

GARDENERS REPORT



HIMALAYAN GARDEN
& SCULPTURE PARK



STEPHEN J. WARD – HEAD GARDENER

Photography by Dominic Daniel

WHAT A MONTH IT HAS BEEN - The wet and windy weather we had in August finally blew away and allowed us to get on with our jobs properly throughout September. Jago turned twenty-one (Happy Birthday mate) and started propagating seeds for next year's plant sales. We found a butterfly that is on the high risk / extinction list. The first National Moth Recording night was undertaken. Liam has been plugging away planting new perennials and shrubs for an improved flower display next year. Dominic has been sorting out cedars and acers and new Volunteer Garden Rangers have joined our team. Please read on for more details and enjoy the gardener report.

Now is The Autumn of My Content

And better things are yet to come



30 New Acers (Shirazz, Pixie and Ornatum to name a few), 10 Eucryphia's and an assortment of autumn displaying shrubs have been planted in a new area called Acer Bank, which is north of Magnolia lake. The new trees have responded well to planting already and their vibrant reddish - purple, pink and green colours are already evident to see. Their positioning and location has been chosen because 1) the site is sheltered from strong winds, especially the cold northerly winds, 2) they will benefit from the warmth that is offered over the winter months when the sun is lower on the southerly horizon, 3) the soil is moist but not too damp, 4) they will be sheltered during the hot summer months by the dappled shade from the canopy of taller trees, and 5) the location has easy access to provide maintenance such as mulching at specific times of the year. In the future these trees will obviously grow, and their impressive combined autumnal display will truly be a wonder to see.

The Gardens are still open until November if you would like to see the work we have completed or the displays from these impressive trees.

Eucryphia in bloom



IN THIS ISSUE

P2 Himalayan Garden Angels
P5 Moth & Butterflies
P8 Dominic's tree Report

P3 New Volunteer Garden Rangers
P6 Jago's Propagation & Fungi Report
P9 Mapping out the site

P4 Liam's Maintenance Report
P7 Plants of the Month
P10 What to see in October

Julie ready to welcome you at the Ticket Office



The Himalayan Garden Angels

The Wonderful Ladies who provide you with a warm welcome, refreshing drinks and tasty treats upon your visit

Judy providing welcomed refreshments in the Halfway Hutt



As well as all the work that goes on to keep the grounds maintained by the gardeners, over the summer we have had a lovely team of ladies who offered their hard work, skills, and expertise in helping to provide a pleasant and memorable experience to all our visitors. Natasha and her dedicated team of cleaners kept the facilities spick and span. Joules (and she is one - as are they all), Gillian, Judy, and Chloe offered tasty refreshments in the Tearoom and Halfway Hutt. And either Julie, Rachael, Ann, or Hillary greeted you with a warm welcome and general information regarding the garden at the ticket office. Without them all, the gardens would not be half the place that it is and thus they are just as appreciated here as much as any of the lovely flowers and plants that you will see upon your visit – Well done ladies.



Chloe and Judy in the Tearoom with a nice selection of cakes and buns

Volunteer Himalayan Garden Rangers

Stephen J. Ward – Head Gardener



The first recruits get stuck in right away

Over the last few weeks, Conrad, Bridget, Ann, and Emily have joined the Gardening Team as Volunteer Garden Rangers. After their initial introduction and induction to the site, they got stuck in straight away helping the full-time gardeners with their duties. Under the direction of Liam, the Senior Gardener, much physical enthusiasm was displayed. The laughter and banter offered by the new volunteers was a clear indication that they thoroughly enjoyed the activities that they were taking part in.

In their fervour many weeds were removed and azaleas transplanted to other beds in the garden from the new Hydrangea bed. The bed is now prepared for the introduction of new plants, which the volunteers will put in in October, thus creating a more interesting and fuller display for next season. Ericaceous composting will be used so that the acid nature of the soil will turn the Hydrangeas a vibrant blue, creating a spectacular view across the Sunrise Lake.

Large clumps of dogwood were also removed from the sunrise borders. These have been transplanted to areas around Nessie Lake and the New Woods. The spaces that the dogwood provided have not only improved the view of the lake, but it will be filled with more butterfly and bee loving plants such as Persicaria, Sedums, Scabious, Rudbeckia and Acanthus.

