

Sulby Gardens was the gardeners' cottage, walled kitchen gardens and orchard for Sulby Hall and originally covered about 3 acres.

The restored **orchard** on the right of the driveway is home to part of an apple collection of 63 varieties. We also have a dozen varieties of pear, and 10 varieties of plum including gage, damson, and bullace. The profusion of apple varieties go into making Sulby Gardens Apple Juice

The house was built in the 1820s, and the head gardener lived in the two storey section while the under gardeners were in the one storey bothy.

The **conservatory, (C)** on the left of the terrace, was converted from half the old fruit store. And has a good cropping dessert vine, bougainvillea, plumbago, jasmine and pelargoniums.

The original **Victorian carnation house (G)** is on your left through the archway. It still has its wrought iron opening gear, and houses fig, nectarine and interesting decorative plants.

The **kitchen gardens**, have been restored and we are self sufficient in vegetables, salad crops, top fruit and soft fruit.

The **butterfly beds** just past the kitchen garden, are filled with insect attracting plants and shrubs including mahonia, cotoneaster, marjoram, buddleia, golden rod, and joe-pye weed (*Eupatorium purpureum*), with self-set honesty flowering early in the season

The **paddock** leads down to the stream, and was planted up with pine, shrubs and light woodland in 1989. There is a beautiful stand of foxgloves under the pines in June.

The path along the canalised stream may yield views of mallard, gadwall, or the kingfisher, whose artificially constructed nest-site is in the bank further upstream.

Over time, four parcels of adjoining land were purchased bringing the total acreage to 12, including a wetland, (**the rough bit**), two pieces of arable land which became the **old** and **new flower meadows**, and a four acre wood with a late 18th century **icehouse**, no doubt built for Sulby Hall.

Seven ponds were dug and the entire area enriched for wildlife habitat.

The **birch tree pond**, dug in 1986, is a good pond for damsel and dragonflies and great crested newt, with a collection of ten species of birch established on its northern bank.

The **duck scrape**, dug before we owned the land, is a favourite with spawning frogs, while the wood pond, excavated in 1990, became home to several hundred rudd, golden rudd, crucian carp and green tench, somewhat depleted by a two-week visit from an otter in the winter of 2008-9!

Just below the **icehouse** look carefully at the area of slates, logs and stones which provide basking and hibernating sites for grass snake, slow-worm and common lizard. **DO NOT STEP ON OR LIFT SLATES OR TILES.** The icehouse itself is used by bats, possibly daubentons which hunt over water.

The **old flower meadow** contains the **badger sett pond** with an artificial badgers' sett constructed alongside it. At the top is the **round pond** and both are excellent for damsel and dragonflies.

Cowslips and snakeshead fritillaries in late spring give way to insect-attracting perennial wildflowers from June to September.

The **new flower meadow** established in 1998 combines a tussocky meadow mix with perennial wildflowers where the uncommon grass vetchling heads 9 species of vetch, amongst other flora invaluable to our rich insect population, hunted over by bats on summer evenings!

For more information on Sulby Gardens, see our booklet **The Story of Sulby Gardens** for sale in the conservatory tea room, which includes chapters on Sulby Hall, Husbands Bosworth Aerodrome and Sulby Polish Resettlement Camp. All profits donated to charity.

In 2008, Sulby Gardens was included in the Northamptonshire edition of the **Historic Gardens of England** series by Timothy Mowl and Clare Hickman, and in 2009 was designated by the Northamptonshire Wildlife Trust as a **Local Wildlife Site**.