WELCOME TO BLOG NUMBER 15

APOLOGIES THAT YOU HAVEN’T HAD ONE OF THESE BLOGS FOR A WEEK OR TWO, WE HAVE BEEN REDECORATING THE KITCHEN.

I SWEAR I WILL NEVER AGAIN UNDERTAKE TO DO IT AGAIN, NEXT TIME WE WILL CALL IN THE PROFESSIONALS. WE HAVE HAD A FORTNIGHT OF UTTER CHAOS GETTING IN ONE ANOTHERS WAY WHILE I WAS PAINTING, AND ANGELA WAS TRYING TO COOK. ALL THAT IS NOW BEHIND US AND I MUST SAY THE RESULTS DO LOOK VERY GOOD.

YOU ARE IN FOR A FESTIVAL OF ROSES THIS TIME WITH SOME BEAUTIFUL IMAGES OF RAY’S ROSES. SADLY HE WAS TAKEN ILL AGAIN OVER THE WEEKEND AND WAS CARTED OFF TO HOSPITAL WITH PAINS IN HIS CHEST AND ARMS, WE HAVE HEARD THROUGH THE GRAPEVINE THAT IT IS PROBABLY MUSCULAR RATHER THAN ANYTHING MORE SERIOUS, SO BEST WISHES FOR A SPEEDY RECOVERY RAY, AND TRY NOT TO DO SO MUCH HARD WORK UP AT THE ALLOTMENT! ACT YOUR AGE!

JEREMY
THIS HT ROSE WAS BRED IN THE UK BY ONE OF RAY’S FRIENDS, AND WILL BE RELEASED AS ‘RAY THE ROSE’!

THIS FLORIBUNDA WAS BRED BY RAY’S WIFE PAULINE, AND WILL BE RELEASED VERY SOON AS ‘SUFFOLK PUNCH’

TWO FLORIBUNDAS, ON THE LEFT, ‘WILD ROVER’ AKA ‘HARRY POTTER’ RAISED IN NORTHERN IRELAND BY COLIN DICKSON, AND ON THE RIGHT ONE OF MY FAVOURITE ROSES ‘TICKLED PINK’ BRED BY GARETH FLOWER.
TWO HT ROSES ‘SUNNY SUNDAYS’ ON THE LEFT BRED BY JOHN SMITH IN THE US AND ON THE RIGHT ‘BUXOM BEAUTY’ RAISED IN GERMANY BY KORDES

‘SIMPLY SALLY’, A MINIFLORA/SHRUB RAISED BY HARKNESS

‘FOR YOUR EYES ONLY’, ONE OF A SERIES OF ROSES WITH THE VERY DISTINCTIVE CENTRE, A HULTHEMA FLORIBUNDA BRED BY CHRIS WARNER IN THE UK
TWO MINIATURES ON THE LEFT, ‘BEES KNEES’ BRED IN THE US BY KEITH ZARY, ON THE RIGHT IRRESISTABLE BY DEE BENNETT AGAIN FROM THE US

‘GOLDEN BEAUTY’ ON THE RIGHT BRED BY KORDES IN GERMANY, AND ON THE LEFT, ‘SIMPLY HEAVEN’ BY COLIN DICKSON FROM NORTHERN IRELAND
‘GLOWING AMBER’ ON THE LEFT, A MINIATURE BY GEORGE MANDER FROM CANADA, AND ON THE RIGHT, ‘PLAYGIRL’ BY RALPH MOORE FROM THE US

AND FINALLY, ‘CLIFF RICHARD’, A FLORIBUNDA FROM THE UK RAISED BY VAN GEEST

THANKS RAY FOR SHARING YOUR PASSION, AND GET WELL SOON
NOW FOR SOMETHING EXOTIC FROM OUR GARDEN, THESE STRANGE FLOWERS HAIL FROM AUSTRALIA, AND ARE KANGAROO PAWS, THEY HAVE SURVIVED OUTSIDE FOR SEVERAL YEARS NOW WITH A BIT OF PROTECTION IN VERY COLD WEATHER

“ANIGOZANTHUS BICOLOR”

SOMETHING MUCH MORE PROSAIC THIS BEAUTIFUL HONEYSUCKLE IS GROWING BY OUR BACK OOR AND IT’S SCENT IS AMAZING
MY CACTI ARE STILL DOING THEIR STUFF, THE PINK ONE SHOWED SIGNS OF A FLOWER BUD WEEKS AGO THEN SUDDENLY ONE AFTERNOON IT PRODUCED THIS HUGE PINK FLOWER;--WELL WORTH THE WAIT

FROM A BUD LIKE THIS TO THIS OVERNIGHT

ANOTHER CACTUS WORTH THE WAIT, THESE HUGE FLOWERS SUDDENLY OPENED ONE EVENING, AND WERE OVER BY THE NEXT MORNING. THEY HAVE A VERY LONG STEM REACHING DOWN TO THEIR OVARIES, AND AS THEY ARE WHITE AND FLOWER LATE AFTERNOON/EVENING, THEY MUST BE POLLINATED BY MOTHS
Eucalyptus or gum trees in the myrtle (Myrtaceae) family

Eucalyptus are evergreen trees from Australasia. A large number of species. They will grow throughout the year if the weather is suitable. They are the tallest broad leaved trees up to 100m tall and very fast growing, to 30m in 5 years, in the tropics they can grow 10m in a year! That makes them wonderful trees for fuel in Africa etc. BUT not wonderful trees in urban gardens.

