Fatal attraction, the darker side of plants

Start date 10 January 2020  End date 12 January 2020

Venue Madingley Hall
        Madingley
        Cambridge

Tutor Caroline Holmes  Course code 1920NRX022

Director of ISP and LL  Sarah Ormrod

For further information on this course, please contact Zara Kuckelhaus, Fleur Kerrecoe
        shortcourses@ice.cam.ac.uk, 01223 764637

To book See: www.ice.cam.ac.uk or telephone 01223 746262

Tutor biography

Caroline Holmes lectures regularly for the Institute of Continuing Education, University of Cambridge; for The Arts Society throughout Britain and in New Zealand, Australia, Germany, the Netherlands and Spain; Ciceroni Travel in France and Italy; Road Scholar globally and on ICCA (Institute of Classical Architecture and Art) sponsored lecture tours in France and Italy as well as for specialist cruise companies. She is author of eleven books, her twelfth to be published in 2020. Her RHS Herbs for the Gourmet Gardener was finalist in the 2014 Garden Media Guild Reference Book of the Year Award. Other titles include Impressionists in their Gardens and Follies of Europe - architectural extravaganzas.

Design consultancies include devising the planting and writing the guide notes for The Poison Garden in the Alnwick Garden, Northumberland; designing Tudor-inspired gardens for a Humanist Renaissance 'journey' around Notre Dame de Calais, and 16th-18th-century orchards and gardens with modern operatic borders at High House for the Royal Opera House. She co-presented 'Glorious Gardens' on Anglia TV and has presented several series for BBC Radio 4.

Caroline was the recipient of ‘The Gertrude B Foster Award for Excellence in Herbal Literature’ in 2011 and ‘The Elizabeth Crisp Rea Award’ in 2017 from the Herb Society of America.
Course programme

**Friday**
Please plan to arrive between 16:30 and 18:30. You can meet other course members in the bar which opens at 18:15. Tea and coffee making facilities are available in the study bedrooms.

19:00 Dinner

20:30 – 22:00 **Session 1 Introduction** - Doctor Shatterhand’s garden is indeed a lovesome thing, God wot inspired by James Bond’s comment on a list of poisonous plants

22:00 Terrace bar open for informal discussion

**Saturday**

07:30 Breakfast

09:00 – 10:30 **Session 2** What is food to one, is to others bitter poison – identifying the classical plant poisons. Paradise Lost to Socrates and Hippocrates

10:30 Coffee

11:00 – 12:30 **Session 3** Lost in translation – sifting the wheat from the tares and other Biblical plants

13:00 Lunch

14:00 – 16:00 Free

16:00 Tea

16:30 – 18:00 **Session 4** Fragrant smells and poisonous hells - Shakespearean tragedy in the world of plants

18:00 – 18:30 Free

18:30 Dinner

20:00 – 21:30 **Session 5** Slay it with flowers Poisonous prose – students are invited to read extracts of stories and poetry that evoke tragic ends by plant means

21:30 Terrace bar open for informal discussion

**Sunday**

07:30 Breakfast

09:00 – 10:30 **Session 6** Virginian Gold and its fatal consequences

10:30 Coffee

11:00 – 12:30 **Session 7** Permission to Poison - The Poison Garden at Alnwick Castle

12:45 Lunch

The course will disperse after lunch
Course syllabus

Aims:
To compare and contrast legendary evil associations with the reality of plant active ingredients
To gain an insight into the way both the Bible and Shakespeare use poisonous plants to convey a message
To acquire a greater awareness that plants can kill

Content:
We will examine the origins of the names given to poisonous plants, some mysterious with evil associations others growing in the gardens around us. The approach will be through the trail of stories that have grown up alongside the plants and how they weave a colourful narrative through so much of both classical and modern action literature such as James Bond and the Harry Potter books.

Presentation of the course:
The lectures will be powerpoint, weather permitting a walk around Madingley’s gardens and class discussion. All students are invited to select prose, poetry or songs which include poisonous and/or deadly plants for Saturday night. This provides an excellent opportunity to widen the scope of the weekend.

As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to:
To have a greater understanding of the power of plants
To identify poisonous plants known only by literary or legendary names
To view in a new light Alexander Pope’s dictum that ‘a little learning is a dangerous thing’

Reading and resources list

Listed below are a number of texts that might be of interest for future reference, but do not need to be bought (or consulted) for the course.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Publisher and date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bate, Jonathon</td>
<td>Soul of the Age</td>
<td>Viking 2008</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dauncey, Elizabeth</td>
<td>Poisonous Plants: A guide for parents &amp; childcare providers</td>
<td>Kew 2010</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fleming, I</td>
<td>You only Live Twice</td>
<td>Jonathon Cape 1964</td>
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Note Students of the Institute of Continuing Education are entitled to 20% discount on books published by Cambridge University Press (CUP) which are purchased at the Press bookshop, 1 Trinity Street, Cambridge (Mon-Sat 9am – 5:30pm, Sun 11am – 5pm). A letter or email confirming acceptance on to a current Institute course should be taken as evidence of enrolment.

Information correct as of: 17 September 2019