

Our stand at Gardeners' World Live 2013

Sue Clarke

Here I am again in 2013. I had hung up my trowel in 2011 but was persuaded to return again when Maureen Hersee, our Treasurer, asked if I would be willing to help with doing the display stand at the NEC again. The big challenge for The CGS committee is to have a presence at the shows, whilst keeping the costs down. I was happy to volunteer again along with the rest of the team - Jean Roscoe our Groups co-ordinator, and CGS members Glenna and David Toyne who garden in Wales and Claire Winfrey who gardens in Cambridgeshire.

Once again the RHS positioned the plant societies in the 'Seeds of Knowledge' area, which is ideal for the CGS, as we all love to collect and grow seeds from the distribution list - were it not for the CGS seed distribution over the years I'd have a half empty garden!

This year we planned to arrange a display that would entice visitors at the show to join the CGS, and also to promote the growing of cottage style plants, vegetables, fruits and herbs - all of which should encourage pollinators to our gardens. Our bees, ladybirds and butterflies need all the help they can get!

Early March

I thought about plants that would encourage bees and planned to divide the plants in my garden as early as possible. But then the rain started, cold weather persisted and everything was growing 3 or even 4 weeks behind. Sweet pea seedlings sat on my window ledge for weeks before I felt it was safe for them to

Illustration / Tom Boulton



go outdoors., Other seeds sulked until May before taking on any growth.

Finally there was a ray of light, the delphiniums I had grown from cuttings in mid March seemed to be growing well and a flower spike appeared. Foxgloves flowered in late May, so I would have something to take to the show. The divisions of hardy geraniums were also doing well. But I seemed to have lots of plants with buds on, and it was just a case of hoping they would come to fruition in time for the show. Claire had also offered to grow plants for the display - it was fingers crossed for both of us until the week before the show.

Tuesday 11th June - Build up

Maureen Hersee was working hard on the promotional material - posters, handouts and a quiz for the show. Maureen and Jean Roscoe did a fine job on the stand displaying information on what plants to grow for bees and pollinators along with our CGS merchandise.

Glenna and I set to work on the plant display at around 9.30am - it was 7pm by the time we went home! During the week we had some lovely comments from the public - 'this is my kind of gardening' and 'full of the sort of garden flowers I love'.

Sunday 16th June - Breakdown Day

A sad day - all our teams of volunteers who have been on the stand promoting our society to the public had gone home.

A special thanks to our Vice President, Rob Baston and his wife Jean, who stepped in to man the stand when a couple of volunteers cancelled at the last minute. Also to Pam Raybould who came to help on the breakdown, as she has done several times before. Dave, my husband came along to help with the moving of heavy things. He even made a handy trolley from the base of a TV stand with wheels, which helped enormously when we had to trundle along through the hall to the car park with all the boxes of merchandise and plants!

Thank you to the many volunteers who gave of their time, I hope you enjoyed your experience and will volunteer again in 2014.

Sue is a CGS Executive Committee member and gardens in Cheshire.