Emily who is studying a Level 2 in Horticulture and is looking for a change in career has started in-house training with us in the use of RTV's, Ride-on and Pedestrian Lawn Mowers, Hedge Trimmers and Strimmer's. Which will help her to gain full time horticultural work in the future.

If you are interested in getting stuck into some gardening work, or wanting to learn new horticultural skills, then why not join us as a Volunteer Himalayan Garden Ranger. At the moment volunteers work with us on a Monday from 10am to 3pm. But the plan is that more working days will become available as the team develops.

JOIN OUR TEAM

Become a VOLUNTEER

WANTED

VOLUNTEER HIMALAYAN GARDEN RANGERS

We are an exceedingly small, but merry band of gardeners. 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 increase the size of our valuable team of volunteers.

So, if you have intentions towards forging a career in the horticultural industry, want to become a park ranger/gardener, 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 experienced 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: -

Volunteer Himalayan Garden Ranger

Duties can 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 infohimalayangarden@gmail.com

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.



GROUND S MAINTENANCE REPORT

Liam Webb – Senior Gardener

On top of all the mowing, leaf blowing and weeding that goes on, the team, along with the help of the new Volunteer Garden Rangers, has been working hard during September to plant out many later blooming flowers and plants. Which, it is hoped, will provide extended summer and autumn interest throughout the sunrise borders and woodland garden for next season. From May to July next year, you will be able to see a collection of later flowering Rhododendrons, and Azaleas, which have been added to the June Beds. And in August to September Flag Lilies and Eucryphia near Sunrise.



Schizoslyis Coccinea (flag lily)

We are planning to move some of these impressive flowers from the streamside over to the sunrise border and to establish an army of new plants.

Facts about the Flag Lily

- It is a perennial.
- It has starry flowers in a salmon pink colour.
- It flowers throughout the autumn.
- It grows best in moist, well-drained soil.



Eucryphia

You will find this shrub/tree in the leopard valley, and now at the top of the new Acer Bank.

Facts about the *Eucryphia X Nymans*

- It flowers in late summer and autumn.
- It has a broadly columnar habit with dark green leaves.
- It grows best in moist, well-drained soil.
- Bees & Butterflies love it.



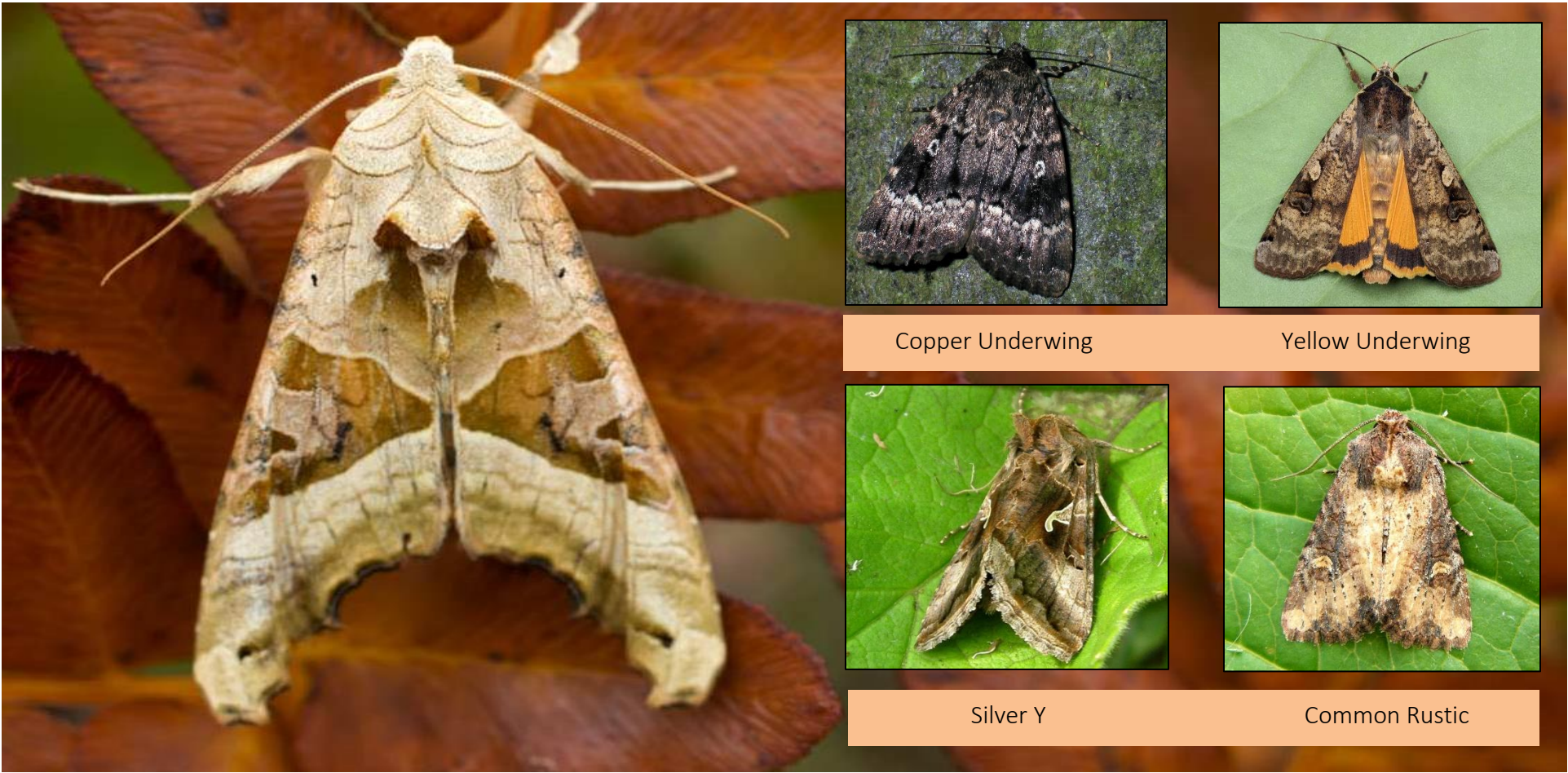
For more information regarding recording moths and butterflies visit the Butterfly Conservation Trust website <https://butterfly-conservation.org/>



