

**** Spetchley Park Gardens Press Release ****



Successful 11th Specialist Plant Fair
at Spetchley Park Gardens

Spetchley Park Gardens' annual Specialist Plant Fair was held on Sunday 13th April and attracted over 1,200 people despite gloomy weather predictions. Those that attended were a mixture of pre booked tickets, 3 pre booked coach groups and visitors turning up on the day.

Organised by Chris Pattison, the stalls on the lawn in front of Spetchley Park had many different plants and garden accessories to view from more than 30 specialist nurseries and suppliers and the addition of RHS talks and free guided tours of the Gardens were very popular. The tours were very well attended, so much so that extra guides were drafted in. The afternoon talk by Chris Beardshaw in the RHS marquee proved popular and lasted nearly two hours.

Amongst the plants available from suppliers from around England and Wales were rare and new varieties seldom offered by Garden Centres. These included a wide range of Japanese Maples, Trilliums, Arisaemas, Ornamental Grasses, Waterplants, Ferns, Tender Perennials etc.

Henry Berkeley said “A lot of effort goes into the event to make it enjoyable for plant lovers and ordinary visitors alike. It was a very happy day and we received a large number of compliments about the Gardens too, especially now when so many spring flowers are out”

The event will be back next year, so if you missed it in 2008 look out for it next year in 2009 by looking at www.spetchleygardens.co.uk

The historic Gardens are open 11am – 5 pm from Wednesday to Sunday (including Bank Holiday Mondays) until October, when they will be open on weekends only.

Note for Editors:

The history of Spetchley covers the burning down of the original Tudor house on the eve of the Battle of Worcester in 1651 to prevent Cromwell from using it as his headquarters.

The two Victorian horticulturists Ellen Willmott (of Warley Place in Essex) and Rose Berkeley redesigned the gardens shaping them very much as they are seen today. Sir Edward Elgar used to stay and compose in Gardener’s Cottage within the Gardens, taking inspiration from Spetchley’s pines to write the *Dream of Gerontius*.

Spetchley was earmarked for Churchill and the Cabinet should the Blitz have proved too effective and later in WW2 *the* American 8th Air Force used Spetchley as a rest and recuperation base during when one of the Cedar Trees was reduced in height by a low flying American pilot flew his ‘plane into it – happily both pilot and ‘plane survived and the tree can still be seen today.

For more information and opportunities to film at Spetchley or interview the Berkeley Family please contact

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