

teasel gardens

CHESHIRE & MANCHESTER
GARDEN DESIGN

The Gardens at Willow Wood Hospice

January to early February 2015

Prunus 'Autumnalis' (below), a shrub form of ornamental cherry is in flower at the moment around the pond. This variety flowers between autumn and spring when mild conditions prevail. The wet, wild and mild last few months allowed plants to stretch out their autumn display. The relative warmth has sparked the interest of spring bulbs and blossom on a number of shrubs to time the display of their varieties with those in the south of the country!



Jasminum nudiflorum (left) has started flowering in the raised borders the below the kitchen garden. Over the next five to ten years these young shrubby climbers will be trained into trailing organic topiary that, each winter through to early spring, will provide a glorious, billowing hit of spectrum yellow, against dark chocolate soil. These reliable winter gems are planted near two other fabulous winter flowering plants, the *Lonicera x purpussii* 'Winter Beauty', a beautifully scented, winter flowering honeysuckle (in bloom now) and three varieties of *Helleborus orientalis*, about to flower.



We have cut back their exotic, palmate leaves to allow the blooms to be more easily appreciated and make way for fresh green foliage in spring. If you pass these whilst outside, it is well worth gently turning their shy heads towards the light, to see their beautiful faces. Their flowers can last well into spring and the varieties settling into their surroundings at Willow Wood will warm the borders with their yellow, pink and deepest purple hues.

(the flower buds of one of the hellebores before the leaves were cut off.)

Spring flowering primulas (below) and their cousin, the polyanthus, have decided to start flowering now rather than wait for spring. They can be found dotted through the gardens (and into the woodland walk this spring, thanks to a kind donation of one hundred native primulas, by a voluntarily maintained woodland in the east of England).



The borders are being gradually cut back, weeded and forked over, leaving certain features we feel still look lovely, such as the grass *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Gracillimus', or the seedheads of the sedums and cardoon until early spring, unless the winds break them before then.



The sculptural seedhead of the cardoon, *Cynara cardunculus*

Relatively few shrubs and climbers require pruning this winter, as they have yet to establish themselves and put out much growth. We have planted lots of daffodils, tulips and crocus through the patients' border and wherever they can be easily seen through windows elsewhere in the sensory and tranquil gardens. We hope to continue expanding the bulb displays each year.

A few areas in the kitchen garden are being planted up at the moment with various summer fruits, including raspberries, whilst in the woodland areas, all twigs and branches collected and stored for several years, have been put into a holding area in the car park to be shredded in February. The chippings will be put back into the garden on informal paths and mulches around trees.



Our kitchen garden with greenhouse and woodland walk (on the left). The three tall steel posts have climbing rose 'Paul's Lemon Pillar' establishing themselves around the lower half. They will eventually cover the the steels.

While the gardens may appear quiet at first glance, the metallic, earthy, tones throughout the borders, have their chance to shine.

The natural and crafted sculptural details, punctuating colours of the primulas and jasmines, deep pine greens, scents of the flowering evergreen shrubs *Sarcococca* and *Mahonia 'Charity'*, (not forgetting the sublimely fragrant *Lonicera purpussii*.) allow the backbone of the borders to shimmer. Chrome skies reflect in the water features and echo through the silvers of the furry lambs' ears (*Stachys byzantina*), *Melianthus major*, *Phlomis italica*, rosemary and lavender. Scent, colour, form and texture abound.

