



Newsletter

August 2023



Lunch in the rain . . .

On Sunday 6th August 18 members descended on us for lunch and the chance to wander around the garden and explore the orchid greenhouse.

During the week prior we were increasingly worried about the weather as rain seemed to be forecast for every day. However, as we got closer the forecast improved, so much so, that we thought Sunday was going to be a bright and sunny day. We were still not overly confident so checked various weather apps constantly but even at 11.00 am on Sunday itself the weather looked fine – you've guessed it – we had rain.

This is, of course, typical British weather and as seasoned Brits it was all taken in their stride.

At 1.00 we planned to start serving food but right on cue the heavens opened causing all members to quickly find shelter in the greenhouses, polytunnel, under trees or in the kitchen. Fortunately, it was only a shower and after some judicious use of towels the tables and chairs were dried so lunch was only delayed by 30 minutes or so and everybody tucked into the lunch that Andrea had prepared. She had made a wonderful selection of quiches along with an array of salads. In addition, there was also a lovely selection of

desserts with Summer Pudding, Meringue with strawberries and cream as well a Chocolate Cheesecake which mainly got consumed before the next rain shower.

This was all very frustrating, but the wonderful food prepared by Andrea made it all quite bearable and everybody smiled until it was time to head for home.

The Orchid Greenhouse provided a popular destination with some members returning for a second look. There were many questions to answer but I think we had enough time to address all the interesting thoughts posed.

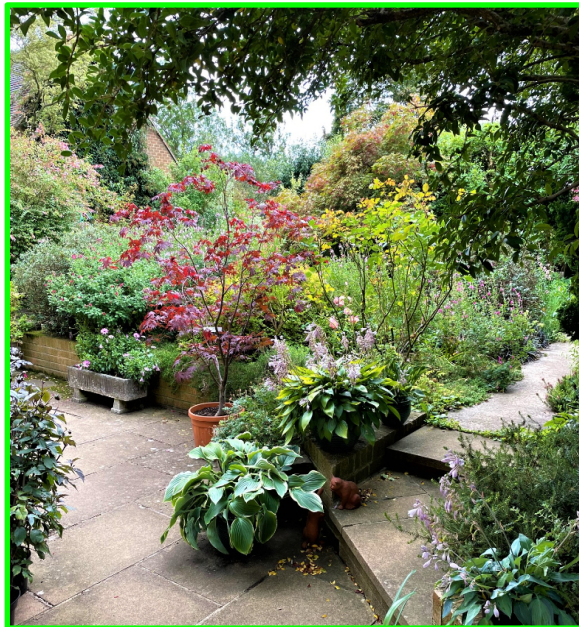
Fortunately, by this time of year I have completed most of the repotting so the greenhouse looked in good order.

Some of my neighbours let the visiting cars park on

their drives, the Village Hall loaned us all of the crockery and friends lent us the tables and chairs so we had everything we needed, bar the weather.

By the time we had cleared away and everything washed up we were glad to sit down and enjoy a glass of our favourite wine.

All in all it was a splendid day and I hope enjoyed by everybody. **Malcolm Moodie**



You can follow Solihull & District Orchid Society on Facebook and Twitter



If you have any pictures or information you would like to put on our website please email: lina_sala@yahoo.co.uk or copy and pictures for newsletter: ballm1@mac.com
Society email address: www.solihullorchidsociety.co.uk

JULY/AUGUST SPRING CLEAN

The title is a little bit of a misnomer because Spring Cleans don't happen in July but it helps to explain what I do every year in the Orchid House.

Once Malvern International Orchid Show is over a hiatus occurs as regard to orchid shows and events so, for me, this is a perfect time to repot my orchid collection and make certain everything is as it should be before the autumn.

Repotting is the key activity but there is much more to focus on, as if repotting wasn't enough on its own.

I have nearly 300 plants and typically carry out the repotting activity at the same time as I water. As a result, the whole process will take about 8 weeks in bite size weekly instalments

But how do I determine which ones should be left alone and which ones should be repotted?

Firstly, I use a system of coloured tags with each colour meaning something to me. Those that visited the greenhouse on Sunday 6th might have noticed the coloured labels and may have also noticed that each name label has data on the reverse. But, if not, I will explain the rationale of my labelling and colour coded system.

Firstly, every name tag has the date of the last time that plant was repotted on the reverse of the label and as I don't generally like a plant to go unrepotted for longer than 2 years this gives a guide as to whether a plant should be repotted or not.

Secondly, starting in the Spring I begin inserting green labels into pots that I think may need attention. The plant might be looking a bit sickly (I might deal with this straight away or if not too unhealthy may wait until the spring clean).

Thirdly, when I water I deal with each plant separately and stand it in a tray to capture the water exiting the pot. If the water is clear and clean that is good but if lots of bits come out with the water that will indicate that the substrate is breaking down and would tag the plant as a candidate for repotting.

Fourthly, the plant may have naturally divided or died back in the middle and so will benefit from being divided and repotted. Again, a green tag will be inserted.

By the time I get to July I have a good idea which plants need repotting and which can be left alone for another 12 months.

Typically, this means that circa half of the collection will need repotting or dividing this year.

But repotting is not the only task as a spring clean is a great opportunity to wash the glass to remove any algae which will reduce light transmission, sweep away cobwebs etc and generally clean up the greenhouse.

Then I start the repotting process working my way around the greenhouse plant by plant. Regardless of whether the plant needs repotting I will tidy up the plant and spray it with a systemic insecticide (always remove the plant to outside before spraying). The same applies to each plant that is repotted or divided.

I keep a spreadsheet of every plant I have and update this with when it last flowered and how many plants I have of each variety.

When I have finally concluded the Spring Clean the greenhouse is clean and tidy with all of the plants looking at their best and in readiness for the next growing season and for the various shows and events during the next 12 months.

Malcolm Moodie



AGM – NEXT MEETING

On Saturday 2nd September our meeting will consist of the Annual General Meeting, the Plant Auction and, of course, the Display Table.

As a result, the timings for the meeting will be a little different from usual meetings with the Hall open by 1.00 for your plants to be booked in for the Auction. Please ensure this is completed by 1.45pm so that the AGM can start at 2.00 pm. All plants should be bug free with 10% of the sale price going to the Society.

This is a great chance to acquire plants grown by society members and so if you have any plants that are

surplus to requirements please bring them along as other members will be eager to buy them.

The Agenda will be fairly familiar with a review of the last 12 months, the election of the committee for the year ahead and the discussion on any resolution that needs to be determined by a vote of all members in attendance.

I know that many people find AGMs a bit boring but with the Display Table and Auction it is always a fun afternoon and shouldn't be missed.

Look forward to seeing you all.

WILD ORCHIDS

JANET
JAMES



Dune Helleborine



Pyramid Orchids



Bee Orchid



Common Spotted
Orchid