have made quite a number of changes. Nevertheless, all the changes I have made are for the continued benefit and improvement of how the garden will be run, especially relating to staff training, systems of operation, garden maintenance, health & safety, project work, events and recruiting volunteers.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone concerned in making my introduction to the Gardens such a pleasant and enjoyable experience and look forward to a positive and progressive working relationship with you all in the future.

As for our garden members, myself and the gardening team look forward to meeting you and to having a pleasant chat on your next visit.



Big star of the gardens – Elephant Hawk Moth. Read more on page 8.

Coronavirus & the Lockdown

As with everyone nationally and globally, the coronavirus and the lockdown affected us here at the gardens as well. Even though we were furloughed for two months, the garden did not stop growing. Unfortunately, the wonderful Rhododendron, Azalea and Meconopsis displays in May were missed, and much of the hard winter work undertaken by the gardeners was soon encroached on by the dreaded weeds. Nevertheless, in June the garden team of four returned with batteries charged, raring to get stuck into what they do best – managing many gardening tasks on the forty-five-acre site. Even though the situation has left us chasing our tails a bit over the summer, I am proud to say that much enthusiasm and dedication has been displayed by all. I hope you understand our predicaments, and genuinely enjoy and appreciate the results of our labours.



IN THIS ISSUE

- P2 -MEET THE GARDENING TEAM
- P2 - VOLUNTEERING
- P3 -FUTURE PLANS
- P4 - COLOUR IN FLOWERS & BUTTERFLIES
- P5 -FOLLOW THE FAIRY DOORS

- P5/6 -PLANTS OF THE MONTH
 - LIGULARIA
 - GUNNERA
 - ACANTHUS
- P7-NEW HIGH WINDS WARNING SYSTEM

- P8 -NATIONAL MOTH NIGHT
- P9 -SEPTEMBER, WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR ON YOUR NEXT VISIT

Photography - Dominic Daniel

MEET THE GARDENING TEAM

Four men and a dog

Stephen John Ward - Head Gardener
Call sign—Culvert King

Educated in Australia. RHS Level 3 in Horticulture, 1st Class degree in Archaeology. Previously worked for English Heritage as a Grounds Maintenance Gardener at Brodsworth Hall near Doncaster, and as Head Grounds Manager at Middleton Hall in Tamworth, Birmingham. A published author of children’s books (Togger Books), artist, and sportsman. Fascination with lepidoptery (Moths & Butterflies). Likes doing a job right.



Liam Webb—Senior Gardener
Call Sign—Weed Wacker

RHS Level 2 in Horticulture. Expertise in garden maintenance with excellent knowledge of plants and how to care for them. Superhuman ability to remove weeds – hence the call sign. Previously worked at Bexley House in London as a Grounds Maintenance Gardener, before making the right choice in moving up North to join us at the Himalayan Gardens. Loves his fishing, has a great sense of humour, however his singing voice leaves something to be desired.



Jago Wallace—Garden Supervisor
Call Sign—Mow Hawk

Presently enrolled at Askham Bryan College to study RHS Level 2 in Horticulture. Excellent plant knowledge and all round good guy. Head of the National Collection for Rhododendrons / Azaleas, and nursery plant sales. Jago was educated in Canada and joined the Himalayan Garden team 3 years ago. Although the youngest, he is the oldest serving member of the team. Has a fondness for Toads (Bufo Bufo) and Toad Stools.



Dominic Daniel—Head Arborist
Call Sign—Buzz Saw

Dominic joined the team at the same time as Stephen. He has a 1st Class degree in Media Production and countless qualifications relating to arboricultural work. Heads all the work on trees in the garden and the new arboretum. Will also head a new media production unit at the gardens for photography and documentary making. Is in the process of establishing a National Collection for Himalayan Cedars. Loves driving his Land Rover and can often be seen with his adorable collie Nana (The 5th member of the team).



In every subsequent monthly issue of the Gardeners Report, each member of the gardening team will submit a brief account, on the areas of the garden that they have been working on.

JOIN OUR TEAM

Become a VOLUNTEER

WANTED

HIMALAYAN GARDEN RANGERS

As you can see, we are an exceedingly small but merry band of gardening brothers. However, we are tasked, in a very nice way I may add, to take care of an area of land that would make even the legendary Sherpa Tenzing Norgay’s knees go weak at the thought of what needs to be done each day.

