



South & South East & London in Bloom

Green Lines October 2021



Well, what a year that was!

After no visits in 2020, we managed to visit over 650 entries across both regions in 2021, with a record number in London and almost back to normal in the South & South East. Thank you

The awards via Zoom were a real experience with the usual "jitters" as we stepped into the unknown, but we got there, despite a hiccup or two along the way. Despite the step into the unknown, we made over 650 Awards to some fantastic entries this year. Judging by the results, we are staggered at how many of you managed to recover from virtually no activity to award-winning entries. Across both regions, 226 Gold Awards were presented and 99 Outstanding Community Awards and numerous Silver Gilt and Silver Awards. Truly astonishing and a record too.

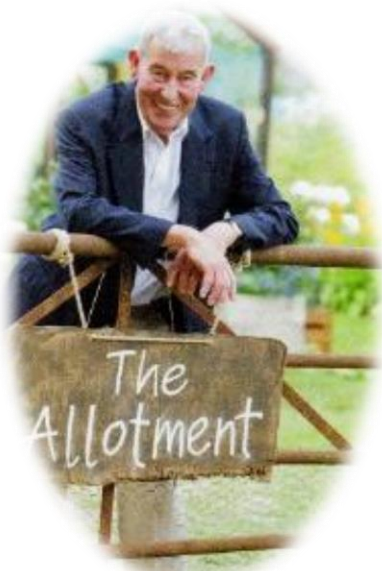
Several changes are planned for next year. We will continue with all our usual categories, still seeking to discover which entries are creating and maintaining places where Horticulture & Gardening, Environmental Management, and Community Participation are part of everyday life. But we also recognise that not all entries can excel in all three areas of the criteria. So plans are in hand to recognise those who excel in one particular section, not all three. More news soon.

We will also be challenging ourselves and all our participants to become Planet Friendly Gardeners. We will be joining the Royal Horticultural Society to tackle the climate and Biodiversity crisis together. We aim to encourage you to save our precious resources and trap as much Carbon as possible through good gardening practice. Collecting and storing rainwater to use when the condition is dry and using Rain rather than Mains will become a recurring theme as it is estimated by doing so, one could save approximately up to 11,000 litres annually. This, accompanied by good cultivation techniques, will reduce the cost and leave your precious plants less vulnerable to hot, dry summers. We would also encourage as many of you as possible to plant a small to medium tree in the local school, the community garden, where you work or even in the park. We plan to provide as much information as possible about suitable species in the coming month's edition. If we all planted a tree and nurtured it to maturity, it would help restore the plant's equilibrium. According to the RHS, if we grow our own cut flower (where you can), savings could be made of up to 7.9 kilos of Carbon per bouquet.

Keep Gardening

Ed:

Chelsea Reminiscences



In 1967 the Royal Horticultural Society Wisley Gardens were asked to build a garden at the Chelsea Flower Show. Ken Aslett, the Rock Garden Superintendent, was told by the Director of the Gardens, Mr Frank Knight, that he would be responsible for the design and implementation. Ken Aslett was a brilliant plantsman with a tendency to stay in the background. He preferred to be part of a team than lead. In many ways, I was the complete opposite, but he liked me because I enjoyed hard work and did everything with a smile on my face. I could not believe my luck when he asked my fellow students and me to be involved.

In January 1967, he showed us his final design based on a Japanese Woodland Garden.

It contained a small stream—a trellis structure in one corner plus a small rockery. The planting consisted of Azaleas, Rhododendrons, Hosta's and Ferns. In February/early March, we labelled all the plants in the garden that we would use. Some of the Rhododendrons and Azaleas were large specimens that were carefully lifted and with large sack barrows transported to the now non-existent frame yard at the rear of the glasshouses (where the long lily pond is now). This was to be their home for the next two months. All the roots were covered with hessian which we stitched together. This allowed the soil to cover the roots and made the job of transporting much easier.

Every night we moved the plants under cover and reversed the process during the day. Finally, after weeks of preparation and several mock gardens, the time had arrived to build the garden at Chelsea. Every day for two weeks before the show opening, we travelled up to Chelsea in the Dormobile for a 7 am start. However, we caught a Greenline Bus outside the Embankment Gates from Victoria to Guildford on the way home. Ken was a perfectionist and took the time to select the exact spot for every plant. The largest specimens were the first to be put in place. We placed metal hooks on the root balls to move the plants in whichever direction Ken directed them.

