

View from The Southwood Garden May 2018

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



The lady killers

Each year our roses are attacked by aphids. Two years ago we bought some ladybird and lacewing larvae through the post. They feed on aphids so are seen as a natural control (although they also eat each other so need to be kept apart!) Last week I spotted this ladybird larvae on one of our climbing roses suggesting that their introduction has been sustained.

Ferns for dry spaces



The first ferns existed before dinosaurs and grew as high as trees. The ones in the Southwood Garden are more diminutive, at between 30 and 80 cm high. I've always associated ferns with damp shade but we grow a number that tolerate our dry shade. Three are

native to the UK - *Dryopteris filix-mas*, *Polypodium vulgare* and *Asplenium scolopendrium* known as Hart's tongue. The garden's non-stop performer is *Polystichum herrenhausen* (pictured), surviving even in the bed with no irrigation by the Piccadilly railings. Ferns are great mixers, for example, *P. tsussimense* in the pots in Caffè Nero. Interestingly, in Victorian times, there was a craze for ferns and amateur collectors decimated many wild populations.

A nest egg of cyclamen



These are the seeds the size of marbles are produced by our hardy cyclamen, *Cyclamen hederifolium*, which flowered last autumn. The stems of the flowers from which they form, coil around them to protect them. The seeds will lie dormant until they are triggered into growth at the end of the summer by shorter days and autumn rain. They will take about three years to flower. Interestingly cyclamen are happy, not only in woodland planted between tree roots but also on mountains under the shade of rocks. They don't like disruption and are unhappy if you bury them under a layer of mulch which I've done in the past but will avoid this year.

In the table below I've listed all the plants in flower in May. I've indicated whether they are about to flower (▲), are in flower (●) or fading from view (▼).

Plants in flower (as of 31 May 2018)		
<i>Trachelospermum jasminoides</i>	Star Jasmine	▲
Fuchsia	Fuchsia	▲
<i>Geranium macrorrhizum</i>	Big root Geranium	▲
'White Ness'		
Rosa 'Shropshire Lad', R. Graham Thomas'	Rose	▲
Lamium 'Alba'	White Dead nettle	▲
Clematis 'Niobe'		●
<i>Astrantia major</i> 'Roma'	Great Masterwort,	●
<i>Myrrhis odorata</i>	Sweet Cicely	●
<i>Aquilegia vulgaris</i> 'White Barlow'	Granny's bonnet, Columbine	●
<i>Polystichum setiferum</i>	Soft shield fern	●
Divisilobum Group 'Herrenhausen'		
<i>Galium odoratum</i>	Sweet woodruff	●
<i>Sorbaria sorbifolia</i> 'Sem'	Flowers rather than leaves	●
<i>Convalaria majalis</i>	Lily of the Valley	▼
<i>Vinca major</i> , <i>V. major</i> 'Variegata', <i>V. minor</i> 'Gertrude Jekyll'	Periwinkle	▼
<i>Lunaria annua</i> , L. 'Alba'	Honesty	▼
<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	Cow parsley	▼

Catherine Tidnam, gardener at St James's Piccadilly ▲ ▼ ●