Therefore, we intend to expand our team over the coming year to include volunteers.

So, if you have intensions towards forging a career in the horticultural industry, want to become a park ranger, looking for a chance to change your career, a student wanting work experience, retired and looking for a place to demonstrate a lifetime of exceptional skills, or just want to be part of something special, then the Himalayan Gardens & Sculpture Park is waiting to hear from you.

No experience is required as full training will be given by our existing highly trained and experience staff. If you have the ability, the right aptitude, and a willingness to help with the gardening tasks mentioned below, then we want you on the team.

Take the opportunity to become a: -

Himalayan Garden Ranger

Duties include patrolling the gardens helping the visitors with enquiries, attending to first aid situations, helping the hospitality staff and ticket office, giving garden tours, completing wildlife surveys, helping at events, assisting with the annual garden maintenance routine - such as winter clearance, grass cutting, strimming, weeding, pruning, path construction and repair, nursery work and for a select few assisting with the National Collections.

If you can help in any of these areas and require more details, please contact the Head Gardener – Stephen Ward by email culvertking2003@yahoo.co.uk

If you could add why you are looking to work at the gardens and what experience or interests you have, that would be helpful. Stephen will then contact you and arrange for a site visit for a tour and a chat.

Please note - We have covid-19 protocols in place at present to protect our staff and visitors. Training regarding this will be given at your induction.

MAINTENANCE OF THE GARDEN & FUTURE PLANS



ALL IN A YEARS WORK

Through professional and in-house training, the gardening team are well prepared to take on the seasonal tasks in the garden. Usually in May and August the paths are sprayed to remove weeds and mold. During the summer months grass cutting with pedestrian and ride-on lawn mowers, backpack blowing the paths to remove debris, watering plants and a whole lot of weeding generally takes up most of our time. In the winter months, preparing the grounds for the following year takes precedent, so there is a lot of clearing and maintenance work to be done on the beds, plants, shrubs, and trees, as well as the paths and fences. On top of this we establish new plants and flowers and feed and mulch the existing ones.

There is much more work involved with our jobs, and at first glance it may seem impossible to achieve. But we have a twelve-month calendar of events that we follow, and bit by bit we get through it.

Other things that help us is to research the methods we use to care for the plants and trees. We follow the advice of the Royal Horticultural Society because they are the leaders in the field of horticulture and have a wealth of knowledge that far exceeds our own. We learn from this and from our own recording methods, to determine what is best for the garden that we care for.



Plans in the Pipeline (Watch out for more details in later issues)

1- To establish later flowering Rhododendrons, Azaleas and Hydrangeas, to areas in the gardens that have easier accessibility. In doing so this will provide a major wow factor to the garden, and a prolong period of flowering and interest to visitors. Improved access will be available when undertaking garden tours. Also, the plants will be easier to care for – improved access for watering, feeding, pruning, and weeding.

2- Establish more Himalayan plants. Example, A) the Himalayan Butterfly Bush (*Buddleia crispa*) & The Giant Woolly Himalayan Butterfly Bush. These will assist in attracting more butterflies to the garden for the butterfly tours proposed for 2021 and increase our Himalayan plants list.

B) Plant more Giant Himalayan Lilies *Cardiocrinum giganteum*



3- Establish a colony of Leopard plants *Ligularia* in Leopard Valley for an August display (*Please read on for more details*).

4- Establish a variety of plants around Sunrise Lake to increase the summer display.

5- Create a Fern Dell.

