

Press Release

Summer 2009



A Touch of the Exotic in Kent

Hole Park Gardens, in Rolvenden is well known for its stunning display of English bluebells in spring; however, during summer the garden's tropical border takes centre stage, producing an equally stunning display as the many rare and unusual plants burst into colour.

Planted three years ago, the border thrives in sunshine and can be seen at its best in summer and early autumn. The border can be found nestled against an old wall and the vibrant plants, which include *cannas*, *daturas* (angel's trumpets) and unusual *Solanum laciniatum* (kangaroo apple), stand out beautifully against the mellow bricks.

The striking border is an ever changing feature and every year head gardener Quentin Stark adds new, unusual plants to delight visitors. In 2007 the border became home to *Salvia involucrata* 'Bethellii' whose strong pink flowers complement the vivid dark blue and black of *Salvia guarantica* already growing; whilst 2008 saw the introduction of the *Sparmannia africana* (house lime) known for its large hairy leaves and white flowers with colourful centres. Quentin is busy at work and added interest this year includes a rare

Trachycarpus princeps palm tree and a Ensete ventricosum 'Maurelii' (red abyssinian banana tree) which has beautiful red tinted leaves. Also added this year, which is rather unusual for a tropical border, is a lovely patch of pumpkins which will be lovely flowering ground cover until October, when the vibrant fruit will begin to appear.

The plants found in Hole Park's exotic border have many wonderful features, from strong bright colours, striking flowers and powerful scents to soothing sounds, created by the wind as it gently rustles through the bamboos and grasses.

Afternoon tea's with home made cakes are available and there is a plant stall selling a varied selection of plants.

Hole Park Gardens are open every Wednesday and Thursday until 31 October 2009, from 2pm to 6pm. Admission is £5.00 for adults and 50p for children.

Group bookings are welcome at any time between April and October please contact Hole Park to discuss your requirements 01580 241344.

For more information on Hole Park, please visit www.holepark.com or call 01580 241344.

For press information including images, please contact Caroline Edmunds of Pennington PR on 01892 616647 or email her at caroline@penningtonpr.com

Editors' Notes

1. Hole Park is situated 4 miles west of Tenterden on the B2086 between Rolvenden and Cranbrook.
2. Hole Park is open to the public every Wednesday and Thursday from 23 March until 31 October between 2pm and 6pm, and on Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays from 23 March to 29 June between 2pm and 6pm. Admission is £5 for adults and 50p for children.
3. Self service afternoon teas with delicious homemade cakes are available at the gardens throughout the season, and a plant stall operates on Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays.
4. A family owned estate, Hole Park has been owned by the Barham family for the past four generations. The gardens manage to combine formalised gardens with natural woodland. They cover some 15 acres and were developed, laid out and planted by Colonel Barham, the great-grandfather of the present owner, in the years between the two World Wars.
Hole Park is now owned and managed by Edward Barham, and much of what can be seen today is due to the contribution made by Edward's father, David Barham, who has looked after the estate for the past 45 years and still takes an active interest in its future today.
The garden is renowned for beautifully clipped topiary and great yew hedges which provide shelter for the lawns and splendid borders. The walled garden contains mixed borders, pools and a water garden. Marvellous climbing plants also provide a fine display here. The natural garden has bulbs, azaleas, rhododendrons and flowering shrubs.
There is a woodland bluebell walk and, in the autumn, the foliage colour is spectacular. Hole Park has many fine trees and the garden is surrounded by superb parkland with wonderful views across the Kentish Weald.

Formal gardens surround the house. Walls and yew hedges, which are a particular feature of Hole Park, shelter broad expanses of lawns. Clipped entirely by hand, it is claimed that nowhere in the county can yews be seen trimmed to greater precision. Fountains and a swimming pool, the egg pond, the walled rose garden, herbaceous borders and wrought iron gates all contribute to make a series of gardens within a garden, united by the lawns, while outwards there are lovely views of the Weald over the surrounding 250 acres of finely timbered parkland.

At the rear of the house, beyond a beech hedge measuring six feet thick and 12 feet high, lies the Policy, massed with daffodils in April with its heathers, flowering trees and shrubs, banks of rhododendrons and its azaleas. Amongst the trees can be seen collections of birch, juniper, cypresses and fine oaks. Rhododendrons, camellias, magnolias and primulas are all here in abundance and further plantings are now being made to adjoining woodlands.