Moths & Butterflies

Stephen J. Ward – Head Gardener

MOTH NIGHT – Late in August the Himalayan Garden took part in the National Moth Recording Night organised by Atropos – The UK’s foremost journal for butterfly, moth, and dragonfly enthusiasts. The aim was to record and register as many moths as possible and to hopefully find the Red Underwing moth. Unfortunately, the Red Underwing was not found and due to an unseasonable 14 degree temperatures (33 the same time last year) and strong northly winds most moths decided to snuggle into any nook and cranny they could find to keep warm. Not even the warm glow from the lights of the moth catcher units could tempt them out. Nevertheless, it was a start and a few interesting moth species were found, which I have listed below. Further moth nights will resume in the new year, especially on warmer night. However, now, and again some interesting species happen to fly into the staff break room and when they do, I will identify them and record them for further research.



ANGLE SHADE *Phlogophora meticulosa* – A rather large moth that has pinkish-brown angular markings and wings that give the impression of a withered autumn leaf. The adults are attracted to and feed on the flowers of Common Reeds, like the ones around Magnolia Lake and other grasses. They are frequently seen during the day, resting on walls, fences, or vegetation. They overwinter as larvae so the caterpillars can be seen all year round, feeding in mild weather on nettles, bramble, and dock – making them a gardener’s friend. They are distributed across Britain but are migratory creature and can be found as far as Turkey, Syria, and Algeria.

BUTTERFLIES

WALL *Lasiommata megera* – Was found in our nursery area this month. The importance of this butterfly is that it is one of our own native species and can be seen from May to October. It is, however, extremely high on the Butterfly Conservations priority list as an endangered species and is rapidly declining in numbers each year. It favours grassland and feeds on various grasses such as Yorkshire - fog and Wavy Hair Grass.



SPECKLED WOOD *Pararge aegeria* – Quite common, but just as lovely. Remarkably like the Wall. Feeds on honey dew from treetops though. Found near the ticket office, tearoom, and woodland areas.





PLANT PROPAGATION REPORT

Jago Wallace – Garden Supervisor

Experiments into Meconopsis germination The Blue Poppy



Boletus Eludis (Ceps) Fungi



Found this little fella in the woods. Took it home, cooked it with some chips. Had it with a couple of slices of bread and butter, and a mug of tea.
It was right grand!



