



Royal  
Horticultural  
Society

Sharing the best in Gardening

# ANNUAL REVIEW

## 2012/2013

# Contents

The Royal Horticultural Society was founded in 1804 by Sir Joseph Banks and John Wedgwood for the encouragement and improvement of the science, art and practice of horticulture. We held our first flower shows in 1820, were granted a Royal Charter in 1861 and acquired Wisley, the first of our current gardens, in 1903. From our first meetings in a small room off London's Piccadilly, we have grown to become the world's largest gardening charity.

Today the RHS is committed to providing a voice for all gardeners. We are driven by a simple love of plants and a belief that gardeners make the world a better place. 209 years on we continue to safeguard and advance the science, art and practice of horticulture, creating displays that inspire people to garden. In all aspects of our work we help gardeners develop by sharing our knowledge of plants, gardens and the environment.

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*Rosa gallica* - *β. versicolor*  
*Rosa Mundi.*

This hand-coloured plate of *Rosa gallica* 'Versicolour', drawn and etched by Mary Lawrence in the late 1700s, is part of the RHS Lindley Library collections.



*Digitalis* Illumination Pink ('Tmdgfp001') was named the 2012 RHS Chelsea Flower Show Plant of the Year. In April 2013 its breeder Charles Valin, who has worked with seed and young plant company Thompson & Morgan for nine years, was presented with the RHS Reginald Cory Memorial Cup in recognition for his work in plant breeding.

Front cover: *Echinacea* and grasses in the Glasshouse Borders at RHS Garden Wisley.  
Photograph: RHS / Sarah Cuttle

# Looking back on 2012



**‘This has been another year of success for the RHS as the popularity of gardening continues to grow and become more available to more people throughout the country.’**

## RHS President Elizabeth Banks on last year’s highlights.

As I look back over the last three years, I am happy to see how much more interest there is in gardening and how far the RHS has helped to promote all aspects of gardening. Our membership has now reached more than 400,000 for the first time, a remarkable achievement given that our number of members has stayed around 350,000 for several years. This is thanks to the much appreciated hard work of our staff and volunteers, but we still have a huge opportunity for further growth.

Throughout my time as President I have been encouraged to see co-operation grow between all organisations involved in gardening. Among many exciting results was the partnership between the Garden History Museum and the RHS to purchase the 1905 *Portrait of a Black Gardener* by Harold Gilman, a picture that will be exhibited by both of us.

In April 2012 the RHS launched the first National Gardening Week – designed to be a platform for the whole industry to work together to promote gardening and horticulture. Highlights included the conference *Horticulture: A Career to be Proud Of*, chaired by Alan Titchmarsh, an RHS Vice President. The conference was attended by journalists, gardeners, retailers, scientists, apprentices, career changers and students, and aimed to change perceptions about a career in horticulture. This led to our *Horticulture Matters* campaign that brought together a whole host of organisations to help raise the profile of our diverse industry. We sincerely hope it will encourage more people into horticulture, where, despite such a varied range of careers, skills are being lost at an alarming rate and youngsters are generally not even considering horticulture as a possible future occupation. The RHS Young School Gardener of the Year was also launched in April to help this and Lucas Hatch, aged 11, won the award out of 16 finalists; he demonstrated passionate enthusiasm and incredible knowledge about gardening, and inspired all those who met him.

## Science and art

The Society’s aim ‘to promote the science, art and practice of horticulture’ remains the same today as it was 209 years ago when it was formed. However, 2012 was the year for the RHS to update and improve the way it worked.

The crucial role of our expert committees was considered deeply during a review completed on 31 December 2012. Some committees have been reorganised to bring in new members, while keeping the irreplaceable knowledge of the long-standing members and others have been amalgamated. Other committees have become more focused in size or remit, and new ones introduced, most importantly, the newly formed Horticulture Board. This oversaw the revision, ably led by John Grimshaw, of the Award of Garden Merit list of more than 7,000 plants that took place throughout 2012 and was launched in February 2013. It was the culmination of an amazing amount of work by all the plant committees for which we thank them.

