

View from The Southwood Garden June 2018

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

Southwood sun factor



The heatwave which took hold at the start of June, only a couple of months after a late bitter winter, drew the crowds.



Sweet cicely - a hardy perennial herb

A couple of years ago I tried out Myrrhis odorata in the garden as I thought it would be a shorter and more shade resistant substitute for cow parsley and also provide longer seasonal interest. It took well to the site and its frothy white flowers produce an early source of nectar for insects. It is known as Sweet Cicely as its leaves, which taste of aniseed, are used to sweeten tart fruit. The flowers, young leaves and seedpods can be added to salads or used with fish. By the end of June our Sweet Cicely had formed large black seeds which we will sow in the autumn. They need a period of cold weather or be put in the fridge for six weeks, to germinate.

The leaf cutter bee



I've yet to spot a leaf cutter bee in the garden but their presence is revealed by these neat half-moon bites out the epimedium leaves. Leaf cutter bees feed mainly on roses, epimediums and wisterias. We have all three but only the epimediums are affected on our site. Leaf cutter bees use pieces of leaf to create cigar shaped nests. These are divided into cells for each egg. The nests are found in old wood, plant stems or walls. The damage does not harm the plant unless they strip the plant bare and it is exciting to know we have encouraged another type of wild bee to our urban garden.

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An easy and fast growing clematis

Clematis viticella 'Venosa Violacea' was in full bloom this month, tumbling over the trellis at the back of the garden into Jermyn Street. It is one of four types of clematis we planted in troughs in 2016 to hide the metal barrier which cordoned off the building works for 18 months. I bought viticellas because they grow fast and we needed them to cover the trellis in a couple of months. They flower from mid-summer to early autumn. I was surprised to find out that clematis viticellas were introduced to England from Spain as early as the 16th century.



In the table below I've listed all the plants in colour in June. I've indicated whether they are about to flower (▲) or are in flower (●).

Photo shows Rosa 'Shropshire Lad' – this is a climbing rose planted under the ornamental cherry.

Plants in flower (as of 30 June 2018)		
Escallonia hybrid 'Golden Carpet'		▲
Weigela		▲
Jasminum 'Clotted Cream'	Jasmine	▲
Melissa officinalis	Lemon balm	▲
Trachelospermum jasminoides	Star Jasmine	●
Fuchsia	Fuchsia	●
Geranium macrorrhizum 'White Ness'	Big root Geranium	●
Rosa 'Shropshire Lad', R. Graham Thomas', R. Erfurt, R. Wild Edric'	Rose - various	●
Lamium 'Alba'	White Dead nettle	●
Clematis 'Niobe'		●
Astrantia	Astrantia	●
Zantedeschia 'Mango'	Calla lily	●
Zantedeschia aethiopica	Arum lily	●
Cosmos bipinnatus 'Xanthos, C. 'Carmine'		●
Alstroemeria 'Summer Snow' and A. 'Summer Paradise and Summer Sky'	Peruvian lily, also known as Chilean lily or lily of the Incas.	●
Clematis 'Venosa Violacea', C. (New World Series) 'Reflections'		●
Acanthus mollis	Bear's' breeches	●
Sorbaria sorbifolia 'Sem'		●
Fuchsia - various		●
Salvia microphylla 'Lutea Cerise Form'		●
Nepeta racemosa 'Walker's Low'	Cat nip	●
Lamium album	White Dead nettle	●
Myrrhis odorata (for seed heads)	Sweet Cicely	●

Catherine Tidnam, gardener at St James's Piccadilly