Ken asked two of us if we would stay on-site after 5 pm. I am sure you will not be surprised that we said yes. Our weekly wage was £5.00 out of which we had to pay for accommodation at Aberconway House (student Bothy). The YMCA managed the hostel. This building was demolished to make way for the New Wisley Garden Centre.

Finally, on Monday, we put the finishing touches on the garden. Ken acquired two passes which allowed us to stay on the showground when all the Royals would arrive. It was an unbelievable experience to be involved in my first Chelsea with such a kind, considerate and knowledgeable boss. We were encouraged to visit different show aspects during our lunch breaks—more about this in the following newsletter. My one regret was that I did not have a camera to record the moment...

At 5 pm, my fellow student, Dave, stood at one of the entrances to the old marque as the Royals entered from the Embankment Gates. It is fair to say we were not dressed for the occasion, unshaven in our working clothes and looking like Scarecrows. The President and Senior members of the RHS Council were waiting to escort the Royal Family around the showground.

Each party would have a set route and a selection of exhibitors to visit. We stood at the back when suddenly one of the Royal party headed towards us. My immediate reaction was to disappear into the marque, but my mate, Dave, reassured me that they would walk past us. You can imagine my embarrassment when Princess Alexandra came over and asked if we had been involved in the show. She was so charming that it was not difficult to explain that we were Wisley students who had helped build a Japanese Woodland Garden. The Director, Mr. Frank Knight, would not have received this well. I was not one of his favourite students. Next month I will tell you about the changes I have seen over the years, including this year's show.

Keep Safe, Keep Smiling, Keep Gardening – Jim

Increased Fees for 2022

Sadly, but essentially, we have had to raise entry fees for next year. As you would imagine, the last couple of years have been difficult with businesses withdrawing their sponsorship and support to Covid. In both regions, we no longer have Headline Sponsors who have cushioned the effect on our administration over the years and the annual Bloom programs.

Entry prices have increased by a very moderate amount, which will help us with the 2022 program. Our regions are the most populated in the UK. There must be 100's of companies working in the same area as ourselves who could be encouraged to give us support or support one of our projects; if you know of anyone or can suggest a contact so we may approach them please, please let us know.

While our Trustees work hard to keep our programs going year on year, we lack an experienced fundraiser in both regions. So, if you or someone you know would be interested in helping us continue our work by raising much-needed funds, we would be grateful to hear from you/them.

GARDENING TIPS & TASKS for November

Reg Leach, SSEiB Judge and former Parks Manager – retired.

Welcome to the October edition of the bulletin with November's Tips and Tasks.

We all feel like hibernating at this time of year as the weather gets colder, but before we do, there are several jobs to carry out first.

Lawns:

If it's not too wet, you may need to give your lawn its final cut and if the lawn has become compacted, spike and scarify to open up the soil and allow air into the roots. Pick a dry day when the soil is moist. Use a springbok rake (if you don't have a scarifier) to drag out the thatch. Collect the resulting thatch using a mower with a box or rake-off by hand. After scarifying, evenly spike the lawn with a garden fork. Once completed, top-dress with a fine loam, with seed added with bare patches and brush in well. However, if the lawn has extensive bare patches, consider turfing these areas rather than seeding, mainly if the weather is cold, as the seed will not germinate so readily.

If you didn't do so last month, give your lawn an autumn/winter feed to stimulate root growth. Do not apply a summer feed, as this would stimulate top growth, which you don't want at this time of year.

When you have done the last mowing of the year, clean and dry off your mower and arrange for it to be serviced and sharpened so it's ready for action next spring; however, if the winter is very mild, the lawn may need a cut – if so, avoid mowing after a frost or if one is due.

Principles of Pruning:

This is the time of year when we need to tidy up the garden, and pruning is one of those elements. Here are some principles of pruning that will come in handy.

