



Midsummer Magic at Whatley Manor: Blooms, Beasts, and Botanical Wonders!

Remember how May brought that initial flush of early summer at Whatley Manor, with tulips dazzling the borders and curious creatures like the polka-dot bee fly adding a wild spark? Well, as the days truly stretch out and the sun warms our beautiful grounds, Whatley Manor's gardens are absolutely bursting with midsummer magic! From show-stopping roses to tiny, intricate leaf art and some fascinating garden guests, there's always something new to discover.

The Rambling Rector Steals the Scene!

Remember our winter efforts, carefully guiding those climbing rose tendrils over the walls? All that artistic pruning has paid off spectacularly! Our 'Rambling Rector' roses have truly stolen the show, cascading down the walls in a breathtaking display. And the scent! It's absolutely divine, filling the air with a sweet, classic rose fragrance that transports you. It's a joyful testament to patience and a bit of creative coaxing, and they are looking magnificent.



Nature's Tiny Jewels: The Lady's Mantle

Step a little closer and you'll be amazed by the delicate beauty of Lady's Mantle (*Alchemilla mollis*). Ever noticed those perfect, glistening water droplets perched on the leaves? It's as if the leaves are hydrophobic, repelling the water and holding it like tiny, liquid pearls. This isn't just pretty; it's a clever trick of nature! Lady's Mantle is known for its ability to exude water droplets from its leaves, especially in the morning, a process called guttation. Historically, these glistening drops were collected and believed to have mystical properties, hence the "lady's mantle" name!



Our Striking Air Plant

Amongst the vibrant chaos, we're celebrating a bittersweet beauty: our flowering air plant. It's put on an absolutely stunning show, an exotic burst of colour and form. While we're sad to say that it's monocarpic – meaning it flowers once and then, regrettably, dies – we've documented its fleeting glory with some wonderful pictures. It's a powerful reminder of nature's cycles and the transient beauty of so many of our botanical treasures.



Battling the Scarlet Menace: The Lily Beetle

Our ongoing garden adventures always bring challenges, and the vibrant red lily beetle is one we're constantly managing. You'll spot them with their bright scarlet wing cases, making them quite distinctive. Did you know they can make a squeaking sound when disturbed or picked up? It's a defensive mechanism, produced by rubbing parts of their body together. While they might look striking, these beetles can be quite destructive to lilies and fritillaries, so our team is always on the lookout to protect these beautiful plants.



Intricate Art: The Raspberry Leaf Miner

Nature's artistry isn't always grand; sometimes it's found in the smallest details. We've spotted some fascinating patterns on our raspberry leaves, created by the raspberry leaf miner (*Stigmella aurella*). These tiny larvae tunnel between the upper and lower surfaces of the leaf, creating intricate, winding "mines" that look almost like delicate silver tracery. While a destructive pest, the patterns they create are surprisingly beautiful and a testament to the complex world of insects.



A New Marvel: The Hummingbird Hawkmoth!

Just when we thought the polka-dot bee fly was impressive, we had another incredible visitor this week: a hummingbird hawkmoth! We managed to snap a video of this truly remarkable creature. With its rapid wing beat and incredibly long proboscis, it hovers and feeds much like a hummingbird, darting from flower to flower. It's fascinating to watch and another fantastic example of the diverse and often surprising wildlife that thrives here in our Whatley Manor gardens.



Not every endeavour yields fruit, mind you. Our attempts with the 'holly sport' – you might remember our hopeful experiments – haven't quite blossomed as we'd hoped. Sometimes, nature simply reminds us that some things are best left to their own devices, a gentle lesson in letting go!

On a more successful, if slightly comical, note, we recently relocated a rather substantial banana plant into the hot borders. It was quite the operation, and I daresay our team felt a bit like a troop of monkeys swinging through the foliage to get it into place! But it's settled in beautifully, adding an exciting, exotic touch.

Stay tuned for our late summer update as the garden continues to flourish – there's always more to share from the wonderful world of Whatley Manor!