

## Garden report to KTE AGM 2011.

It has been a mixed year in the garden. The winter was very cold and began early with snow in November. Then when it did warm up we had an exceptionally hot dry April which meant we had to do a lot of watering and the spring flowers were over very quickly. However the summer was cool and wet which kept things green and flowering over a longer period. This benefited my efforts (which I mentioned in my last report) to improve the colour of the borders in the late summer. I think my efforts paid off and the borders continued to have more colour for longer through the summer this year.

Over the year I have been working on improving the whole woodland area. The area is very dry and shady especially in the summer, which makes it difficult to grow anything there and what does do ok tends to grow very slowly. So it is more of a long term project, but I have been planting some shrubs that will probably not be very noticeable for 5- 10 years. However they will eventually grow up and give the woodland area more variety and interest. My aim is to slowly develop the woodland so that it is not just one big blob of green, but that it has different layers of trees, shrubs and ground cover. Last winter we spent quite a lot of time pruning the shrubs and trees to help create this definition, and we will be continuing with that this coming winter.

We also had to fell two trees this summer on the east side of the woodland due to Dutch elm disease. Unfortunately because so many of the elm trees have grown up as suckers it is quite likely that more trees are infected and will have to be felled in the coming years. There is really nothing we can do about this except be vigilant in felling the trees at the first sign of disease.

Partly as a result of the elms being felled which allows in more light and rain I have been developing the borders near the gate on the east side of the woodland. Two years ago we created a new border further down on that east side which has been looking good this summer, and we are now in the process of extending that border so it continues all the way up to the path. I am excited about this development as I think it will make a big difference to that whole side of the garden.

The bed in the middle of the woodland also got a makeover, the yew hedge around it was reduced in height and the large overgrown shrubs were removed and replaced by lower growing flowering plants. My aim was to create a continuous tapestry of hot fiery colour from spring to autumn that would be a surprising contrast to the dark leaves and shade of the woodland around. When it was looking it's best in the spring and summer I thought it worked well.

The tree surgeons have almost completed the tree work that was recommended in the tree report of August 2010. They removed a lot of dead wood from the trees in the summer, the main work left to do is reducing by 20% a large holm oak in the woodland. They will do this as soon as we have received permission from the council.

### The lawns:

I mentioned in my last report that we had purchased a lawn scarifier to remove the dead grass from the lawn. Because the weather in April was so hot and dry and the grass wasn't growing we weren't able to do any spring scarifying or have the lawn treated with weed and feed. However in September we did manage to both scarify the lawns and treat them with weed and feed. This should leave them in a good state to get through the winter.

### Chichester terrace:

Afke has been working away on Chichester Terrace and I think the results are clear to see. The shrubs have much more space and definition, they have been kept well back from the railings and the weeds have been kept down. There are areas that need improving and this winter we plan to clear out and replant the worst parts, but over all I think it is looking good.

Ben has been cutting the hedges through the summer and they have been kept back behind the railings more than ever before.

The wonderful volunteers have been helping throughout the year as usual and several new members have joined the team to give additional valuable support.

For the coming year I have lots of small improvement projects rather than big ones. There are several beds that I want to adjust, both the shapes and also the planting. For the planting what I want to do is bulk up on the plants that work the best, many of which I have been propagating through the summer in the polytunnel. Other than that it is just all the usual things to keep the garden feed, watered, weeded and looking good!

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