In the past year, the great significance of science to the work of the Society has been emphasised. More has been done to inform members and the public about our science work, particularly all the information available from the RHS Advisory Team and the RHS website. The John MacLeod Field Research Facility at RHS Garden Wisley was opened by Professor David Bellamy, at last giving our scientists a modern resource to carry out field and controlled experiments. In future you will hear much more about the work they will undertake as horticultural science becomes of increasing importance to us all.



Her Majesty The Queen was presented with a Royal Autograph designed by artist Gillian Barlow at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show.



RHS Garden Rosemoor was the number one garden to visit in a survey by readers of *Which? Gardening*.



National Gardening Week was launched in April to encourage people of all ages to get involved in horticulture.



Professor David Bellamy opened the John MacLeod Field Research Facility at Wisley.

## Success in a challenging year

Although summer 2012 was one of the wettest on record, every RHS Show managed to open and stay open, which was a triumph as many outdoor events were cancelled. Apart from the RHS Chelsea Flower Show, where the sun shone all week, visitor numbers at the other shows were lower than we hoped. This was as a result of the poor weather and the conflicting appeal from the magnificent, once-in-a-lifetime events of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games and The Queen’s Diamond Jubilee. In honour of this last occasion, we introduced the Diamond Jubilee Award for Best Floral Exhibit in the Chelsea Flower Show Great Pavilion. The Queen awarded it to HW Hyde & Sons for its fantastic display of lilies.

The Campaign for School Gardening celebrated its fifth anniversary in 2012 and grew from strength to strength, reaching more than 3.5 million children in some 16,000 schools. In Scotland and in Yorkshire two regional pilot groups were set up to work more closely with schools, communities, local horticultural societies, businesses, RHS Britain in Bloom and Beautiful Scotland to raise the presence of the Society in these areas.

All our gardens are flourishing and came out well in a *Which? Gardening* survey of its readers’ favourite gardens. Rosemoor in Devon came first, with Wisley in Surrey second, Harlow Carr in North Yorkshire fourth and Hyde Hall, Essex a worthy 10th. To have all four RHS Gardens in the nation’s top 10 is a magnificent achievement. Further investments were made to ensure that the appeal of the RHS Gardens continues into the future. At Wisley, the Bowes-Lyon Rose Garden goes from strength to strength and, at Hyde Hall, work on a new playground tower began. At Rosemoor, *The Green Ship*, an enchanting play boat inspired by Quentin Blake’s book, has been a great attraction. It uses spruce timber milled from trees in The Copse. Rosemoor also received a collection of iris from John and Galen Carter of Rowden Gardens, Devon. Harlow Carr completed the Alpine House garden and, despite poor weather, welcomed a record number of visitors. The Great Garden Adventure, new for 2012 and sponsored by Witan Investment Trust, ran across all four RHS Gardens; its learning activities focused on different continents around the globe, with summer trails and exciting workshops attracting more than 200,000 people during August.

## Financial achievements

It was also a major milestone for the RHS when we sold the lease of the Lawrence Hall to Westminster School. This was a true win-win, as the children of this fine school have a sports hall at last, we can run our four shows a year in both the Lawrence and Lindley Halls, and substantial seed funds have been established to have a material and positive impact on the future of the RHS and horticulture in this country; more on this in the Director General’s introduction overleaf. We continue to be immensely grateful to RHS Fellows, a small group of core supporters who donate so generously each year to help fund many RHS initiatives.

Throughout my Presidency I have been overwhelmed by the way members, volunteers, committees, staff, executive, Council, sponsors and the horticultural trade work together to help everyone to garden. It has been a huge honour and pleasure to lead such a team; I thank them for their hard work and the magnificent contribution they make and welcome the new President Sir Nicholas Bacon.

*Elizabeth Banks*

Elizabeth Banks, RHS President

# Looking to 2013



**‘We are looking forward to 2013 as an exciting year of landmarks for all of us at the RHS.’**



Images of bygone shows decorated the Great Pavilion at the centenary Chelsea Flower Show in 2013.

## RHS Director General Sue Biggs highlights key developments for the year ahead.

As you have read in the President’s report, 2012/13 was a challenging year for the Society and the whole horticultural industry with early drought followed by the second wettest year on record, plus the impact of the ongoing recession, The Queen’s Diamond Jubilee and the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

In this context, we are reasonably pleased with our achievements in 2012 as they demonstrate the continued relevance of the work of the Society, particularly as we welcomed our 400,000th member and started work on our Key Investment Projects, carefully chosen to make a real difference to the RHS, its members and horticulture in this country. More on those projects later.

