

# Wisley's Alpine Log

By Paul Cumbleton

2010: Log 15...09 August



Colour can still be found around the Department though it is at a premium in high summer. Out on the rock garden, *Origanum* 'Emma Stanley' is giving a superb show:



This *Origanum* has spread over the years to make a substantial clump about a metre across and is a real eye-catcher





Warmer and brighter in colour, this *Castilleja* really stands out too. I think this one is *Castilleja applegatei*, but might be *C. hispida*:



But undoubtedly the hottest colour around right now is this *Verbena peruviana* flowering in one of the sand beds:





Some of the *Silene* are also good at this time of the year and a reliable old favourite is *Silene schafta*:



The pale coloured form called 'Ralph Haywood' makes a nice contrast to the usual dark pink.

Out at the sand beds I am pleased to report that my combination of putting shade netting buried just under the gravel and planting some cacti continues to deter Sunny the cat from digging in the bed. She still manages to squash herself into one corner to sleep with a very spiny cactus as a back rest! But otherwise she is no longer causing a problem here. Those cacti I put in seem to have settled in OK and continue to put out an odd flower or two even now. This one is *Chamaelobiva* 'Ralph's Orange':





It will be interesting to see how they survive next winter.

Cooler in colour but looking wonderful falling over the edge of a bed into the path is this *Campanula versicolor*.





In wet crevices next to one of our pools I have put the little creeping *Mimulus luteus*. This plant often does not last long but is easily and quickly grown from seed, flowering in its first year:



Bulb re-potting is now in full swing and I am currently doing the winter-growing South Africans. However there are lots of other jobs also occupying us. At the very top of the rock garden is a bed under an oak tree that had become very tired and rather overgrown. We have recently been clearing it with a view to starting afresh with new planting next year, once we have cleared it of weeds:





First week in August is also when we cut our alpine meadow. This year different equipment was used which reduced the time and effort required significantly.





One job that gets done every morning is clearing the pools, to remove any rubbish that has been thrown in, leaves, any blanket weed or excessive growth from other plants. Doing this every day is our secret for the ponds always looking so clear! Here are trainees Joe and Melissa taking their turn at this task:



Finally, with the south-east having one of the longest droughts for many years, watering has become a major consumer of our time. So this is one sight that has become extremely common:

