

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.

Author	Title	Publisher and date
Bate, Jonathon	Soul of the Age	Viking 2008
Dauncey, Elizabeth	Poisonous Plants: A guide for parents & childcare providers	Kew 2010
Fleming, I	You only Live Twice	Jonathon Cape 1964

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