

Notes from a Volunteer Gardener June 2011-January 2012

The summer gardening was driven by the need to have the park looking good for the numerous events that took place from **June- October**. Armed Forces Day led us to have the formal rose garden looking pristine, including the herbaceous planting, Jurassic Garden, Chubb Hill borders and rockeries. For Yorkshire in Bloom judging in **July** the lily pool area was weeded, and the entire judging route was kept in tip top condition. The bedding displays got a boost from a feed of seaweed. At the end of the month Union Steps rockery was weeded, and the long herbaceous borders tidied.

The big push in **August** was to prepare the route for the Britain in Bloom judges, and although they spent only 10 minutes judging the park every area was immaculately presented, crisp edges, weed free and flowering away. Stunning. We finished the month by weeding all herbaceous areas and rose beds again, Peony Steps, Jurassic area, back of museum and rose pergolas.

Back to the lily pool in **September** where we are running a competition for the biggest Fat Hen. Herbaceous borders needed regular attention. The warmth and rain kept the weeds growing fast in the rose beds. A few of us were lucky enough to go to the Yorkshire in Bloom Award Ceremony in Harrogate, an amazing day. Feedback from the public during the summer was fantastic, both verbally and in our comments book. 'Amazing park', 'Beautifully maintained', 'There's nothing like this in Nottingham', 'Gobsmacked'. This is all down to teamwork and partnership working with the park staff.

In **Oct.** we again visited rockeries, herbaceous borders and lily pool, cleared summer bedding and planted up the floral clock.

Plenty of work to do in **Nov....**clearing the half moons, weeding Jurassic

Garden & rockeries; the floral clock & sun dial area were pressure washed.

The Commemorative Garden was prepared for the Armistice Day Service. The aucuba has taken quite a knock over 2 hard winters so we pruned a lot of the dead wood out, probably more to do when new growth starts in spring.

The twin herbaceous borders were cleared of all plants prior to redesigning, these were used elsewhere in the park where possible. It was a good community project working with the school kids on the crocus river, & getting feedback from the public as they passed. More crocuses were planted in the South Seas Garden and near the play area. Climbers were tied in and all rockeries tidied up.

We helped to clear and drain the lily pool for it's winter maintenance in **Dec.** which involved a bit of ice-breaking to gain access.

The twin Chubb Hill rockeries were cleared prior to replanting.

We took a 4 week break over Xmas and restarted in mid **January** by pruning the buddleia and helping to remove the old roses from the formal rose garden.

The park has looked splendid throughout the autumn and winter...the grass was cut regularly right into December and looked really smart, there's so much to look at...the white bark of the betula, coloured stems of cornus and rubus, and so much in flower from early January...galanthus, winter aconite (Eranthis Hyemalis), iris reticulata, mahonia, viburnum varieties, hamamelis, prunus subhirtella autumnalis which flowers from October to spring, euphorbia colouring up.

Returning to the crocus planted near the play area...we wrote a message with the bulbs and were so looking forward to it's emerging, but what we didn't know was that a small army of squirrels must have been watching from

the tree tops, and in January they descended and dug up and scooped the lot!
Checking of the nest boxes has been started, also weeding of the herbaceous
borders prior to topping up the mulch later.

The volunteer gardening hours for the last twelve months are 1422.