

A Touch of the Tropics

Five years ago, I planted up an exotic / tropical border along my garden's northern boundary to disguise a new development. The banana (*Musa basjoo*) quickly developed into a multi-stemmed thicket (it has been seriously cosseted) and this year the oldest, central stem flowered and fruited!



Goodbye and Hello again!

Back in the spring, a gardening client in Exbury called me to let me know that his bamboo had started flowering. Based on what I thought I knew about this unusual happening, I suggested that it probably meant that the plant would now die.

Sure enough, the magnificent plant remained in a state of inactivity all summer long, with just its fluffy tufts of seedheads poking out from the nodes along the culms (see photo below).

That was until a few weeks ago. During one of my gardening visits, we both noticed that the centre of the plant had started to grow new leaves along the younger culms, from behind the seed tufts. Puzzled (and a little embarrassed about my earlier prognosis), I promised to find an explanation.

I found some useful information at www.bbc.co.uk/dna/h2g2/A2175851, which says that bamboos flower irregularly and sometimes over a two year period which can put enormous strain on the plant causing many to die as a result. Also, bamboos flower 'gregariously', meaning that different species often flower at the same time all over the world (probably as a result of cloning from the same plant).



Unusual flowering activity on an Exbury bamboo in the spring

printed on conservation grade recycled paper

Cuttings...

Where there's Muck there's Brass - did you know that landscaped gardens can add, on average, 15% to the value of a property and nearly 80% of homebuyers are prepared to pay a premium for a house with a garden? (*Haart Estate Agency-Sep 07*).

Snap Happy - June and Trevor Parkinson from East Hampshire, have been visited by Leigh Clapp, freelance photographer for a spread on their garden in February's **Hampshire Life** magazine.

Spread 'em! - A quick plug for a wonderful site on the internet that is the 'ebay of seed swapping': www.seedypeople.co.uk.

Touchy Feely - Some vindication for those of us who admit to talking to plants. Scientists in South Korea believe they have found a set of "sound responsive genes" in plants that may affect the way they grow. (*The Scotsman 30.08.07*)

Red Cross Go Green - I'm supporting the British Red Cross Hampshire Open Gardens Scheme 2008. For more details, visit:

www.redcross.org.uk/opengardens

And some website news...

A Real Page Turner - the website is undergoing a much needed update. I'll be rearranging pages, deleting others and adding loads of new ones all to make the process of getting across more succinctly my whole approach to designing and making a garden. Thanks to Gary in Poole and Chris in Eastleigh for all their help.

A La Carte - I've been busy cooking up a series of easy to follow garden border 'recipes' based on some of the borders I've planted up. They'll be available as downloads shortly.

Freeze Frame for Hot Border - Winchester plantswoman, Jane Hughes, allowed me to photograph one of her borders each month this year. Check out the website shortly for Jane's commentary accompanying the photographic sequence from February to November this year. A fascinating project. Thanks, Jane!

Digging up the Past - a gallery of unused sketches and designs will be uploaded onto a new 'Plan Chest' area shortly. I'm putting up older plans (more than 5 years old), sketches and design tenders and talking about the stories behind the concepts and layouts.

Logo A Gogo - keen eyed colleagues and clients will also notice a shift to another logo in the new year!

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