

Garden Ramblings

When I was a student I worked at Hatfield House as a guide in the summer and spring. It was great fun. That was where I discovered John Tradescant you might just have noticed I often mention him. Hatfield house belonged to Henry VIII and it was there that Elisabeth I was told she had become Queen. James I didn't like it and swapped it with Robert Cecil, first Earl of Salisbury for his house Called Theobalds (just to confuse everyone, it was pronounced Tibbolds). Robert, the son of Lord Burghley, Elizabeth's advisor, decided to build a new house as the lovely brick palace was a bit unfashionable. Hence Mr Tradescant Sr. sourced the plants and laid out the gardens.

Years later a great gardener decided to restore the gardens. She was Mollie, Marchioness of Salisbury who had already spent 30 years making great gardens at Cranborne Gardens in Dorset. BH21 5PP.

She was very much an organic gardener and worked on producing amazing flower beds and re-designed a knot garden in memory of that man with initials JT ! She had the ability to see the overall shape and texture of the gardens she wanted, making them fit in so well with the background of the house and the surrounding parkland . She was one of the founders of the Garden Museum in London. which is in the graveyard of the church of St Mary at Lambeth. Just guess who is buried in the ornate tombstone is a focal point?

Her daughter in law is still continues this overall plan; Her husband is a gardener next to my own heart. He does not like to se soil and fills the ground really well. On the other hand I rely on the amazing gout weed or as it is often called ground elder. Those two words being said with an angry or sad facial expression. I read it can be weakened by cutting off the leaves as they appear in early spring. Might just have missed that good time but will give it a go. I will be out with a torch every day so I can do a 16 hour day to achieve this.

Young gardeners might like to browse round the packets of sunflower seeds. Although Tall ones are great there are so many others that are amazing. Plant the seeds in pots this month and plant out in May. Keep some in case the dreaded slugs eat some. Also discovered alfalfa is hard to find so try fenugreek instead. Again on tissue in an old cress tub or small bowl as they need a couple of rinses with water, still look at the tissue.