1. Remove dead and diseased wood.
2. Take out thin and weak growth.
3. Remove any crossing over branches as they will rub and may become infected.
4. Prune to open up the centre of the shrub to allow in more light into the middle.
5. Prune to an outward-facing bud.
6. Avoid leaving 'snags' - wood above a leaf joint as they may become diseased.
7. Retain the natural shape of the shrub if possible.
8. As a general guide, prune flowering shrubs soon after flowering, so the plant has the longest time to produce new flowering stems for the following year.

Shrub Beds and Borders:

Prune back summer flowering shrubs before the weather gets too cold.

When you have completed all your border work, which may have included planting pockets of spring-flowering bulbs, carefully de-compact the soil by lightly forking over the bed, avoiding the bulb areas. Apply a mulch of organic matter to keep weeds at bay and wash the nutrients into the soil for the winter rains.

Any lingering seed heads leave for the birds, and any hints of colour from shrubs such as Hydrangea leave for a little longer.

Roses:

Reduce HTs by half their height to reduce wind rock. (The final prune will be done next March). For climbers, prune back this year's growth to 2 or 3 buds of the mainframe. Apply this pruning to most climbing plants to maintain their shape. If you want to increase the climber's framework, tie some of the new shoots into the spaces you want to fill. For specie roses, take out some of the older shoots at ground level, leaving the newer stems to flower next year and encouraging new base growth.

Herbaceous Borders and Plants:

Remove stakes and supports from herbaceous and perennial plants and cut down old growth to ground level unless seed heads are beneficial to birds. If you have mature plants, lift and divide them to increase your stock and replant elsewhere in the garden or give them to friends and neighbours. Or perhaps create a new border using your surplus plants. To divide the rootball, dig it out and carefully insert two forks back to back through the middle of the rootball and slowly prise the two halves apart. Replant them to the same original depth.

Planting:

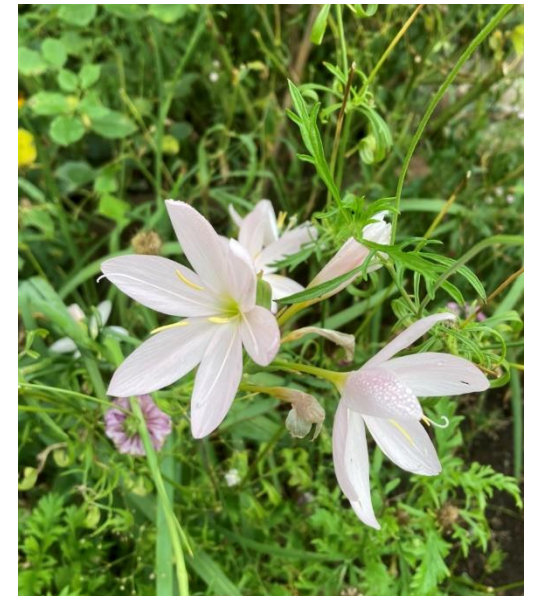
November to March is the best time to plant bare-root trees, shrubs, roses and hedging plants. Planting now allows the maximum amount of time for plants to settle in and get their roots actively growing before next summer, giving them the best chance of surviving.

If you have plants growing in the wrong place and are not too mature, lift and replant into a better position, always water in well after any planting.

Trees:

When selecting a tree, try to visualise its size in a few years. Also, consider the tree's eventual root spread and its proximity to buildings!

When planting, always prepare the ground well, incorporating fresh compost and a slow-release fertiliser. Always dig a larger hole than the rootball, so the roots are not squashed into the hole.



Tree staking is a debatable subject. Some recommend a stake that supports the whole length of the stem. I prefer a much shorter stake that is only around two feet above the ground so that the tree can sway naturally in the wind and trigger root growth, thereby giving better support to the tree as it matures. You may consider putting an irrigation tube in with the tree's rootball to assist water penetration to the roots, helpful in the tree's first year, but if you can water regularly, you may not need to.

Plant the tree to the same depth as when it was grown in the pot or nursery - note the existing soil mark on the stem. Planting too deep can rot the stem! Always spread the tree roots out evenly. Ensure the hole is large enough to accommodate the roots without bending them and put in the stake before planting to avoid damaging the tree's roots.