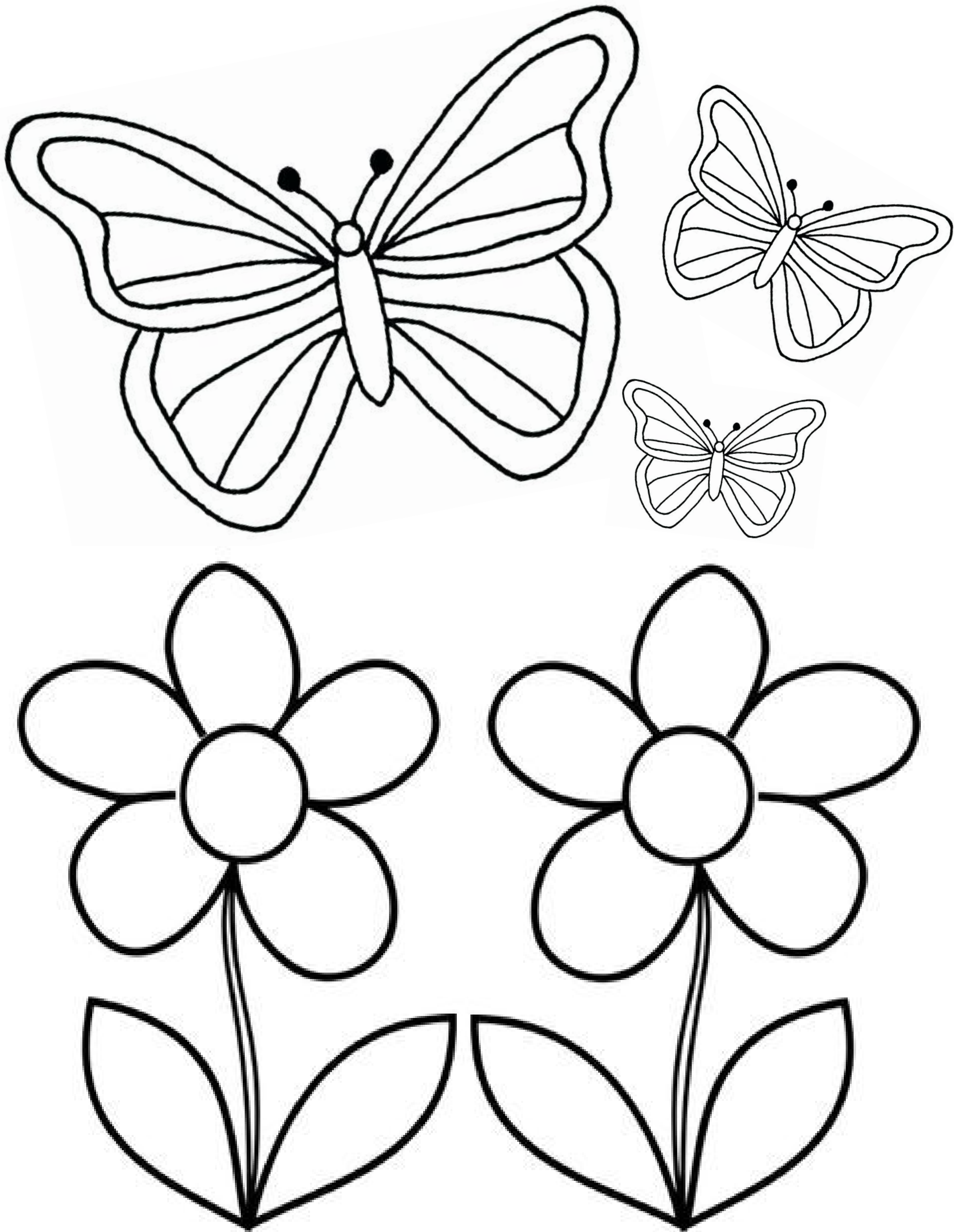
6- Create an Acer bank, for an autumn display.



HIMALAYAN GARDEN
& SCULPTURE PARK

COLOUR IN THE FLOWERS AND BUTTERFLIES

Many flowers bloom in the summer at the Himalayan Gardens and when they do the butterflies all appear





HIMALAYAN GARDEN
& SCULPTURE PARK



Follow the Fairy Doors

The fairies have discovered the Himalayan Gardens and Sculpture park. They think that it is so amazing that they have set up home at the base of ten trees, spread out over the gardens.

On your next visit, see if you can find them all. But remember though, the fairies are very shy. If you make too much noise, then they will hide. To get the best chance of seeing one, you must sneak up on them quietly. Be polite and knock on the doors. If you do not get an answer, then they are out exploring the woods and looking for food. But by knocking on all the doors three times, then this will bring you lots of fairy luck.

To help you find the doors, we have placed a map of their location on the outside of the ticket office. Take a picture of this on your mobile phones and follow the trail.

A little fairy has told me that once all them have settled in over the winter months, then they will make improvements to their homes. And hopefully more of them will chose to stay here and live happily forever with the butterflies and the bees.



PLANTS OF THE MONTH

During the summer months, a selection of spectacular plants will be highlighted so that you can watch out for them on your next visit.