Chief among the 2013 highlights is of course, the centenary of the RHS Chelsea Flower Show that took place in May. Since 1913 the Society has staged what was originally known as the Great Spring Show in the beautiful grounds of the Royal Hospital, home of the Chelsea Pensioners. Today the world’s finest flower show is not only a landmark in the UK’s cultural calendar, but a source of inspiration for plant and garden lovers – whether they are among the 165,000 visitors or the millions of online and BBC television viewers and radio listeners.

## Encouraging the next generation

We want to ensure, however, that this centenary show creates a lasting legacy, supporting the next generation of horticulturists.

After our 2012 conference ‘Horticulture: A Career to be Proud of’ we continued to expand the network of organisations involved from right across the spectrum of the horticultural world. The resulting report was presented to Parliament in May and entitled *Horticulture Matters*, and highlights the growing skills crisis in UK horticulture that threatens our economy, environment and food security. It also threatens the health and happiness of our nation derived from our love affair with gardens, allotments, parks and community gardens... indeed any green space!

*Horticulture Matters* is a key focus for us in 2013. Without skilled and professional horticulturists we would not have the horticulture industry contributing £9 billion to our economy, we would not have control over at least part of our own food security and we wouldn’t be renowned throughout the world as a nation of gardeners in our truly ‘green and pleasant land’. We will, during this year, do all we can to raise the profile of horticulture and close the green-skills gap.

But make no mistake, this is a crisis and now is the time for us all to act before it is too late and horticultural skills are lost from Britain forever.

We used the 2013 Chelsea Flower Show to launch the RHS Chelsea Centenary Appeal to raise £1 million to invest in the future of the horticultural industry, an exciting new RHS horticultural apprenticeship programme, and an expansion of our Campaign for School Gardening into secondary schools. Pin badges (right) are being sold at our gardens and shows to help raise funds.



## Future projects

But just as important and exciting are our Key Investment Projects that have been made possible by the sale of the lease of Lawrence Hall in London to Westminster School. Each one of these projects helps us achieve our strategic objectives. They will enable us to continue our research and conservation work in science; improve the reach and quality of our educational work; further develop the public access to our libraries and artworks; and share the best in gardening with as many people as possible.

Briefly, the projects already under way are as follows. Some will take many years to deliver, but we are keen to share the exciting news of what’s coming:

- **RHS Garden Wisley** Our flagship garden will have new event and exhibition space, more retail space devoted to our specialist British nurseries and horticultural books, a lecture theatre, new restaurant and learning facilities.
- **RHS Garden Hyde Hall** Acres of new perennial flowering meadows, an edible garden and a learning centre are being planned for our Essex garden.
- **RHS Lindley Library and Hall** The flexibility of these two beautiful spaces will be developed to enable more displays of our incredible art collections, more events and exhibitions, more lectures and more horticultural shows in the heart of London.
- **www.rhs.org.uk** The new RHS website is launched this year with more-easily navigated pages and a mind-boggling amount of information that will be educational, fun and inspirational, too, all easily accessed by anyone, anywhere in the world.
- **Regional** We have launched two pilot schemes in Scotland and Yorkshire as we firmly believe we must reach out and link up with other organisations around the country – Britain in Bloom, our Partner Gardens, plant societies, allotment holders, gardening clubs, local businesses who want to help and colleges who want to teach. We all have one vital thing in common: horticulture!
- **Science** We are making major investments into our science work – into the conservation and naming of plants; into plant health, pests and diseases, and into our work on the environment and climate change.
- **Urban Garden** Work will start on this in late 2013 as we look to secure a site for our first urban garden designed to bring gardening and a love of plants to city dwellers. We also aspire to secure another major garden within the next few years and have allocated £7 million in our reserve funds to enable this when the time and opportunity arise.

As you can see, we have an exciting year ahead of us. Everyone at the RHS, staff and much-valued volunteers alike, know that we want to inspire as many as possible to enjoy the simple love of plants, to get growing and gardening, to visit beautiful gardens and to spread the word about what wonderful and varied careers horticulture can offer.

