

# Managing the Wild Garden – a series of 3 seasonal workshops

Sunday 21st April, Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> May and Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> July  
10am – 3.30pm

with Debbie Wilson and Sue Mabberley

at Nant-y-Bedd, Fforest Coal Pit, Abergavenny, NP7 7LY



In this series of three workshops we will be looking both at the philosophy and rationale behind wild gardening and at the practicalities of seasonal tasks. Why should we be wild gardening anyway? How do we cut down on expensive instant gardening, use sustainable materials, encourage soil health, increase biodiversity of plant, bird and insect-life and develop sustainable plant communities? What can we leave to its own devices and when do we have to step in and intervene? What do we want our garden to look like and how does wild gardening fit with the need for controlled design.

The first workshop is in early spring. Bulbs will be coming up and there'll be primroses and bluebells in the woods. Perennials are beginning to emerge again, self-seeders are beginning to germinate and it's time to sow seed too. We will look at different types of plants and the early stages of natural succession, growing plants from seed, using self-seeders in the wild garden, and the pros and cons of growing natives. We'll be going into Sue's potting shed and greenhouses and looking at what is germinating in the garden.

The second workshop is in late spring/early summer. Cow parsley and biennials like foxgloves are flowering, seedlings need potting on. It's warming up and, even if there's little rain, things are growing fast. In a few weeks the garden will be in full flower. We'll be looking at later stages of natural succession, that thorny problem of weeding, how to build plant communities and include edibles in your planting. In the garden we'll be looking at Sue's edible forest, the cottage garden and the riverside.

The third workshop is in high summer with a glance at autumn. By July, the peak flowering will be starting to wane, foliage is at its fullest and we often get wind and rain. The garden may be beginning to get out of control and shapeless! We will look at deadheading, seed-collecting and cutting back, choosing plants to prolong the flowering season through into the autumn, at meadows, mowing regimes and the advantages and disadvantages of planting straight into grass, and even think about autumn planning and managing change for the following year. We'll be looking mainly at the meadow, the cottage garden and Sue's potager.

Although this is a series of three workshops each one considers different aspects of Wild Gardening and explores different areas of the garden here at Nant-y-bedd. So, if you are just interested in one particular aspect and/or can't spare the time to do all three, then that's fine. Each workshop can stand alone. There's a discount if you book all three.

## The series of workshops will cover:

- Understanding different types of plants, their growth, habitats and place in natural succession
- Growing plants from seed and managing self-seeders

- To weed or not to weed and the winter die-down
- Planting into an established base
- Creating legibility and developing your own style

**Level of expertise required?** some gardening experience an advantage but not absolutely necessary.

**Bring with you** Sensible shoes and outdoor wear.

**Go away with** lots of ideas to try out and a pocketful of seeds collected from the garden.

**Booking a place** Places are limited to 10 to ensure maximum opportunity for discussion.

**Cost £65 per day, or book all three for £175** (plus booking fee)

The course will be led by Sue Mabberley and Debbie Wilson. Sue has a First Class Honours degree in Environmental Systems, has professionally devised and delivered practical environmental training courses and most importantly has gardened wildly and enthusiastically at Nant-y-Bedd Garden for more than 43 years!

Debbie Wilson is not a professional gardener but she has spent the past 12 years enthusiastically trying out as many varieties of wild gardening as she could find.