Add the soil and compost mix slowly, carefully raising and lowering the tree slightly by the stem as you fill the hole, so the soil gets in between the roots. Start to firm the soil around the tree carefully with your foot, but only after the roots are covered with soil, then fill the remaining hole firming as you go and finally secure the stake. I would suggest mulching around the tree base after planting to help keep it weed-free. If the tree is to be planted in a lawn, a mulched base will help prevent mower damage to the bark.

If you are planting a containerised tree, it's a good idea to plunge the rootball into a bucket of water before planting to make sure moisture has reached the middle of the rootball. Loosen up the rootball carefully to free some of the compacted roots before placing them in the hole, then plant as above, adding a little soil at a time and regularly firming as you go.

Tree stakes usually face the prevailing wind to give the tree the best support; however, when planting trees on a roadside, put the stake on the side facing the road, so the tree's trunk is protected from car doors!



Shrubs:

As with trees, always try to visualise the shrub's size in a few years and consider its position in the border. You don't want to end up with tall shrubs at the front of the border and smaller ones hidden at the back. Always prepare the ground well and incorporate new compost and a slow-release fertiliser. Some nurseries offer planting compost with fertiliser already mixed.

Depending on what you are trying to achieve, it's good to select shrubs in the garden that flower at different times of the year, so there is always something of interest to see. Similarly, it is good to have a mix of shrubs with different leaf or stem colours to give autumn interest. In the winter, there is nothing better than a clump of red-stemmed *Cornus siberica* with the low winter sun shining on them!

Hedges:

Now is an ideal time to plant bare-root hedging plants. They are cheaper to buy as whips, and they will usually outperform containerised hedging plants. Prepare a trench incorporating organic matter, and if you have enough space, plant a double staggered row to get a good thick hedge. I would recommend planting a native hedging mix of Beech, Purple Beech, Copper Beech, Field Maple, Hawthorn and perhaps Dog Rose, all of which will attract wildlife into your garden.

Evergreens:

November to March is the best time for planting evergreens and conifers (avoid Leylandii as they are too vigorous and they will not please your neighbours!). As before, plant to the existing soil level mark on the trunk.

Containerized Plants:

Containerized plants can be planted now and throughout the year. If you intend to reuse an existing pot or container thoroughly disinfect it to remove vine weevils before replanting. Where possible, lift containers off the ground and onto legs to improve drainage through the winter and avoid waterlogging.

Winter/Spring bedding:

It's still not too late to plant winter bedding. Choose between Wallflowers, Bellis, Myosotis, Primula, Viola and Winter Pansies. Don't forget that if you are including bulbs such as Tulips amongst your bedding, put the bulbs in after the plants to avoid them being chopped in half with the trowel! Plant bulbs to a depth of 2 ½ times their diameter.

Tender plants:

Some bulbous plants and those that have corms and tubers, such as Canna, Begonias, Dahlias and Agapanthus, can be left in their pots and allowed to dry off in the garage or shed over the winter, protecting them from the worst of the winter weather. Bring them out again next spring after the last frost and when new shoots appear at the base. If you have good draining soil, you may want to risk leaving some of those temperate plants such as Agapanthus in the ground, but if you do, mulch well over their crown. However, lifting, potting up and storing in the garage or shed is less risky.

If you have tree ferns, tie up the fronds and add straw to the crown to protect from frost and snow. Straw can also be used to cover less hardy herbaceous plants too.





Greenhouse:

If the greenhouse is empty, thoroughly clean it using Jeyes Fluid (an old fashioned and dependable solution) or use smoke to fumigate the greenhouse to eradicate pests and diseases. Tender plants can then be put into the sterilised greenhouse, such as Pelargoniums, with little heat, keeping them as dry as possible to avoid rot. Ventilate in milder weather to keep the air fresh and to circulate. Try insulating your greenhouse with bubble wrap for extra insulation and save on heating! Ventilate the greenhouse on fine sunny days but remember to close the vents at night!

Herbs: if you have some less hardy herbs in the garden, carefully lift and pot them up and bring them into your conservatory, greenhouse, or window ledge, to extend their life and give you fresh herbs for longer.

