

# NARBOROUGH HALL



## GARDEN WALK

From the entrance pavilion in the visitors car park turn left and follow the sign to the walled garden.

The entrance to the walled kitchen garden is through the large gate. This garden has been restored during the last seven years and its original design with box lined paths, re-instated. You are welcome to enter the large fruit cage on your left which has now been extensively replanted with unusual fruits. You will see a cranberry bed to the left. Local varieties of apple trees have been grafted and grown by our gardeners.

We grow our vegetables using organic methods and combine a traditional rotation system with plantings of green manure. Our favorite manure is the beautiful blue flowered 'Phacelia tanacetifolia' which is attractive to bees and can be used as a cut flower, as well as being dug in to fertilize the garden. The garden is always full of interesting vegetables, heritage and older varieties are grown for flavour. The garden supplies the house and café with produce throughout the year.

The bower, to the right of the main path, is planted with edible fruiting trees, hazel, sloe, crab apple and dog rose and the avenue is planted with quince 'Vranja' and desert pears. The west facing herbaceous border has recently been re-designed as a cutting border and is planted with both annual and perennial plants and shrubs in tones of peach, nude and apricot.

Plants for the garden are raised in the greenhouse hotbed, which is heated in early spring by a woodburning stove (a system which also provides potash for the garden). We also grow tender herbs such as basil and lemongrass in this more protected environment.

A walk continues from this garden through a door by the greenhouse. This leads to the river and the beautiful mill leat of the Nar. A kingfisher, water voles, brown trout and otters. are often visible from the banks of the river which is a protected site of special scientific interest. The walk follows the river to the Monet bridge and turns right towards the lake.

Joining the lake walk you can take a simple route around the lake, once part of a moat. The path follows the east side of the lake, past our newly planted orchard. This has been replanted on the site of a historic orchard, visited by Queen Mary for its famous prize winning Cox apples.

The path leads to a circular wood, which surrounds an ancient earthwork or hill fort which dates back to the time of the Iceni. Visitors can take a path through the center of the wood, or choose the boxwood path closer to the lake. The approach to the garden passes by the treehouse. It is from this hill that the most picturesque view of the house can be seen with the lake in the foreground.

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Staying close to the lake you pass through the small iron gate and take the curving path through the wild flower meadow to the sunken blue garden, fountain and fish pond. The plants in this garden have been chosen, not only for their flower colour, but for their foliage, slatey blue grey being the sought for colour such as Lavender 'Vera', Iris Jane Phillips and Nepeta 'Longpipes'. In April the garden begins to come alive with the acid heads of Euphorbia Mysonites contrasting with cascading blue Aubretia. In May, we have Symphytum Corsicum, the blue comfrey, and masses of Iris, Iris Siberica, Jane Phillips, Langport haze and Langport jane. In June the narrow spikes of deep blue Veronica Grandis, and Veronica longifolia flower with the low clumps of lighter blue Veronica 'Gentianoides Robusta' and the beautiful double sky blue delphinium 'skyline'. Masses of wispy sun loving nepeta 'Six Hills Giant' and 'Souvenir D'Andre Chaudron' and 'Walkers low' are planted throughout the blue garden as are Linium dominii, a purple/blue flax, Geranium 'Blue blood' and 'Nervosum nimbus'. Salvias are also a summer highlight, Salvia 'Blue enigma', Salvia 'Farinacea Victoria' and Salvia 'Patens'. Herbs are also a feature of this garden, as it is close to the family kitchen. Rosmary 'Officinalis Corsican blue' tumbles over the walls and the upright Rosmarinus Officinalis var. Sissinghurst which also has blue flowers and is a particularly fine culinary variety is grown throughout the garden. Indigo tinctoria, a source of dye, is grown as an annual for its bright blue pea type flowers. Lovage and Artichokes give the borders height. Sweet peas 'singing the blues' and the smaller Lathyrus 'Tutankhamun' are grown to scramble horizontally through the borders, the a naturalistic way of growing this plant that we have grown to prefer here.

Climbing the steps to the east terrace you can see the ancient topiary and the two monumental wisterias, entwined with grape vines and rambling roses on the front façade of the Hall. The front border, edged with box is planted in a colour scheme of lavender, peach, buff and dark purple. Roses mix Charles des Mills and Black Prince, with the peachy Rambler Ghislaine de Feligonde and the lilac Rose-Marie Viaudand. Other roses at the front of the border are the floriferous buff beauty and the pretty Lavender Pinocchio. Verbascum 'Merlin', 'June Johnson', and Cotswold beauty, combine this scheme in a single beautiful flower. The other important plant in this border is Burplurium rotundifolium, which has a seed head that turns biscuity pink and combines perfectly with the grass Hordeum jubatum.

The gardens to the south of the house are planted in subtle colours. The plum border is sultry and dark. The roses are William Shakespeare, Munstead Wood, Charles des Mills, Magenta, Indigo, Darcy Bussell and Reine des Violettes. The border is underplanted with the dusky pink cow parsley 'Chaerophyllum Hirsutum Roseum' and the gorgeous grass 'Hordeum Jubatum'. Black tulips, Queen of the Night, papaver 'Patty's plum', 'Royal Chocolate Distinction' and 'Raspberry Queen' flower with the lovely Euphorbia Cyparissias 'Fens Ruby' and the Euphorbia 'Amygdaloides Craigeburn' grown for its deep burgundy foliage. Dark Martagon lilies and the lovely lily 'nepalense'. Iris Langport 'Claret' and Aster 'Jenny' and the ruby flowered Achillea 'Christel'. This border also has fruit trees, Mulberry Nigra 'James 1' and the purple foliated crab apple, blackcurrant bushes, and the purple

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foliated elder, 'Sambucus Niger', fruit in late summer and in the autumn are joined by the lily 'Landini' and the shaggy dark dahlia 'Soulman' and Scabiosa 'Chilli Black'.

The pastel border to the west of the front lawn is light and pretty. Pale lemon 'Cephalaria Gigantia' combine with double pink hollyhocks, Sidalcea 'Elsie Hughes' and the misty double mauve delphinium 'Tiddles'. The stunning Eden rose (also grown in its climbing form in the walled garden) combines cream, rose pink and a jade green and is underplanted with Alchemillia 'Mollis', hardy geraniums and the dainty grass 'Fiber optics'. Other key plants in this double border are Santolina 'Primrose gem', Phlox 'divaricata' and the freely self-seeding rose bay willow herb 'Epilobium Stahl Rose'. Grown for its lovely foliage, amazing when back lit by late afternoon sun, Helianthus 'Celcepholius' sits happily at the very back of the border. The flowering cherries at the south end of this border support the rampant old rose 'Paul's Himalayan Musk'.

Moving towards the west of the house, the new white Garden, is planted in white, cream and jade green with frothy layers of 'Alchemillia' and the stately annual 'Ammi Magus'. The spires of white foxgloves are replaced by the beautiful Delphinium 'Constance Rivett' and cream 'Butterball'. Rosa 'Wedding Day', 'Iceberg' and 'Mme Hardy' are underplanted with 'Hesperis', which is encouraged to self-seed, and the grass 'Brizia Maxima'. Telima grandiflora, an elegant green flowered plant, which will grow in dry shade, also self-seeds and flowers with lily of the valley.

The wild flower garden in the gravel by the front of the house is a thriving mass of 'Vipers Bugloss', 'Corncockle', 'Ladies bedstraw', 'Oxeye daisies' and 'Plantain'. It attracts a large population of bumble bees and insects.