

# Lavant Horticultural Society

## 'Revive Your Garden'

Wed 14<sup>th</sup> February 2024

### Nick Bailey

The following are notes taken from Nick's talk. Unfortunately, they cannot do justice to his talk and only covers some of the points and plants that he mentioned. Any errors are mine, not Nick's.

Nick wrote a book of this same title, published in 2018. He is currently working on a new issue.

#### Limitations

Tree preservation order, conservation areas, access

Existing plants – are they revivable

Soil types

#### Shape up

Form follows function:

Key requirements for garden

Access to the various areas

Practicality

Make most of borrowed landscape – neighbour's plants and trees - views beyond.

New house/garden – wait for a year before undertaking major changes, to see what plants emerge and how they develop.

#### Pruning

Trees: Crown lifting - Opens up new views; gives opportunities for under-planting;

Crown reduction;

Crown thinning – take out individual branches back to the trunk, creating holes for air & light.

As a rule of thumb carry out pruning after flowering.

Plants that will withstand very hard pruning:

Taxus <i>Yew</i>	Mahonia	Hypericum	Choysia	Berberis
Buxus <i>Box</i>	Spirea	Fuchsia	Prunus	Ilex <i>Holly</i>
Euonymus	Philadelphus	Camellia	Pittosporum	
Myrtus <i>Myrtle</i>	Lavatera	Buddleja	Sambucus <i>Elder</i>	
Thuja	Hebe	Nerium	Viburnum	

Avoid pruning magnolia – this will provoke the production of vertical non-flowering shoots that will grow up through the centre of the canopy.

#### Weeds

Ground elder:

Nick found that *Geranium oxonianum*, planted in sun or part shade, smothered and killed-off large areas of troublesome ground elder on his plot

Bindweed:

In general, Nick gardens organically, but this is the exception where weedkiller is the only option – encourage it to grow up a cane or support and then wipe the foliage with glyphosate – make sure the glyphosate doesn't get onto adjacent plants and then cover with clear plastic sheet to avoid this.

**Soils:** Observe what is already growing – lots of healthy camellias & rhododendrons: acid soil;  
camellias & rhododendrons with yellow leaves, sickly: neutral;  
absence of such plants: probably alkaline.

**Plants to grow up existing plants/hedges.** Nick gave some examples, including:

Tropaeolum growing up a beech hedge;  
Perennial sweet pea;  
Salvia confertiflora together with Tropaeolum;  
Morning Glory climbing up a cardoon to provide continuation of colour;  
Dicentra growing with hypericum.

### **Successional planting**

Mirabilis jalapa (4 o'clock plant) can take over from early flowering perennials – only emerges in May, will flower until the frosts.

Chilean Glory Vine – will climb over spring flowering shrubs providing flowers later in the season.

Add self-seeding plants and bulbs to borders: e.g. Verbena bonariensis, fennel;  
Collarette dahlias will self-seed, producing new hybrids.

Annuals –add to existing borders.

Lopezia coronata (mosquito flower) – will flower for 6 months from March.

**Enhance existing plants** by adding plants with complementary colours:

Green and red. Orange and blue. Yellow and purple.

### **Plants to enhance:**

to grow under roses: Nepeta, hardy geraniums, Salvia viridis (pink or violet);

to grow under shrubs: Tiarella, Erythronium 'Pagoda';

Plants to enhance grassy areas: Hemerocallis, Lysimachia (Loosestrife), Geranium pratense.

For north facing walls:

Trachelospermum jasminoides, flowering currant *Ribes sanguineum*,

'Ghislaine de Féligonde' – a rambler rose that is an exception in that it is repeat flowering.

Hot patio pot plants: Astelia (similar to Phormium) –does not need pruning.

Plants for the base of hedges:

Hostas – their very deep roots will find moisture under the hedge roots.

Gillenia trifoliata.

### **Interesting evergreens:**

Pittosporum

Indian hawthorn *Rhaphiolepis indica*

**Back of border plants:** Thalictrums;

Goat's rue *Galega officinalis*.

### **Suntraps**

Eryngium, Opuntia (Mexican cactus, but hardy down to -10C), Dietes bicolor (iris family from South Africa).

**Plants for under trees:** Martagon lilies (cope well with shade); Lilium lancifolium.