

This Wonderful Wet Summer – (At least until mid-July!)

If we lived in a drought stricken country and were suddenly helicoptered into our village it would seem like another planet. Not only have we enough water to drink we can grow non-essential things like hedges and flowers. This summer, so far, as I write, is wonderful and your garden will be at its best **BUT IS IT JUST AS YOU WANT IT?** Now is the time to enjoy but also to photograph and plan.

There is a current passion for 'garden rooms' which you can enter and not see all of your garden at once. This gives areas of privacy and surprise as you go from one to the other. Lovely, but this doesn't work for everyone. Perhaps some of my thinking about designing our garden will prompt thoughts in your mind for your garden.

After emptying our garden of Leylandii conifers, seven years ago, designing a new layout was tricky. You see, we enter the garden in four places, three doorways on the back of the house and the side entrance from the front.

- I wanted to make each entry point inviting, enticing you to go and explore outside and I also wanted to make the view from two seats, nestled in borders, to have a similar outlook.
- Tied in with this, I wanted lots of paths (just mowed lawn) that led off but where you couldn't see the end or where they were going to. Again this encourages you to 'go and see'.
- I didn't want lots of little fences, hedges or trellis that would make garden rooms as these would block my overall view of winter planting and it is not a very big garden anyway. The house is higher than the garden so we look down on it, rather like looking at a map. Also, the other half of our partnership doesn't like (understandably) complicated mowing.

This lot was a tall order but the pictures show that in year seven, **MY PLANS HAVE WORKED!** I am so pleased.





Really useful plants are tall perennials and shrubs that partly obscure but not totally block your view. One picture shows *Phytolacca americana* which is taller than me but is a perennial that dies down to nothing in winter. Its pink stems are highlighted by the pink flowers of *Diascia personata*. (See picture left)

Another idea is to have a few separate flower/fruit/veg beds with something tall in the middle. Three tall plants I use at the centre of three of my beds are a tree peony, *Paeonia delavayi* Lutea, the tall wavy grass, *Calamagrostis* 'Carl Foerster', and the *Sanguisorba* 'Arnhem'. However, these are just the centre of a 'spine' of tallish things running down the centre of each bed.

You will probably be surprised to know that I have never ever drawn a planting scheme or even a design plan for any garden I have ever had. First of all, I am hopeless at drawing and anyway, there was never any need as I could see it all in my head.

The Garden Club Committee really hope that on 30th Sept 2021, the last Thursday in the month, we can welcome everyone to a meeting, in the Reading Room.) The September edition of the Parish magazine (and this website) will also have the Garden Club programme for the year 2021-22.

I have so enjoyed writing about gardening during times of restrictions and lock down but I am guessing that I will soon be back to reporting meetings – with, I have to confess, injections of things from me that the speaker didn't actually tell us!

Keep reading and gardening,
Dorothy Richards