

View from The Southwood Garden June 2019

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



Hoverfly: an important pollinator and beneficial predator

The flowers at St James's are regularly visited by hoverflies. With their black and yellow markings, they mimick bees and wasps to deter predators but are in fact, true flies and do not sting. There are about 250 different hoverfly species in Britain. The two species you see above are assets to our garden as their larvae feed on aphids. However other species have different feeding habits, for example, some eat rotting wood, fungi, plants or bulbs. Adult hoverflies drink nectar and eat pollen, preferring open flowers; they also eat honeydew - a byproduct produced when aphids feed on plants.

The top and rhs photos show a female Migrant Hoverfly (*Eucephalodes corollae*) on *Rosa* 'Erfurt' and a Peruvian lily. It is commonly found in gardens, road verges and hedge rows and can be seen between March and November.

The bottom photo shows a female *Meliscaeva auricollis* (no common name) on an Arum lily. This species prefers woodland and is usually found around trees. It is one of the earliest hoverflies to appear and can be seen from February to December. Look out for its larvae near colonies of aphids.

According to recent research which looked at the use of hoverflies in strawberry production in polytunnels, hoverfly pollination (rather than manual pollination) led to larger and less malformed fruit as well as higher yields.

The following sites have excellent info on hoverflies and other invertebrates:

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/>
<https://www.naturespot.org.uk/>

Ensuring fresh supplies of herbal infusions throughout the season



Our collection of mints and other plants for tea infusions, got a bit of battering this month, corralled as they were behind the builders' fences. Green herbs (mints, parsley, marjoram etc), benefit from regular watering and a little feeding. They bounce back with a fresh crop of leaves when cut back several times during the

growing season. However, if you do this, you will miss out on the flowers which are particularly popular with pollinators so you may decide to leave some stems to flower and go to seed in July. Our collection by the caravan include grapefruit and spearmint as well as lemon balm, lemon verbena and the scented-leaf *Pelargonium* 'Attar of Roses.'

Plants in flower during June 2019	
<i>Alstroemeria</i> 'Summer Sky'	Peruvian lily
<i>Centaurea montana</i>	Perennial cornflower
<i>Clematis</i> 'Niobe'	
<i>Digitalis purpurea</i> f. <i>albiflora</i>	White foxglove
<i>Geranium macrorrhizum</i> 'White Ness', <i>G. Phaeum</i>	
<i>Galium odoratum</i>	Sweet woodruff
<i>Luzula sylvatica</i>	Great woodrush
<i>Narcissus</i> 'Pheasant's Eye'	
<i>Rosa</i> 'Graham Thomas', <i>R.</i> 'Erfurt' (Hybrid musk)	
<i>Tiarella</i> 'Crows Feather'	
<i>Viburnum plicatum</i> 'Pink Beauty'	
<i>Weigela</i> 'Florida Variegata'	
<i>Zantedeschia aethiopica</i>	Arum lily

Catherine Tidnam, gardener at St James's Piccadilly