We visited some huge forests of enormous trees in SW Australia and they were magnificent. One place we stayed had a large dining table made from a single, vertical slice from a Jarrah tree. It was beautiful, a lovely, dark red wood and it must have been about 6 m long by 1.5 m wide. The Jarrah are endemic to SW Australia and our land lady told us that they called them 'widow-makers', as they were prone to dropping a branch unexpectedly!

Eucalyptus are wonderful trees in the right place, which is not in a small town garden.

Our back garden has been completely overshadowed by a neighbours eucalyptus about 20 metres tall, and I must have spent hours collecting bits of twig, small branches, bark and fallen leaves littering our garden. Last week it was felled. HOORAY.

I hate to see a mature tree killed but on this occasion I was delighted, and I am slowly adjusting to how light our garden is now. Each time I walk out of our back door I am surprised at the difference it has made. The plants growing out there must be quite pleased too because with such growth it was, a very thirsty tree, sucking up water by the gallon.
going......you can see the lumberjacks ropes etc. Fascinating to see them at work, such skill.

GONE!

Gone! Look at all that sky and sunshine.

HOORAY
THE MATING HABITS OF ORCHIDS

The orchid family is one of the most prolific in the floral world with some 28,000 different species, and then many more different cultivars that have either been selected by man, or developed in the wild by natural hybridisation. Many are extremely promiscuous, and within any local population there will be dozens of different varieties. This often makes identification extremely difficult, and on one of our plant hunting trips in Crete we found about 35 different species of bee orchids on one hilltop alone, with hundreds of slight variations within each species.

Many orchids use mimicry to attract pollinating insects and this is particularly the case with bee orchids, many also have a very cunning trick to ensure cross pollination; their pollen is often contained in a sticky sac called a pollinium which glues itself to the back of the visiting insect which then flies off to another plant ensuring that the pollen is distributed far and wide. The seed produced is then contained in an elongated seed case holding millions of seeds that are as fine as dust and blown about by the wind. The seeds are so tiny that they cannot contain any food reserve to nourish the developing seed. Instead they often rely on the presence of a fungus to be present and they form a symbiotic relationship with the fungus to provide it with nutrients.

I could go on about orchids for hours, but on the next page you will find some examples of what I have been trying to explain.
THIS BEAUTIFUL BEE ORCHID WAS FOUND BY A FRIEND OF OURS IN A CHURCHYARD IN ESSEX, AS YOU CAN SEE, THE BULBOUS LIP LOOKS VERY LIKE A BUMBLE BEE, AND ALTHOUGH THE BEE ISN’T REWARDED WITH NECTAR, IT IS ATTRACTED BY IT’S SHAPE AND MAY ATTEMPT TO MATE WITH THE FLOWER, AND THE STICKY SAC THEN ATTACHES TO THE BEE

THIS ORCHID ABOVE REALLY TAKES MIMICRY TO NEW HEIGHTS, IT IS CALLED THE WARTY HAMMER ORCHID FROM AUSTRALIA! THE FLY ON THE LEFT ABOVE IS ABOUT TO ATTEMPT TO MATE WITH THE BLACKISH HAIRY LUMP OF THE ORCHID. WHEN IT DOES, THE WHOLE FLOWER SPRINGS SHUT WITH THE POLLINIUM ON THE RIGHT STICKING FIRMLY TO THE FLY’S BACK. IT ISN’T ONLY ORCHIDS THAT GET UP TO TRICKERY OUR HUMBLE WILD CARROT ON THE RIGHT OFTEN HAS A RED FLOWER IN THE CENTRE HOPING TO ATTRACT POLLINATORS
THE ALLOTMENT IS GOING FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH, THIS WAS ONE MORNING’S HARVEST, AND I HAVEN’T SHOWN ALL THE RASPBERRIES, REDCURRANTS AND BLACKCURRANTS, THE DAHLIAS AND GLADIOLI ARE COMING ON NICELY TOO. WHAT A SHAME WE HAVEN’T GOT A PROPER SHOW THIS YEAR. WE HAVE THOUGH GOT A VIRTUAL SHOW AND THE NEXT BLOG WILL BE DEVOTED TO YOUR ENTRIES.

STOP PRESS
RAY IS NOW HOME AGAIN, STILL IN A LOT OF PAIN AND DISCOMFORT, BUT AT LEAST IT DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE ANYTHING TOO SERIOUS