



MORE FROM THE SHED – 8

Dear Gardeners,

The flowers that bloom in the spring Tra la!

Music! Are we going (flower) potty about music? What links a musical Beatle and a group of garden gnomes? Do plants prefer classical or rock music to encourage them to grow? And gardens on the Underground?

In most summers there is a rich array of musical feasts to enjoy, some of which take place in wonderful gardens



The gardens at Glyndebourne



the Cloisters at Iford Manor

But sadly this year there will be no such evenings filled with music. We are shut down. Still.

There has always been a link between music and gardens, it could be with musical statuary such as the 6- foot tall frog orchestra at Newton Surmaville House near Yeovil or this trio of musical cherubs in a French garden, Jardins de Quercy, who point the way to a concert stage.



Also found in gardens are some interesting musical instruments which run on water such as this one that can be played like a keyboard in an Italian garden.



And there are majestic musical organs such as this one at the Villa d'Este. The music is produced by pouring water into a chamber which forces air into a series of flute-like pipes. Work on the masonry structure began in 1566. The fountain was the first of its kind, and astonished everyone who heard it; when Pope Gregory XIII visited the villa in 1572, accompanied by his court of cardinals and princes, he insisted on inspecting the interior of the fountain, to learn if someone wasn't concealed inside making the music. In 2003, after a long and delicate restoration, the organ was able to play again. The original wind chamber and tank for creating whirlpools were retained, and the rest of the mechanism was replaced with new machinery in modern materials following the original principles. It now has 144 pipes, and is controlled by a cylinder, operated by the water, which can play four pieces of late Renaissance music for a total of four minutes. Follow the link via youtube to HEAR the music.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gGJumf6m44M>

And in India, Brindavan Gardens at Mysore pulse every night with musical fountains



And in France, more dancing musical fountains are at the Villa Ephrusi



A lovely story about the making of this garden was that Beatrice d'Ephrusi wanted to be INVOLVED. This meant that when the area that you can see in the photo on the right above was being designed, she got all her staff, armed them with swathes of blue material or bunches of green material and got them to play the part of the canals, pools and trees and moved them about until she liked the view

of her garden. The garden, designed by Aaron Messiah, was conceived in the form of a ship, Beatrice loved ships and sailors so attired her 30 gardeners in a quasi naval uniform with berets with red pompoms.

But I feel that one of the most fascinating musical features in any garden is that designed by Geoffrey Jellicoe at Shute House in 1970. Jellicoe devised a series of 8 chutes in the rill which runs through the garden which had 4 outlets that could produce an harmonic chord. The sound of the water at each of the small waterfalls was controlled by a series of copper chambers of varying dimensions.



However, we might not have room for musical dancing fountains but we can bring music into our gardens, just a series of terracotta plant pots can be hung and 'tuned' to make a scale.



Music to grow plants?



Can you get your plants to grow better by playing music to them? Lady Salisbury claimed to be the one who encouraged Prince Charles to TALK to his plants but does MUSIC really make a difference?

Dr George Milstein, a dentist who became a horticulturist, believed that all plants needed to grow was water, sunlight, nutrients and a swinging-sixties soundtrack.



He produced an album in 1970 'Music to grow Plants' which had a series of electronically embedded notes in the music – producing a high-pitched whistling sound which acted on the plant growth patterns. He suggested serenading the plants for 45' a day as this would keep their pores open longer and wider allowing a greater exchange of air.

More scientific experiments were carried out in 1962 by Dr. T. C. Singh, head of the Botany Department at Annamalia University, he experimented with the effect of classical musical sounds on the growth rate of plants. He found that balsam plants grew at a rate that accelerated by 20% in height and 72% in biomass when exposed to music.

Canadian engineer Eugene Canby exposed wheat to the Baroque sounds and lilting dance rhythms of J.S. Bach's violin sonata and observed a 66% increase in yield. And in the 1970s a group of university students played groups of plants different genres of music. Plants exposed to Hayden, Beethoven, Brahms and Schubert grew towards and entwined themselves around the speakers. Another plant group grew away from a speaker that played rock music. In layer studies plants were played Led Zeppelin and Jimi Hendrix- abnormal vertical growth and smaller leaves and plants leant away from the rock music source.



QUIZ

Last time I asked you what are the main ingredients of the following dishes?

1. Tarte Normande 2. Pesto 3. Dhal 4. Tzatziki 5. Guacamole 6. Spanish Tortilla 7. Tebouleh 8. Allo gobi

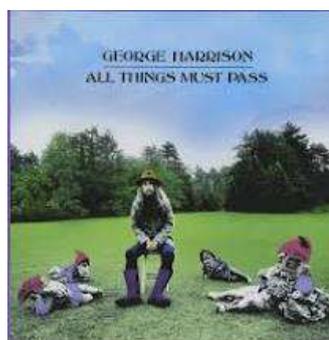
And the answers: 1. Apples, 2. Basil, 3. Lentils, 4. Cucumber, 5. Avocado, 6. Potato, 7. Parsley, 8. Potato and cauliflower.

A twist this week – here are some answers but what were the gardening-based questions?

1. They are exquisitely dainty and hate dirt and disorder'
2. *'My garden will never make me famous
I'm a horticultural ignoramus.'*
3. The more absurd the better.
4. If he got a common toad and put it in his frame.
5. Enid Blyton in 1940 to help the war effort.
6. Green Park in 1826 and Regent's Park in 1835.

All Questions and gripping explanations in the next Blog.

WHY DOES THE LP COVER FOR GEORGE HARRISON'S 'ALL THINGS MUST PASS' SHOW HIM WITH GARDEN GNOMES?



Let's start with a bit about the history of gnomes. Garden gnomes are the marmite of garden statues. Until recently they were banned at Chelsea but they are firm favourites with many people. It was the Germans who first had the idea. The garden Museum has several interesting gnomes such as this one from the mid 30s from Germany



Gnomes originated in Germany and arrived in England thanks to Sir Charles Isham who brought back some in the mid-19th century and installed them in his garden at Lamport Hall in Northamptonshire. He regarded these gnomes as having some religious significance. He was a spiritualist and believed that these gnomes were supernatural beings. The only gnome in his collection which survives is one dating from the 1840s nick-named Lampy , and the original is still on display at Lamport Hall – insured for £1 million . This is a replica.



Garden gnomes were further popularized when Sir Frank Crisp, the owner of the second largest collection of garden gnomes in the UK opened his Friar Park, Henley-on-Thames estate to the public at least once a week from 1910-1919. It was here where garden enthusiasts and visitors from around the world perhaps saw garden gnomes for the first time. And it was this house and garden that was bought by the Beatle George Harrison in 1970 and hence the link with gnomes on the cover of his LP. The garden which consists of numerous caves, underground passages, grottoes and an Alpine rock garden is no longer open to the public and visitors can now only visit the gates of this mansion and admire the splendour of this house and its surrounding areas. However, the Gnome Reserve in Devon IS open to the public and there you can see over 2,000 gnomes. Visitors are encouraged to borrow gnome caps and fishing rods so they blend in and for the many photographic opportunities. Gnomes had been banned at Chelsea for 100 years but in 2013 the RHS decided not only to allow gnomes in but to grant them VIP status. There were “best-dressed” gnomes decorated by celebrity fans and 150 gnomes were lined up for inspection by the Queen



Gnomes have popped up everywhere including in this front garden in France .



Gardens which crop up in unexpected places

We looked at a garden above a railway station in Paris – here is a garden on the Underground in London



FINALLY, A POEM.

I came across this one by Wendy Cope and it reminded me of the music that is sometimes played on Thursday nights at 8pm and how, hopefully, one day we WILL be able to go anywhere we choose.

New Season

No coats today. Buds bulge on chestnut tree,
And on the doorstep of a big, old House
A young man stands and plays his flute.

I watch the silver notes fly up
And circle in the blue sky above the traffic,
Travelling where they will.

And suddenly this paving stone
Midway between my front door and the bus stop

Is a starting point.

From here I can go anywhere I choose.

KEEP SAFE AND GOOD GARDENING