

## The Almonry Gardens

### Front garden

The Judas tree has dead branches that need to be removed before the leaves drop or this will have to wait until after the tree has bloomed and there are established plants underneath.

The area beneath Judas tree has been cleared of ground elder as much as possible and will be left fairly open with low planting. It will be planted with cyclamen, Tête-a-tête daffodils, heuchera, hostas etc. We could consider asking people to donate egg shells to crush and place around the hostas to protect them from slugs and snails.

The herbaceous borders contain established cottage garden style plants. Any tall plants near the front of the borders need to be moved back at appropriate times as opportunities arise. More herbaceous plants may be needed. We should consider undertaking the 'Hampton Court Hack' in early July in order to encourage new blooms. The shrubs need to be pruned in a sympathetic, but if necessary, radical way. The museum sign needs to be kept clear of growth.

The spotted laurel should be cut back from the walnut tree or even be removed. The Walnut tree needs to have the dead wood removed – this will probably need to be done by a tree surgeon.

It would be helpful if the buddleias in the walls could be cut back by the grounds staff and treated with weedkiller to stop the stems becoming wider and causing damage to the walls. If possible, this treatment could also be applied to the brambles.

The thyme line needs both additional and replacement plants. We will try to propagate new plants by pegging healthy stems into the ground. Some plants can be separated.

The planter in front of the Museum is planted and cared for by the museum staff.

The border by the office window contains ferns etc that thrive in the shade. The clematis must be kept in check to ensure that it does not grow into or over the hung wall tiles. The clematis would benefit from being cut right back every three years.

Note - there is a crack in the end wall nearest to the kebab shop that should be inspected.

### Upper garden

The border along the building has a box hedge that needs to be cut back from the path. GC will 'cloud prune' it in the autumn. The wisteria needs to be cut back annually to protect the hung wall tiles. It could be pruned in July or August, once flowering has finished by cutting back all the long, whippy green shoots that have grown in spring to just above the fifth or sixth set of leaves on each shoot. The roses need to be deadheaded regularly.

The Elizabethan Garden needs quite a lot of TLC. The back hedge will be removed, along with the iris and Michaelmas daisies that are growing in the roses. The hedge needs some replacement plants, including hyssop, teucrium, winter savoury and

golden marjoram in addition to the lavender and rosemary. More roses may be required in the parterre. The roses need to be deadheaded regularly. The tree growing by the shed must be trimmed back quite hard or it will damage the roof tiles; the lower growth could also be removed to prevent growth over the path.

Plants in the building and boundary wall should be cut back by the grounds staff and treated with weedkiller to stop the stems becoming wider and causing damage to the masonry.

### **Lower garden**

The pond is rather overgrown. Some of the iris should be removed and all of the carex should be removed. It would be most helpful if the grounds staff could remove the brambles between the pond and the wall. The white planters could be removed and the large planter in front of the arbour could be placed on the path by the pond to dissuade access to the pond from the path. The rugged stone in front of the arbour could be relocated to the end of the pond to block off access by the compost heap. The 'deep water' signs could be repainted.

The compost heap needs to be repaired or even rebuilt, preferably slightly away from the walls, ensuring that there are no nails sticking out. At the same time, discrete fencing or similar could be provided to camouflage the two plastic bins.

The southern border is creating a great deal of shade. The bay tree needs a radical trim, as does the laurel. There are two conifers that need to be removed, possibly by the grounds staff. Other shrubs need to be kept in check.

The arbour border has several plants that are spreading. The magnolia and pittosporum need pruning and the wisteria needs to be trained in places. However, the wisteria could also be pruned hard in places during the winter while the plant is dormant by cutting back old branches to just above a strong young shoot, or removing them completely if necessary.

The lavender hedge needs refreshing. We will try picking healthy sprigs and sticking them in the ground, but new plants will probably be needed.

The herb garden needs tidying and refreshing. New plants to enhance an apothecary bed will be needed. The bricks will be cleaned and made more prominent. The ivy needs to be carefully cleared from the wall near the main steps.

The Twinning Association garden is suffering from too much shade. The golden anniversary roses have also deteriorated as they are planted too far out of the ground: it may be best to replace them with new specimens once there is more sunlight in the garden. It would be good to plant low growing plants with yellow flowers to replace the current untidy planting. Yellow alyssum, stonecrop, sedum, Tête-a-tête bulbs, primroses, saxifrage (eg lime green and mossy white) are possibilities, but this will have to be discussed with BTA.

## Information for visitors

Plant labels should be clear and not dominate in any way. Suggest black labels with white writing. Writing both botanical and common names will satisfy S&SE in Bloom judges. Hanging labels would be needed for the trees.

As a costing guide, examples of angle head black plastic labels include:

16 x 10 cm	50 cm tall	£29.25 for 25
10 x 6 cm	38 cm tall	£15.50 for 25
8 x 5 cm	18 cm tall	£14 for 50
Paint marker pens		£4 each

Signage is felt to sufficient for now, as the group recommends that the garden is not cluttered with signs in order to keep a medieval feel. The aging sign on the side of the arbour could be updated (or it could wait until we get a Gold award again!)

Information leaflets could be in two forms: laminated garden guides and leaflets to be taken away or used as advertising.

Laminated garden guides are already in place, but need an accessible waterproof display case. We also need to remember to review them now and then. We could produce a laminated guide to the apothecary plants, but with their uses.

Leaflets could be produced in-house. If this is designed on A4, folded into three, it would give a front cover plus 5 pages of information. These pages could cover: the museum plants used for dyeing; the Elizabethan garden; the front garden with the sculpture and thyme line; the apothecary garden and a brief description/history of the building (to advertise the wedding venue, too).

The Council website could perhaps have more detailed information about what is on the leaflets. The address could then be included on the leaflet.