

Bulb Gardening

News and advice for better gardening

Newsletter no. 20

“BRITISH GARDENS IN TIME” SERIES

Hidden on SBS this year and with little fanfare we found what is in our opinion, the best BBC TV garden documentary program yet. It is informative, entertaining and doesn't talk down.



Great Dixter - Daffodils are a feature in the early Spring

“This series takes a close look at four iconic gardens created during four very different eras, each garden giving us a fascinating window into a different century and the people that created it.”

“Far more than just a history of gardening, this series brings these four glorious gardens to life, allowing us to see them through fresh eyes and gain a greater understanding of their true significance.”

It does this by using knowledgeable talking heads who cover areas of their expertise as they weave



Great Dixter - Daffodil meadow in Spring

a fascinating story about the gardens and their relevance to the styles of the times. It is truly inspiring television and well worth hunting out.

The gardens covered are Stowe, Nymans, Biddulph Grange and the sublime Great Dixter which was developed by the brilliant Christopher Lloyd. Christo used his garden as an experimental ground for his writings and derived great pleasure from breaking gardening conventions with his innovative plantings within the traditional bones of the Lutyens designed garden.

We were privileged to visit his garden a number of times and enjoyed his company and being shown around and talking plants. He loved encouraging young gardeners, in particular Australians who he thought were interesting and less inhibited.

The daffodils at Great Dixter are a breathtaking sight in full bloom. Christo told us that they were planted by his mother in the 1920s and had not been touched since. To create the random naturalistic look apparently she had a big basket of bulbs and threw them over her head and they were planted where they fell.

SOIL ECOLOGY

Much attention is being paid nowadays to the unseen part of our soil; the micro-organisms. Micro-organisms decompose organic matter, detoxify toxic substances, fix nitrogen and transform phosphorous, potassium and other nutrients in such a way that they become available to plants and other larger organisms.

Agricultural practices are now focusing on improving soil health by looking after beneficial soil micro-organisms with the addition of organic matter to feed them and by avoiding compaction to maintain the aerobic conditions they enjoy.

Trichoderma is a naturally occurring fungus found in healthy soils. It has been used in horticulture for a couple of decades for its ability to discourage pathogenic fungi. A strain has been identified which seems to work against daffodil pathogens and we have been incorporating this when planting for a couple of seasons now with promising results.



Friends farewelling at Great Dixter

Published by Christine & Will Ashburner
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Gambler's Pot Luck



At the end of the dispatch season in April we often have small quantities of bulbs packaged up. We offer these bulbs at half-price to people who are happy to take 'pot-luck.'

We make up packages of bulbs to the value of at least \$100 worth. These are available for \$56.50 including postage. The packages generally contain a wide variety of bulbs as well as some daffodils.

To order, simply add to your order;

Gambler's Pot-Luck \$56.50

2016 SHOW DATES

To see our living displays next spring, please note the following dates:



Farm Display (Menzies Creek)
Friday 26th Aug. to Sunday 30th Sep.

Royal Adelaide Show
Friday 2nd Sep. to Sunday 11th Sep.

Leongatha Daffodil Show
Friday 26th Aug. to Sunday 28th Aug.

Henty Field Days
Tues 20th Sep. to Thurs 22nd Sep.

Baw Baw Garden Expo
Saturday 8th Oct. to Sunday 9th Oct.

**Other show dates to be announced: -
Check our website or Facebook page.**

FAMILY AFFAIRS

Jessica & Simon, our children, have as usual helped us out in many ways through the year.

We were proud to attend graduation ceremonies for both of them last year; Jessica graduated with a Bachelor of Agriculture from Melbourne University and is now working as an agronomist with a fertilizer company. Simon graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Photography from RMIT and intends to further his studies. In the meantime he has taken responsibility for running operations the shed, organising the cleaning and processing the lifted bulbs while Will continues with the harvesting.

We appreciate their help during this busy time, as we do that of our part-time staff who increase their hours and assist us in numerous ways.