Garden cleanliness:

To discourage slugs and snails, keep paths regularly swept, remove debris from patios and decking and keep pots clean and free of dead leaves and detritus. At this time of year, slugs and snails will hide in crevices and under rims of pots etc. Seek them and

remove them – I'll leave you to decide what you do with those you do find!

Don't forget:

- Keep collecting those fallen leaves off the lawn, pond, borders and low growing plants such as alpines and compost them.
- Pack away the hosepipe and lag the outside tap to protect from frost.
- If the winter weather is mild, keep hoeing to remove annual weeds such as chickweed, which seems to grow all year round. This is particularly the case in urban areas now that the winters are often milder.
- When planting roses, avoid beds that have had roses in them before, as there is a risk of 'rose to replant disease'.
- Clean and sharpen mowers and hand tools over the winter period, ready for next year.

Achieving a dream

Molly White - Horticulturist, Youth Worker, South & South East in Bloom Ambassador

September 2021 saw the first-ever Autumn Chelsea flower show; it was also the first time I'd ever worked at the show. Having been an RHS volunteer for several years, I hoped to volunteer in their retail team at the front; but Covid had delayed this.

Planting a garden on Main Avenue; was a childhood dream; it seemed like an unrealistic reality, a destination I wasn't sure how to reach. Yet this September, I did just that; I could be found planting on Main Avenue and volunteering for the RHS during show week.

Just over two years ago, at Hampton Court palace flower festival, I volunteered for a day to plant a garden for horticultural hero Beth Chatto. The morning I arrived, the garden had already been completed; however, the show manager directed me towards Designer Rossana Porta, building the RHS Wild Garden. I spent a day working with her and her team; she took my number and said she'd keep in touch; little did I know that I could make such an impact in one day; low and behold, we touched base once or twice during Covid and then in early summer this year I got that phone call.

I was an excitable child and not ashamed to admit it. There is something about the aura of Chelsea, the history of the show, the display of horticulture at its highest level, the reputation on a worldwide scale.

Fast forward to September, and I'm now part of a design and planting team. Led by Rossana Porta, this Chelsea brought two exciting challenges for me; for us.

They assisted Marie Louise Aguis and the cop26 climate change garden, a garden with the strongest messages. Attempting to highlight the critical place we find ourselves in; with extensive building, driveways increasing, and AstroTurf's introduction instead of grass. Our infrastructure is negatively affecting our green spaces; combined with changes to our weather, the results are seen across our gardens, towns and rural landscapes. I enjoyed the concept of the four quarters and thought they were very valid. Decline, highlighting the current plight; Adaption; how many plants have adapted to change or are more suited to certain climates. Mitigation was a favourite of mine, exploring ways we can work with our changing climate; taking time to know our green spaces. I particularly liked the swale and introducing areas that can be flooded successfully in periods of flash rainfall. The final quarter was balanced, showing the visitor that you can still create a garden based on our family traditions and those younger dreams whilst aiding the climate change emergency. Cop26 was a vast 400m², and it was so inspiring for me to be part of a larger team. I love being self-employed, the freedom and control, the flexibility and the joy of working and achieving by myself but this time at Chelsea had so many advantages. They were working alongside other professionals, learning from their experiences & bonding over a mutual love of horticulture. I was inspired and planting those statement Hydrangeas on the corner of the main avenue in the mitigation quarter of the garden was a very surreal moment.



The second challenge was planting the soft landscaping for Cashmere Caveman Wild Kitchen; a trade also stands on the main avenue. The plants for this garden exuded Autumn, and they were the epitome of the season; blackberries in whole fruit, blueberries bursting with ripeness. Betula pendula and Sorberia varieties with their leaves changing. In a changing season, this garden sang as a forest, long grasses nestled amongst ferns and moss, a living roof and berries hanging poised from native species.

For me, the joy of Chelsea in September was an opportunity to showcase something different, to allow the joy of Autumn to shine through on this world stage. To shout for the grasses, for those Dahlia blooms, for everything great about Autumn in England.

