

Friends of Valley Gardens

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News

The Gardens are looking very colourful at the minute. The snowdrops have been in flower for nearly two months and seem to be more abundant each year. I have ordered two hundred bulbs in the green and identified three or four clumps that could be divided to further increase their distribution through the Gardens.

The miniature daffodils and purple crocus we put in last autumn have flowered together and made a really good show alongside the path below the Art Gallery. In the same area the scilla are just beginning to flower and seem to have spread down the slope. Near the grotto the first of the primroses are out.

The Parks and Gardens team have been busy – The sycamore tree has been removed from the rockery, a new floating duck house has appeared on the pond and the litter removed from the pond, the grotto has been repaired and part of the meadow has been rotovated so we can sow wildflower seeds when the rule of six returns.

Thanks to Karon Wallis and Sue Glew who volunteered to do the **First Aid Course**. The continuing covid restrictions has meant that the course has been split in two with the training element taking place on line and the practical and assessment section taking place at the centre in mid March.

Thanks also to those of you that registered for **Easyfundraising** – we've only raised £5 so far but it is a start.

Photographs – from the top

*Crocuses and Daffodils below the Art Gallery
The repaired Grotto
Taking down the Sycamore tree on the rockery*

Butterbur

Butterbur is a native perennial that produces massive leaves (up to two feet across), that were once used to wrap butter in to keep it fresh. It is also called Pestilence Wort and Bog Rhubarb and tends to enjoy damper conditions, especially along river banks.

On the downward slope facing Vernon Road we have a plant in flower that is obviously a butterbur but not the native one. It turns out we have a patch of the white butterbur an introduced species from Central Europe. It was brought to Scotland in 1683 as a garden plant and was first recorded in Yorkshire in 1843.

All Butterburs are dioecious, which means they have separate male and female flowers. The ones in the park are male and emerge before the leaves do. All butterburs are a good source of nectar early in the year and the flowers are quite pretty. However the white butterbur is considered invasive and can become a nuisance. It produces large leaves that carpet the ground and prevent native plants from growing. It will also grow from even the smallest piece of rhizome so spreads along riverbanks easily during flood conditions.

I don't think our patch will cause us problems unless we disturb it, but we will keep an eye on it.

A number of sites recommend reporting the existence of White Butterbur to the BSBI (Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland) which I have done. Its database shows that it has not been recorded anywhere near Scarborough before - the nearest place is Coxwold.

Finally a chemical from the root of the native butterbur has been found to be effective in the treatment of migraines with its only reported side effect being an increased likelihood to burp.



Photographs – from the top

The native Butterbur
Our patch of White Butterbur
The new floating duck house