

SHARING REPTON: HISTORIC LANDSCAPES FOR ALL

Garden History Lucky Dip

These notes accompany the prompt sheets that were developed to help volunteers to run the activity: Garden History Lucky Dip. This uses everyday objects to lead a conversation about garden history and inspire interest and further involvement.

The prompt sheets are aimed at three different levels of interest and knowledge in garden history.

Entry Level is aimed at those who have little knowledge of garden history or gardening.

Curiosity Level is aimed at those who have some knowledge of garden history and are curious to know more.

Expert Level is aimed at those who have experience and expertise in garden history and who are interested to share and debate with others of the same level.

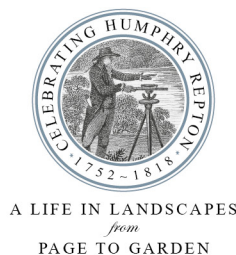
These notes set out the preparation and delivery of the activity. The Garden History Lucky Dip activity is intended to be an interactive workshop, and is suitable to do within an hour, easily conducted over a lunch break or long tea break at an event, AGM, or other meeting.

This activity was inspired by The Garden History Grapevine who offer one day workshops on An Introduction to Garden History in 10 Objects.

Team required for this activity

At least two people are needed. If the activity is offered to children, more people are needed to manage the natural exuberance of youngsters and their relatively short attention span.

Anyone can run this activity – it does not require any knowledge or expertise in garden history. The prompt sheets provide the information needed to open the conversation and encourage participation. It is a light-hearted exercise, and can get quite lively.



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Venue

This activity can be run indoors or outdoors in good weather. The indoor activity needs a table. The outdoor activity can be run on the lawn, outdoor bench, or picnic blanket.

Materials:

Box or basket to carry the objects.

Range of sizes of gift bags - one for each object.

(The box or basket can be filled with loose straw (such as hamster bedding). The gift bags can be placed amongst the straw, and selecting one becomes like a lucky dip.)

Lucky Dip Objects:

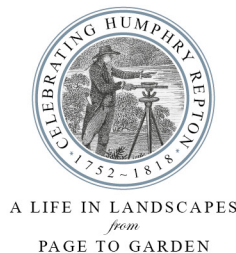
- Brick (or half brick)
- Toy sheep, cow or deer (fluffy dog toys are quite suitable)
- Pineapple (the green pineapple top can be used to save space)
- Plant in a jar (a Kilner jar works well, with an exotic looking plant . For example, a small succulent, such as *Sempervivum*)
- Model bridge (china, wood, lego, origami, plasticine)
- Bunch of cut grass
- Piece of glass (a piece from a photo frame, for example. Be very careful to have no sharp edges)
- Sprig of Rosemary
- Packet of seeds (Choose something bright and exotic Californian Poppy (*Eschscholtzia*) is the eg in the prompt sheet)
- Toy musical instrument
- Tennis ball

Printed prompt sheets

Printed image sheets (optional).

Note: Using gift bags to conceal the objects is useful as these are easy and inexpensive to obtain, and easy to carry. They are bright and attract attention. When running the activity with children, the use of gift bags can create an expectation of receiving gifts. One idea that worked well was to have a supply of postcards with pictures of flowers, and offer the children to choose one after they have participated in the exercise. If family members are present, it is quite common for the youngsters to ask to take more than one 'gift' to give to their family. This is a good way to network engagement in the activity and share the conversation about garden history.

Another idea is to prepare small envelopes with seed as a take home gift.



Prompt Sheets

The prompt sheets present a few questions to prompt the discovery of what aspect of garden history the object alludes to. There are also some ideas for conversation teasers which can be used to develop the discussion and encourage participation. The prompt sheets also provide notes and a short story about garden history. Leaders of the activity are invited to expand on any aspect of garden history, based on their own knowledge and experience – the activity is not limited to the information contained in the prompt sheets.

Images

Images are provided to give some visual interest to the garden history story. These are not essential for the activity to run. The images are relevant to all three levels of prompt sheets.

Method.

The activity can be run as a group activity, with everyone gathered round at the start, or can be run simply as people pass by and show some interest.

Start	Ask participants to choose a gift bag and see what is inside it
	Use the prompt questions to tease out what the link is between the object and garden history
	Describe the garden history story using the notes on the prompt sheet.
	When the conversation around that aspect of garden history subsides, ask a participant to choose another bag, and repeat.
	Be flexible whether everyone listens to one conversation about garden history, or whether there can be more than one object under discussion at one time. The more people that are leading the activity, the more objects can be discussed at once, however, this may dilute the interaction.

The main purpose of this activity is to introduce garden history as a story that weaves into our everyday life. Garden history is not limited to dusty archive rooms and dates and facts. We hope to inspire participants to enjoy learning about garden history and to share this new interest with others.

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