I've walked away from my first Chelsea experience a little taller, with a broader smile and a newfound enthusiasm to continue my education in horticulture. I have never doubted my hunger for the great outdoors, for my love of being a gardener and my passion for this industry. This Autumn has shown me that I am in the right place but that working the self-employed life can narrow those blinkers slightly, and it's never too late to push them back and delve a little deeper into the ever-changing world of horticulture.

RHS Community Awards 2021

The RHS Community Awards highlights the inspiring work that groups continue to deliver across the UK. Congratulations to our regional winners.

Cultivating Your Community

- Achievement Awards - Farnham, Sevenoaks, Upton in Bloom & Walthamstow Village in Bloom

Nature-Friendly Gardening

- Outstanding – Royal Tunbridge Wells
- Highly Commended – Farnham & Walthamstow Village in Bloom
- Achievement – Upton in Bloom

Nourishing, our Community

- Highly Commended – Upton in Bloom
- Achievement – Sevenoaks

Planting with a Purpose

- Highly Commended – Farnham
- Achievement – Sevenoaks

Playing our Part

With 30,000,000 gardeners in the UK, it is clear, we as Gardeners, can affect outcomes. It is easy to think as individuals, we are too small to make a difference, but like Chaos Theory, "a butterfly beats its wings in one part of the world, and its effect is felt thousands of miles away" eventually.

So what can we do to affect change? For years we have sought to be more sustainable in our approaches to gardening and Bloom, but what are sustainability and biodiversity?

We talk a lot about biodiversity and sustainability, but what are they in reality, and what does it mean to us?

Sustainability - In short, sustainable gardening is low maintenance, eco-friendly method of growing Trees, Shrubs, flowers, veg and fruit and using a resource, in this case, our very earth, so that the resource is minimally depleted, quickly restored and not permanently damaged.

Biodiversity – Roughly put, is the interconnectedness of all things, from the merest bacteria or Fungi to Trees and insects & animals, such as humans.

So as gardeners, we pretty much cover all the bases. As gardeners, we can minimise our impact on the Planet by taking care of our surroundings and without causing harm to other members of our Bioverse.

So what can we do to play our part?

Soil

Improve our soils by incorporating organic materials. This will add much-needed nutrients, prevent dry soils from eroding and reduce the need for watering and of course, good soil will add to the quality of our crops. When removing or disposing of plants, make sure to knock off as much soil as possible to save this most important of resources

Pesticides

Wherever possible, please stop using harmful pesticides. Try wherever possible to use mechanical or physical means of removing weeds such as a Hoe. On a warm day and if you have not let the weeds grow too high, the Hoe is the perfect tool, good exercise too.

If you must use a pesticide, a homemade insecticide made from vegetable oil mixed with a mild soap can have a devastating effect on troublesome insects, such as aphids, mites, thrips, etc. To make an essential oil spray insecticide, mix 250 ml of vegetable oil with 15ml of liquid soap (cover and shake thoroughly). When ready to apply, add 10 ml (two teaspoons) of the oil spray mix with 1200 ml (two pints) of water, shake thoroughly, and spray directly on the surfaces of the plants affected by the little pests. The oil coats the bodies of the insects, effectively suffocating them, as it blocks the pores through which they breathe. Please do not spray in strong sunlight.

Neem Oil Spray

An oil extracted from the seeds of the neem tree is a powerful natural insecticide capable of disrupting the life cycle of insects at all stages (adult, larvae, and egg), making it an excellent resource for the organic gardener. Neem oil acts as a hormone disruptor and an "antifeedant" for insects that feed on leaves and other plant parts. Neem oil is biodegradable and non-toxic to pets, birds, fish, and other wildlife and is effective against a variety of common garden insect pests

If you must use a weedkiller, consider utilising a weedkiller containing 20% Vinegar and Citric Acid. These are approved for organic use and have proven to achieve excellent results.

Peat based Composts

Wherever possible and where available, use Peat Free Compost for growing your plants and sowing your seeds. Grow bags for tomatoes are now available for growing your tomatoes. Many good quality composts will grow as well or even better than Peat based composts.

Recycle, Reuse

Recycle plastics such as pots or reuse them year after year; all they need is to clean and disinfect any pathogens that might affect the next crop. Try to reuse horticultural fleece, products such as Enviromesh and plastic netting wherever possible.