2) *Ligularia Dentata ‘Pandora’* - The Leopard Plant



Ligularia are robust herbaceous perennials, with crimson stalks, large green attractively lobed leaves and yellow or orange, daisy-like flower-heads. They can grow to 1.2m in height and flower midsummer to autumn – which seems to correspond with the appearance of specific butterflies, such as The Painted Ladies, Small Tortoise Shells and Red Admirals, who have already been seen in large numbers visiting the plants.

There are several different varieties of this these plants, and it is proposed that a selection of them will be established in the Leopard Valley section of the garden, to complement the magnificent and powerful Leopard sculpture (created by the artist Hamish Mackie), that is positioned there. A kind of Beauty, Butterfly, and the Beast sort of theme.

1) *Gunnera Manicata* – Giant Rhubarb or Dinosaur Food



This prehistoric looking plant can be found in various places in the garden, such as Leopard Valley and around Sunrise Lake. It loves to grow in moist boggy ground. The leaves are massive, so much so that you can gain shelter under them on a rainy day. At the base of the plant you can see their large red coned flower. In various locations around the world, the plant is used for numerous things – eating them is one thing, on salads and for making beer. They can be taken medicinally for digestive complaints and used as wound dressings. Nevertheless, their massiveness is truly awe inspiring.





PLANTS OF THE MONTH

Continued

3) *Acanthus mollis* – Bears Breeches



Acanthus mollis, has a green stem, purplish leaves and flowers that look like little white handkerchiefs waving to passing bumble bees. Commonly known as bear's breeches, sea dock, bear's foot plant, sea holly or oyster plant. A more apt name may have been 'Bees Bar' as the little furry insects are attracted to the irresistible nectar within the plant. In doing so the bees are the main pollinators of the plant and thus a symbiotic relationship helps them both thrive. Acanthus are an herbaceous perennial. It is regarded as an invasive species in some places. But this attractive plant has a good home here within our garden, and in future years more of them will be seen around sunrise lake. Something our bumble bees would be incredibly pleased to hear of.



STORMY WINDY WEATHER

Beaufort Wind Force Scale for Tree and Forest work

0	Calm	0-1 mph	No wind
1	Light Air	1-3 mph	Smoke drifts gently
2	Light Breeze	4-7 mph	Leaves rustle a little
3	Gentle Breeze	8-12 mph	Twigs and small branches move
4	Moderate Breeze	13-18 mph	Branches moving
5	Fresh Breeze	19-24 mph	Small trees sway
6	Strong Breeze	25-31 mph	Umbrellas difficult to use
7	Near Gale	32-38 mph	Whole trees sway
8	Gale	39-46 mph	Branches off trees
9	Strong Gale	47-54 mph	Tiles come off roofs
10	Storm	55-63 mph	Trees blown down

Safe

Warning - use caution

Danger

NEW HIGH WIND WARNING SYSTEM - The weather during August has not been as seasonal as was to be expected. Most of the month we saw rain and several very windy days. Which prompted the BBC to issue serve weather warnings for storm Francis and Ellen, with winds that reached up to 50-75mph.

To update and improve on our safety procedures, a weather station sensor has now been positioned on the gardener’s office. This device gives us an immediate and accurate reading of wind conditions on the grounds.

Using the Beaufort scale as a guide, we can then determine 1) whether it is safe for members of staff to be working in wooded areas, and 2) whether it is safe for you the visitor to enter the grounds.

A safety check is undertaken on all our trees by our talented arborist Dominic Daniels on a regular basis. And tree maintenance is undertaken annually, or when required. However, there is no accounting for storm strength winds.

Therefore, if it is predicted that wind conditions will become too severe, then the Met Office will notify us well in advance. We will then issue a warning as soon as possible, through our social media and website, that the grounds may close / or will close due to the situation. So, it is always a good idea to check them before you decide to visit us.

If no warnings are issued by the Met Office, but for some strange meteorological reason the winds become dangerous while you are visiting the garden, then the staff will undertake a safe and immediate evacuation procedure – basically to inform you of the dangers and escort you as quickly as possible to a safe place (The Car Park).