Meconopsis or the Himalayan blue poppy is symbolic for us at the gardens, not only is it our logo and something for us to be proud of but it is a challenge to grow. So, every year in June to July when Meconopsis Langholm and Meconopsis Baileyi start producing their lovely sky-blue flowers it represents the overcoming of hardships in the year and the rewards you get for your work as a gardener.

This year we are experimenting with sowing techniques to see if we can find a method that works reliably for us. Firstly, the Meconopsis seed does not stay viable for very long so it is important to sow them quickly to get the best results. The seeds need sunlight exposure to germinate and will die quickly if they are either too wet or too dry, which is the same for the seedlings. We will be trying seeds that are sown on top of damp perlite and seeds that are sown, then covered with a thin layer of perlite. The seeds sown on top of the perlite will get more exposure to the sun however, the seeds sown under the perlite will have a more constant humidity level. We’re also trying different trays, regular seed trays and plug trays, this is because a lot of seedlings can be damaged when they get pricked out of the seed trays and alternatively because plug trays dry out very quickly. The seeds are being sown in September to make sure they are still viable; this then means we will need to over winter our seedlings in a cool greenhouse. With a green thumb and a bit of good luck we should have some Meconopsis ready in spring to put out in the garden, or at least we will have learned some valuable lessons.

Ceps are a mycorrhizal fungi, meaning they make partnerships with the trees around them. They help in the uptake of minerals and water in return for sugars produced by the trees. Ceps mainly associate themselves with conifers, pines and larch but do occasionally partner with beech and birch. The key morphological feature for identifying Ceps is their lack of gills, all members of the Boletus group are poriferous meaning their spores are produced in thousands of tiny tubes instead of gills. The caps should be a chestnut brown getting slightly paler near the edges. The stem should be pale in colour and the bottom should widen often becoming bulbous, the top third of the stem should be webbed with a fine white structure. The flesh of the mushroom should be completely white with a narrow red blush at the top of the cap.

WARNING
There is always a chance of making a mistake with identification, it is always best to check with a mycologist before eating wild mushrooms.



SEPTEMBER

Plant of the Month



FLOWERS

- Persicaria
- Scabious
- Actaea Simplex

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

Persicaria – Commonly known as Red Bistort, this plant provides a nice display of pinkish - red short stalked flowers that will last throughout autumn. Late season feeding stations for our insect life, such as the butterflies.

Scabious Columbaria - or the nicer named Lilac Flowers. Irresistible to butterflies and bees to the extent that it puts the butterfly bush to shame. This season swarms of Red Admirals, Comma’s, Peacocks, Small Tortoise Shells and even Brimstone’s have visited this plant in great numbers. Tall stems with pompom type bluey – purple flowerheads. An amazingly successful little bloomer.

Actaea Simplex – (Black Negligee). Boy! does this one smell nice. Instantly you are stopped in your tracks by an attractive aroma well before you see the plant, and it grows six feet tall. White brush type flowers haloed by the sunlight shoot out from purplish leaves like the trail of a rocket on bonfire night. A major favourite of our gardeners, visitors, butterflies, and bees alike. The sirens of ancient Greek mythology should have used the Actaea’s perfume instead of song as not even Odysseus could have resisted them - even tied to the mast.





ARBORIST’S TREE REPORT

Dominic Daniel – Head Arborist



The Himalayan Cedar

Our Coniferous Friend



With the dark seasons drawing in what feels like ever closer this year, as an Arborist, I find myself thinking more and more about the evergreens. With all the miraculous colour brought to the gardens during autumn, trees like Japanese Acers, Sycamores and Liquid Amber take the spotlight, displaying reds and oranges in a magnificent blaze of glory. But it is important not to forget our coniferous friends such as Abies, Pinus and Cedrus, marching on through the winter period in full green leaf. This month at the gardens we have been focusing on ‘Cedrus Deodara’ or the ‘Himalayan Cedar’.

While the tree’s natural habitat is in the Himalayan Mountains from Afghanistan to Nepal, it has become a popular ornamental tree in the western world and thrives in our natural landscape. The Sanskrit root-word for ‘deodara’ roughly translates to ‘wood of the gods’ - an apt name for a tree that in its natural habitat can reach up to 250 feet in height!