Water Harvesting

Water is one of the finite resources, and gardeners probably use more than most to keep their crops growing, so try to reduce the use of Mains Water and store as much as possible for when the weather is dry. Use a watering can if you are able, or use a hosepipe, not a sprinkler left on for hours using an exceptionally large amount of water. Remember, watering tends to encourage surface roots as water penetration is only a few inches more often than not. This, of course, leads to even more watering as plants become more stressed. Organic soils and good mulching will help considerably. Mulch veg crops, so they will benefit from the soil retaining its moisture. Roofs on buildings can all capture rainwater if attached to water storage. Large water tanks, many being secondhand, are available for allotment and/or community gardens,

Composting at Home

Compost at home is a simple way to reduce our carbon footprint; not only will you know what's in the compost, but it will also reduce costs.

If contemplating buying in your compost or FYM for the veg plot or Roses, check the source's efficacy as some bagged products contain residues of herbicides and growth regulators, which can be harmful to a number of crops.

Forward Planning

Gardening is very much about planning and forward-thinking; we tend to leave things a little too long and then have to resort to destructive processes to overcome our lack of attention. Using nature's natural predators is a way of reducing pests or at least maintaining a balance. Encouraging surrounding habitats containing predators will help control a high level of natural predation. If this is not possible, use purchased predators such as Encarsia for Whitefly in the glasshouse or nematodes for slugs in the veg patch. Homemade sprays can also reduce infestations but not eradicate them.

Marianne North - English Victorian biologist and botanical artist.

Kate Harris – SSEIB & LIB Campaign Manager



Plant hunters made extraordinary discoveries and dramatically changed the landscape of horticulture the World over. But let's be honest, it was also a boy's club, the realm of wealthy white men with family money or rich financial benefactors who afforded them the privilege of traversing the globe on the hunt for the new and exotic. Marianne North was about to change all that.

Born in 1830, the eldest daughter of a member of Parliament, Marianne's upbringing was one of wealth and privilege. At this particular time, women of wealthy families were expected to take up suitable pastimes such as drawing and painting. Marianne was, in fact, a talented artist who focused on the painting of flowers. This genteel pursuit would later secure her place in history.

Single and independently wealthy following her father's death, at the age of 40, Marianne set off on her first solo adventure. Rough passage and poor living conditions would not dissuade this strong independent woman from claiming her place in horticultural history.

In 1871 she embarked on a trip to Canada, U.S.A, and Jamaica, followed by eight months in Brazil, documenting and painting undiscovered flora. Most of her work during this time was carried out in huts deep in the forest.

1875 saw Marianne begin a tour around the World that took her to Japan, Borneo, Java, Ceylon and California. Marianne is said to have raised concern, during her time in California, of the destruction of the Redwoods.

Much of 1878 was spent in India and was the year that 512 of her oil paintings were displayed in Kensington.

Unlike traditional plant hunters, she used her skills as an artist to paint her finds with extreme scientific accuracy, including their natural habitat in her work. Marianne travelled the World twice over and documented over 900 plants in the years she spent travelling. This was a time before photography was available to all, making her work all the more valuable. Marianne also set herself aside from her male counterparts because she liked to travel alone because she did not enjoy the company.

Charles Darwin himself wrote to her to recommend that she should visit Australia. Whilst there is no doubt that Marianne's family name and wealth opened doors for her, it makes her no less incredible as she ventured further than most women of the time ever did.

Marianne liked to start her day at dawn outside with a cup of tea, which could not be more quintessentially British and is said to have described her life as "wander and wonder and paint".

In 1882 a gallery of her work opened at Kew. I think it is important to remember that this was a time where photography was still black and white. Marianne's artistry allowed a glimpse of a world far past anything the average person would ever see. 832 of her paintings are still on display at Kew in the Marianne North Gallery.

Marianne's story is of bravery and adventure, a life that pushed against limitations placed on women, who were seen as fragile and of lesser skill and intellect and much in need of a husband to do their thinking for them. It is said that when the subject of marriage was mentioned to her, she is quoted as saying, "Marriage? A terrible experiment". Marianne passed away in 1890 at the age of 60 after living a life that many can only imagine.