To us your safety, no matter the reason, is paramount. If the wind starts blowing twigs and branches off, then someone is going to get hurt. If a tree is blown down it could be much worse. It is always good to keep things in perspective though. It has been estimated by the UK Health & Safety Executive that there is a 1 in 20,000,000 chance of a person being hurt by a falling tree. But we do not want that one person to be you, a member of your family, a friend or one of our valued members of staff. And it is for that reason that I hope that understanding and appreciation is offered when or if we put the severe weather procedures into operation.

NATIONAL MOTH NIGHT

27TH – 29TH AUGUST



For more information regarding recording moths and butterflies visit the
Butterfly Conservation Trust website
<https://butterfly-conservation.org/>



IN SEARCH OF THE
RED UNDERWING

This year, the Himalayan Gardeners will be taking part in the National Moth Recording Night organised by Atropos – The UK’s foremost journal for butterfly, moth, and dragonfly enthusiasts.

All moths found will be recorded, but the star of this year’s search is the Red Underwing. Previously restricted to the southern regions of Britain, climatic changes over the past few years have seen this creature moving northwards. researchers now want to know more about its movements.

If you are interested in recording moths, then visit the Butterfly Conservation website – details above.

At the beginning of August, we undertook our first moth survey here at the gardens. The aim was 1) to help ascertain what species we had on the grounds, and 2) to determine the logistics of holding regular moth survey nights in the future, that our Garden Members could attend.

Although moths are fascinating, amazing, and beautiful creatures, they also play a vital part in the garden’s ecosystem. Not only are they a food source to other creatures, birds, and animals, but they also act as pollinators to specific types of plants. Therefore, they can act as a barometer to help indicate the ecological health and effectiveness of an area and indicate climatic change – which is obviously important to a gardener’s plant design and maintenance plan.

Below are all the types of moths which we discovered. These will be registered in our own database as well as forwarded to the Butterfly Conservations National Moth Recording Scheme. We will complete more research on each species and determine their importance on the grounds and where possible improve the habitat of such creatures with effective plant selection and positioning.

As for further recording nights, obviously what with the restrictions relating to Covid 19, this prevents us from running large group events for the continuation of the year at least. However, it is hoped that for the new year things will improve to the extent that our garden members will be able to take part in this fascinating pastime. Please watch future reports for more details.



Hummingbird Hawk Moth



Centre Barred Sallow



Common Footman



Common Wainscot



Elephant Hawk Moth



Privet Hawk Moth



Copper Underwing



Yellow Underwing



SEPTEMBER

THINGS TO WATCH OUT FOR ON YOUR VISIT
THIS MONTH



Photography - Dominic Daniel

FLOWERS

Hydrangeas – Blue, Mauve & Pink

Rudbeckia – A butterfly’s fancy

Sedum – Autumn treat for the bees

There are quite a few plants in bloom in the garden during the month of September, especially around Sunrise Lake. Some of my favorites though are: -

Hydrangeas – The flower colour depends on the ph. level of the soils that they are established in. That is whether it is more acidic or alkaline. Those planted near pine trees will be blue in colour, as the needles from the trees are acidic in nature. Where soils are more neutral or less acidic, the plant will be mauve / purplish, and pink if the soil is alkaline.

Rudbeckia - A lovely golden daisy shaped flower head, with a central dark brown cone will bring colour to the garden well into autumn. Looks well set against sedums, and a tasty treat for the butterflies.