Cedar’s as a family are personally one of my favourite trees. I love the beauty and the presence they hold when allowed to grow tall. Because of this, we have decided over the next few years to work alongside Plant Heritage UK to curate our own national collection of Himalayan Cedars for you to come and enjoy in the gardens! This is an extremely exciting prospect for me as an Arborist, as not only do I get to curate from the very beginning, my own national collection, but a national collection of my favourite trees none the less! We as a team, feel that filling the woodland and arboretum with these magnificent Himalayan trees will bring even more of a sense of the Himalayas to our landscape, allowing you to immerse yourself even further into our ever changing garden experience.

HARE OF THE DOG



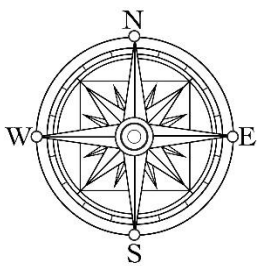
HEAD DOG REPORT

NANA – Gardeners Mascot

Thanks to Emperor Claudius, Brown Hares have been part of our landscape since the Romans decided to conquer Britain. You will see them in the garden usually in the woodland or grassy areas. They are quite tame here, if you do not scare them, they will just sit there. I had one walk right up to my nose. Seeing as they can run up to speeds of 45mph and at my best I can only manage 30mph, rather than chasing it, I decided chewing on my doggy biscuits and dreaming of sheep was the better option. To all of my doggy colleagues that visit the gardens if, unlike me, you find it impossible not to chase them or any other creature on site, then please make sure that your humans are trained well enough to keep you on a lead.



Mapping the Garden



The gardens are ever expanding and developing and, in a bid to keep up with this the Garden and grounds will be mapped out to indicate old and new locations, sculptures, trees, shrubs and plants. This is where Stephen’s (Head Gardener) archaeological skills will come in handy. Using a series of tape measures and leveling equipment, measurements will be plotted to create an accurate scaled drawing. This is no mean feat and will take some time to complete. But the advantages will be many, especially in naming new areas and knowing exactly where everything is and their relationship to each other. It will also clearly indicate areas for future development and aid us in our plant selection and maintenance routines.

Stephen & Jago surveying near Nessie Lake



Sculpture profile

Mushrooms & Toadstools

By Anthony Sturgiss & Steve Blaylock

The woodlands around the garden are amassed with large mushrooms and toadstools at this time of year, as indicated by Jago in his report. To complement this feat of nature we have a selection of large steel mushrooms placed in various location, created by the artists Anthony Sturgiss and Steve Blaylock. On your next visit, see if you can find the artwork and see how many different types of real mushrooms you can find.



Things to Watch Out For in OCTOBER



October 2020 will see the last month this year of our open season. Although Sedums and Rudbeckia are still blooming, most flowers are past their best at this time, having gone to seed and preparing for winter. However, their lack of display is immediately replaced by the magnificent autumn array of the shrubs and trees such as the Acers and Liquid Ambers, where leaves go from greens in colour to vibrant golds, oranges, and reds.

Also noticeable is the reduction in butterflies and bees, but on a sunny day, they have been seen well into November.

With winter clearance of the woods and the preparation of the flower beds on the garden maintenance agenda, specific bird life appears. They are attracted to the areas of work to catch an insect or worm that we may have disturbed. We have Tree Creepers, Siskins, Chaffinch, Long Tailed, Great and Blue Tits, also Nuthatches and everyone's favourite the Robins. Many ducks and Little Grebes have descended upon the lakes also.

The big surprise you will see, especially in the arboretum area and in the top woods are the Woodpeckers. Pictured left is a Green Woodpecker I photographed sticking its head out of a tree. We also have the Greater Spotted variety as well. These birds are increasing in numbers at the gardens and it is hoped that they stay for many years to come. You will see the holes they peck in trees about the site. This they do because they are searching for insect life to eat or looking for a site to construct a nesting hole.



I do hope that you have enjoyed this edition of the Himalayan Garden and Sculpture Parks Gardeners Report and are looking forward to reading further accounts over the winter 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 in October or in the New Year.
Until then my best wishes to you all.

Stephen J. Ward

Head Gardener
(Contact – infohimalayangarden@gmail.com)