

View from The Southwood Garden April 2018

It's amazing what you see when you look ...



Tulips a Glow, Glow

According to one of our market stall holders, this year's tulips in the courtyard were the most photographed flowers at St James's. Tulipa 'Cape Cod' has flame red flowers with a yellow edge. When the sun rose over Piccadilly the petals shone, radiating warmth to all passersby. The bulbs were planted at the end of November. A couple of weeks later I planted a selection of shrubs and perennials over the top to provide some Christmas interest. When I removed this planting in March, I could see that the shoots of the tulips had pierced through the root balls of the plants above– an amazing achievement for such tender tissue. Where the root balls were very dense the bulbs made slow progress. The effect was that although the tulips flowered only 3 weeks later, some were shorter than expected. Next year I will grow them first in smaller pots then transplant at the beginning of March.

At the other end of the spectrum

I spotted this in the compost bin in the far NW corner of the garden. Fuligo septica is commonly known as 'Dog Vomit Mold' or 'Scrambled egg slime because of its yellow or bile like appearance. It is not, in fact, a fungi but a collection of single cell amoeba which have banded together to feed. I hadn't come across it before, but it is common in woodland. It often occurs in spring when humidity is greater and when beds have been mulched. It is not harmful to plants as it prefers to feed off decaying matter.



The woodland rush

Nature switched on the heat this month just at the right moment. We went from snow to sun in only a few weeks. Early spring in a tree-shaded garden, before the leaves of trees and shrubs are out, is when you get most colour. This month, our mini heat wave was followed by rain, giving our plants a good start to the season. In the table below I've listed all the plants in colour in April. I've indicated whether they are about to flower (▲), are in flower (■) or fading from view (▼).



Plants in flower (as of 26 April 2018)		
Lunaria annua, L. 'Alba'	Honesty	▲
Convallaria majalis	Lily of the Valley	▲
Polystichum setiferum	Soft shield fern 'Herrenhausen'	▲
Divisilobum Group 'Herrenhausen'		
Anthriscus sylvestris	Cow parsley	▲
Galium odoratum	Sweet woodruff	▲
Sorbaria sorbifolia 'Sem'	<i>New leaves have pink tints</i>	▲
Vinca major, V. major 'Variegata', V. minor 'Gertrude Jekyll'	Periwinkle	■
Mahonia aquifolium 'Apollo'	Oregon Grape	■
Luzula sylvatica	Greater woodrush	■
Chaenomeles	Flowering quince	■
Tulipa spp.	Tulips	▼
Hyacinthoides non-scripta	English bluebell	▼
Erythronium 'Pagoda'	Dog tooth violet 'Pagoda'	▼
Magnolia stellata 'Centennial'		▼
Omphalodes cappadocica 'Cherry Ingram'	Cappadocian navelwort	▼
Epimedium x versicolor 'Sulphureum', E. x warleyense	Barrenwort	▼
Scilla	Chionodoxa or Glory of the Snow	▼
Brunnera macrophylla and B. 'Jack Frost'	Siberian bugloss or Great Forget-me-Not	▼
Osmanthus x burkwoodii		▼
Skimmia japonica 'Rubella' and S. 'Kew Green'		▼
Helleborus orientalis	Lenten rose	▼
Pulmonaria 'Diana Clare'	Lungwort	▼
Camellia x williamsii 'Donation'		▼

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