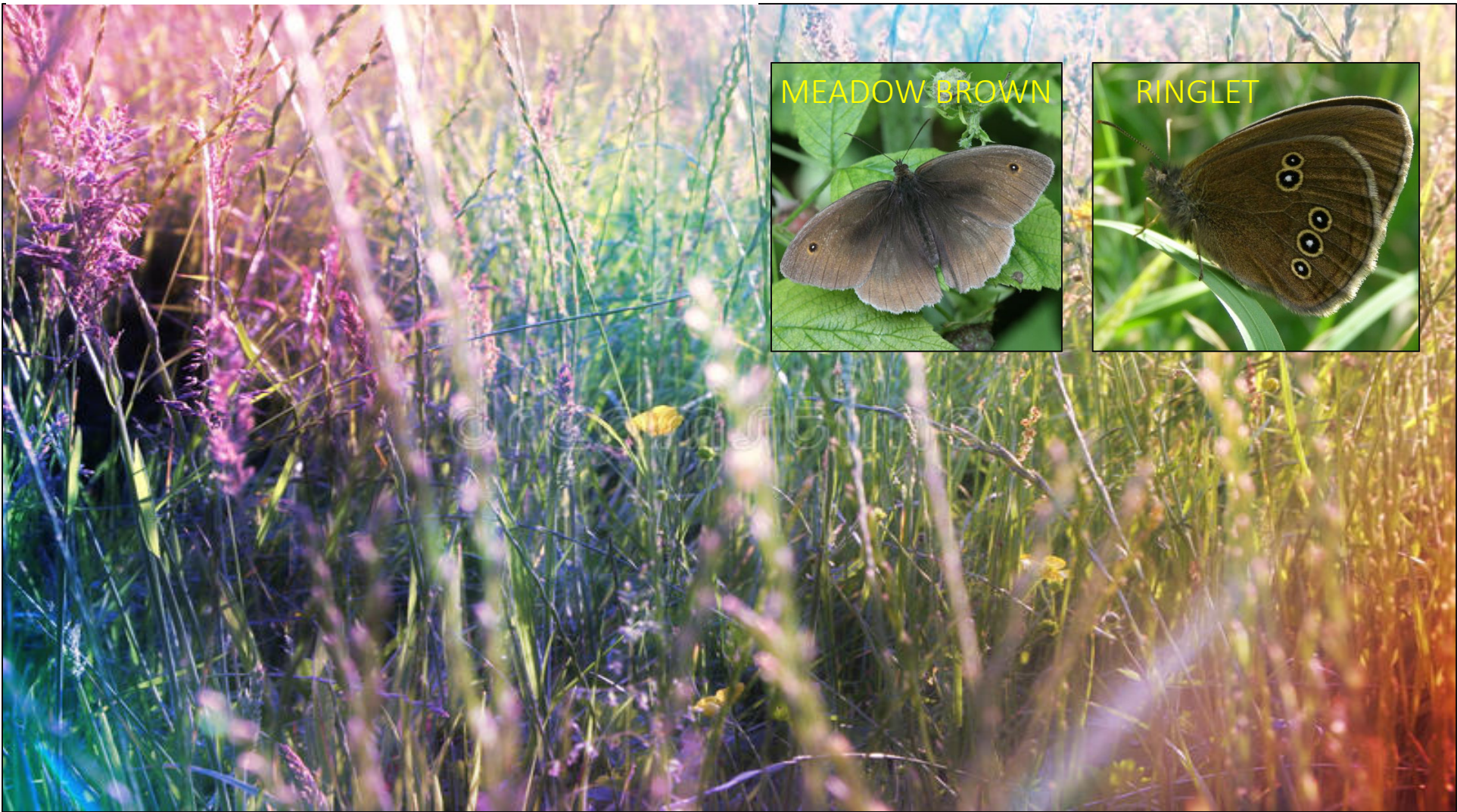
Sedum – These clump forming plants are Bee heaven. The flowers are just about turning pink. Over September they will transform themselves to red in colour and then a deep crimson, before providing a wintering hibernation area for insects.





SEPTEMBER

THINGS TO WATCH OUT FOR ON YOUR VISIT
THIS MONTH - Continued



BUTTERFLIES



Red Admiral



Small Copper



Peacock



Small Tortoiseshell

September is a good time for butterflies in our garden. You can find them on the various plants and the walls of the Buddha Garden. They like the warmth there and the respite from the wind.

Meadow Browns and Ringlets dance amongst the grasses near the Norse Hutt. Small Tortoiseshell take advantage of any nettles in the woods. Small Coppers perch on sorrel and dock, and Red Admirals and Peacocks gorge themselves on the blue cones of the buddleia (The butterfly Bush).

As with the moth recording nights, the gardeners will be recording the different species of butterflies. Again, this will determine the ecological health of the garden and help us to determine what actions to take in the choice of plants in the future.

I do hope that you have enjoyed this first edition of the Himalayan Garden and Sculpture Parks Gardeners Report and are looking forward to reading further accounts in the coming months. In the meantime, if you have any questions specifically relating to the gardens or volunteering, then please do not hesitate to contact me at the email address provided below, and either myself or one of the gardening team will get back to you as soon as we can.

I look forward to providing you with further accounts of gardening events in the future, and hope to see you in the gardens on your next visit. Until then my best wishes to you all.

Stephen J. Ward - Head Gardener
(Contact - culvertking2003@yahoo.co.uk)