



September 2020: Special Edition 25

Dear Members,

What a wonderful sunny weekend we have just had! Lovely to be able to potter in the garden before the Autumn sets in. Some of our members have been busy with somewhat more energetic activities.

Congratulations to Andi, who with her husband Ian completed the Lands' End to John O'Groats cycle ride in aid of the Alzheimer's Society!



Jane is in training for with a 5k run in aid of a



Cancer Research – Race for Life – good luck Jane! I am feeling rather exhausted just thinking about all this cycling and running.

Congratulations are due to Julia and Jim who become Mr and Mrs Exon last week at All Saints Church – the first 2020 wedding held there.



This Newsletter I share my visit to St Michael's Mount. Please send any news, ideas of photos to me: kateawilkinson@hotmail.co.uk.

Best wishes,

Kate Anthony Wilkinson (Chair)

LAST WEEK'S QUIZ - DRINKS

Answers

1	Tea	Camellia sinensis
2	Raksi from Nepal	Millet or rice
3	Mojito	Mint and lime juice
4	Pastis from France	Star anise and liquorice root
5	Tequila	Blue agave
6	Pulque from Mexico	Fermented sap of the agave plant
7	Raki from Turkey	Grapes or figs
8	Pina colada	Coconut milk and pineapple juice
9	Chinotto from Italy	Fruit from the myrtle leaved orange tree
10	Mate from South America	Holly Tree

THIS WEEK'S QUIZ – WHICH WOOD

Match the Wood below, with how it is often used:

Aspen (low flammability, tolerates moisture); Persimmon; Poplar (very soft wood); Balsa wood (light weight); Walnut (very dense and withstands shock and force); Ebony; Willow; Spruce/Ash.

1	Black piano keys	
2	Rafts, life preservers, surfboards	
3	The Wright Brothers first aeroplane	
4	Golfing wood (historically)	
5	Saunas and matches	



6	High end car manufacture and gun making	
7	Model making and crafts	
8	Cricket bats	

PLANT FACTS: ASTERS

Asters are one of my favourites, easy to grow and give some colour to the garden in the Autumn as other flowers are passing. Sometimes they are not labelled as Asters. Apparently in 2015 botanists renamed a number of them. Some are now called *symphyotrichum*, while others are called *eurybia*.



But regardless of their new names, they are lovely daisy like flowers in a range of purples, blues, pinks and white. New York asters (above) are prone to powdery mildew, so if this is a problem for you, go for the New England asters (opposite), also known as Michaelmas daisies, as they are far more disease resistant, long flowering and generally taller at around 1.8m.



It is important to keep weeds down around them, mulch well and cut down at the end of the season.

The benefit of asters is also that you can divide up large clumps in early spring. This also helps if your clump has naturally died out in the middle. Dig up the clump, chop the living part of the plant into chunks a little larger than a fist, enrich the soil with plenty of garden or mushroom compost and replant around five plants to the square meter for a decent block.





ST MICHEAL'S MOUNT GARDENS

Most of us know of St Michael's Mount, the house (or castle), formerly a monastery, which is on a small island just off the Cornish coast, which can be reached by a causeway at low tide. Its image is immediately recognisable. But many people do not realise what amazing gardens are hidden on the steep rocky cliffs on the seaward side.



Despite the gales and salty winds, the Gulf Stream tempers the climate so that frosts are a rarity and the rock acts as a gigantic radiator – absorbing heat by day and releasing it at night, creating a micro climate in which all sorts of unlikely plants flourish. And the result is definitely worth a visit.



Starting from the large lawned area, there are grass avenues and stone steps leading up to the East Terraces, falling in tiers down the steep cliff face. Luckily there are some handrails). Filling the shallow

terraces of stone granite walls are blooms of Pelargonium, Gazanias and Lithodora which thrive in the acid, free draining soil. Further up the hill there is an ornate garden well, where water is collected from the castle rooftops, and is used to irrigate the grass paths.



Along the way are large succulent plants, growing out of the walls, hanging on for dear life against the wind, soaking up the sunshine.

In the top walled garden a strong planting of Pericallis, Parahebe and Pelargoniums combine to make a glorious wave pattern, echoing the sea whilst in the middle walled garden there is the silver the foliage of Cineraria and Artemisia, broken through with prairie-style plants including Pennisetum, whose delicate fronds dance in the breeze. The yellow blooms of the Medicago Arborea (below) can be found here. Plucked and placed into the wedding bouquet of the first Lady St Levan, its cuttings have been used in family bouquets ever since.





Long Ashton Horticultural Society

The top walled garden is also home to a large colony of miner bees, who burying into the ground, and act as resident pollinators for the garden.



In the bottom walled garden there is Bay, Ajuga, Salaria and Fuchsia. The west terraces have some of the hottest spots in the gardens, with recorded temperatures reaching 35C+ as the granite pumps out its accumulated heat and the sun beats down. A giant Agave rubs shoulders with Leucadendron, Aeonium, Aloes and Ginger Lilies.



The gardens were started in 1780, when four Miss St Aubyn's, daughters of the 4th Sir John, initiated the building of the walled garden in red brick with a small summerhouse. Plants were brought from different countries to take advantage of the unique climate on the rock face. Different terraced areas and walled gardens

were established to protect against the wind and to provide distinct areas to discover.

The St Aubyn family has lived on the island since the 17th century. In 1954, the family gave St Michael's Mount to the National Trust, who look after it today, but the family still retains a presence in the house.

Today there is a Head Gardener and a team of three working in the garden and surrounding landscape; they have to be prepared to abseil down the rock face to prune and sort out plants which are not accessible from the paths – not your usual gardener's required skill!



Other Facts about St Michael's Mount:

About 2,000 years ago, the Mount was an important centre of the tin industry.

It became an important religious destination and place of pilgrimage during the 6th century. About 30 people live on St. Michael's Mount. During the early 19th century, almost 200 people lived there, and the island had several schools, and a chapel.

The 12th century castle is known for its library of valuable books, its 18th century tidal clock and its mummified cat. It also has a model of the Mount made entirely from champagne corks, so something for everyone!

www.stmichaelsmount.co.uk

www.primaryfacts.com