

Ray Smith

IT WAS NO ORDINARY GARDEN....

Hello. Welcome to *Gardeners Weird*; the alternative programme dealing with alternative gardening.

As you can see, I am trying to remove a rose. I think it must have been here for quite a time. The roots are very deep. Once I get it out, I will chop it up and put it in the council wheelie bin.

While I struggle with this, we're going to visit the garden of Jilly Tilley in the Isles of Scilly, who has the National Collection of Dandelions.

Welcome back. We've got quite a few dandelions, but we can't match that!

I'm now down at the Japanese garden. I was wondering what to plant here. I asked my neighbour and he recommended Japanese Knotweed. Apparently, it grows well in any soil and needs no maintenance. I was quite surprised with his input. He has never shown any interest in what we're doing here.

Now we're off the Ben Dover in Andover. He and his wife Eileen run the only British aphid farm.

Welcome back. It's amazing what those little creatures consume!

You may remember what it was like when we moved here to *Short Field*. There was the lawn that went all the way down to the rose garden, with herbaceous borders both sides that were full of flowers. We soon dug those up. As you can see, we have replaced them with deadly nightshade and couch grass. But how to deal with the lawn? I had an idea. I contacted the local infants' school and told them what we were doing. I invited them to bring the children for an experiential project and asked for them to bring their own little forks and spades. I plied them with sugar-loaded drinks and loads of sweets that were full of E-numbers. They were soon attacking the lawn with venom (once they had stopped attacking each other – and me!) and it soon looked more in keeping with the rest of the garden. If you're thinking of trying it; a word of warning. You will only get the one chance. The parents now won't let their little darlings anywhere near me and my garden. Oh, and the teacher's been suspended.

As you can see, I'm down by the pond. I'm very pleased with how the hemlock is growing. The pond was another problem we had to deal with. It was full of frogs,

newts and all manner of creepy-crawlies. What I've done is to buy a couple of piranha fish. They seem to be making short work of the inhabitants. They're very inquisitive. If I just dabble my finger in like this.... Ouch! Let go of me, you little.... While I fetch a bandage, here are my jobs for the weekend. It's an away match for The Town tomorrow, so I'll be out for most of the day. Sunday? Well, it's a day of rest.

Well, that's just about it for this week. Join us again next Friday, when I'll be looking at removing clematis and replacing it with bindweed. Oh, just a minute. I heard a noise from the bottom of the garden. It's my favourite part. I call it *The Jungle*. It's more British than Amazonian, due to the abundance of brambles. Just as well that I've got my faithful machete to hand. I'll just start hacking my way through. Oh, there's that call again. I wonder what it is. There's a garden bench in here somewhere. Ah, there it is. And the source of the sound. 'Hello, dear. I was wondering where you'd got to. I've been living on leftovers for the past couple of days. I'll just cut a few more off so that you can get through to the house and into the kitchen.'

Sorry about that, viewers. Well, enjoy your week and don't forget my motto: 'Ignore Monty Don and you can't go wrong.'