

Inside the Potting Shed

DECEMBER 2019

MITTON
MANOR

Merry Christmas from The Team at Mitton Manor!

We will be in touch next month with January's edition of Inside the Potting Shed. Until then, we wish you a prosperous and healthy New Year!



Why not find out what we'll be getting up to in the Gardens over Christmas by following us on social media?

@MittonManor

Flowers of the Month



TOPIARY

We have waited all year to talk about our Topiary! We have so much of it here at Mitton Manor; you would certainly be forgiven for thinking we are somewhat obsessed. We just find it so versatile and striking - the possibilities for creating living architecture are near endless. We have used it throughout each of Mitton Manor's gardens to give structure and 'block in' our borders. Starting with a completely bare and flat blank canvas in 2001, owner and the gardens' designer Elizabeth Gooch felt creating 'rooms' through the use of yew and box hedging would be a good place to start. It means we enjoy all the neatness and form of a wall without the harshness of brick and mortar.



SARCOCOCCA CONFUSA

This glossy, deep green shrub grows to a compact 2m high and, in winter, sprouts inconspicuous, very sweetly scented, creamy-white flowers. These fabulous, vanilla-fragranced flowers are then followed by glossy black berries. Part of the Buxaceae family, they are nicknamed 'Christmas Box' and is widely considered one of the best shrubs available for the winter period. Cut stems can be taken from established plants for the same scent and foliage to add to floral arrangements but this wonderful, winter-flowering, dense, evergreen is equally perfect for a shady border or patio planter.



FERNS

Low-maintenance and tolerant of a wide range of soil conditions, evergreen ferns maintain interest and life when almost all else in the garden is in retreat. Graceful and robust, they complement any shade plant combination. There are 10,560 known species of ferns, belonging to the lower vascular plant division Pteridophyta. They reproduce via spores and do not have seeds or flowers. Some ferns can live up to 100 years! The Victorians had a particular penchant for ferns, with decorative arts presenting the fern as a motif in pottery, glass, metal, textiles, wood, printed paper and sculpture. They are right at home here at Mitton Manor; which was built in the Victorian era.

Jobs for the Garden this December

1. Collecting leaves - we will remain doing so right through until at least February next year, when (hopefully) the last of the leaves have fallen.
2. Sowing begonia and geranium seeds for a head start to the Spring season.
3. Planting bulbs and wallflowers in our Cherry Tree Avenue.
4. Planting new perennials and bulbs in our new borders - we can't wait to reveal these next year!
5. Covering hydrangeas and other tender plants with fleece to protect them from frost damage. We were a little late in doing this with our hydrangeas and the unexpected frost just before the end of November managed to get to them. They made for pretty spectacular morning photographs though.
6. Continuing to plant bulbs from Sarah Raven and J.Parker - tulips are next on our list.
7. Cleaning and painting our garden furniture prior to overwinter storage.
8. Keeping on top of the bird feeders, ensuring our lovely birds have enough food to see them through the winter.



Our Roundhouse garden, taken one frosty morning at the beginning of December.