Quite simply, we want to be more open, more accessible and more relevant for everyone who has an interest in all things green. If we achieve all that, then 2013 will be very special indeed.

Sue Biggs  
RHS Director General



RHS Garden Hyde Hall will be enhanced by the planting of a new perennial meadow.



The Sykehouse Apple, engraved by William Hooker (1779–1832) from *Pomona Londinensis*, is held in the RHS Lindley Library. Access to the library’s extensive collections will be greatly improved as a result of one of our Key Investment Projects.

# What the RHS does

A summary of our principal activities and how we make a difference to our members and the wider public.

## Gardens

We have four renowned gardens at Harlow Carr in North Yorkshire, Hyde Hall in Essex, Rosemoor in Devon and our flagship garden Wisley in Surrey. Through them, the Society helps gardeners across the UK by providing access to diverse plant collections, examples of innovative and attractive planting design and the highest horticultural standards and practices.

RHS Gardens also hold plant trials to judge the performance of plants. Those that are considered to perform particularly well receive the RHS Award of Garden Merit to help gardeners identify plants that will thrive in most garden situations. Those that are particularly good for pollinating insects, so vital for a healthy, sustainable environment, are identified by the new and easily recognised RHS Perfect for Pollinators symbol (logo).

In 2012/13 we welcomed more than 1.76 million visitors to our gardens. While this was a 5.7 percent decline on the previous year we believe this to be a relatively good performance in comparison to other visitor attractions, given the poor weather in 2012, the ongoing recession and the diversion of the wonderful London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

## Retail

The RHS offers excellent shopping opportunities to members and visitors to our shows and four gardens. Sales are generated through our plant centres, gift shops and bookshops, with RHS Garden Wisley offering the best selection of horticultural books in the UK. In addition we offer online sales and a mail-order service. We earn further income for our charitable purposes from licensing various products and the use of images from our extensive library.

## Shows

We are responsible for organising inspirational flower shows at Chelsea and the Royal Horticultural Halls in London, Hampton Court Palace in Surrey and Tatton Park in Cheshire, as well as seasonal shows at RHS Gardens Wisley and Hyde Hall. In the RHS Lindley Hall flower and garden design shows, art exhibitions and talks are held for the benefit of our members and the public. Partnership shows include the RHS Flower Show Cardiff (organised with Cardiff Council), the Malvern Spring and Autumn Gardening Shows (organised jointly with the Three Counties Agricultural Society) and BBC Gardeners' World Live featuring RHS Flower Show Birmingham at the NEC in Birmingham (in conjunction with the BBC).

## Collections

The RHS Lindley Library which contains one of the world's finest collections of horticultural literature, as well as a renowned collection of botanical paintings and outstanding photographs. The collections provide an unmatched reference for the influences and knowledge that underpin our perspective on horticulture and are used by scholars, garden writers, journalists, keen gardeners and members of the public. Access to the Library at Vincent Square in central London and its branches in each of the RHS Gardens is free to everyone.

The RHS Herbarium at Wisley also holds an internationally important collection of dried and pressed plant specimens of cultivated ornamental plants. It is the largest herbarium dedicated to ornamental plants in the UK.



RHS / ANDY PARADISE

Many displays at our shows were inspired by the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, including this one at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show.



RHS / CAROL SHEPPARD

The RHS Perfect for Pollinators symbol helps gardeners recognise insect-friendly plants in garden centres.



Autumn at RHS Garden Harlow Carr. The four RHS Gardens are open all year except for Christmas Day.

RHS / BETHANY CLARKE

# What the RHS does

## Publishing

We aim to share our knowledge with all gardeners and publish widely online and in print. The RHS website ([www.rhs.org.uk](http://www.rhs.org.uk)) attracts around 600,000 unique users a month and our horticultural book titles are among the best sellers in gardening bookshops.

We also publish *The Garden* magazine every month, as well as *The Plantsman* and *The Orchid Review* quarterly, to help keep our members and the public informed about the latest skills, design and practice of horticulture.

## Science

We are the recognised centre of excellence for independent horticultural science and advice. Our scientists are committed to helping gardeners improve and develop their horticultural skills, as well as identifying and promoting solutions to major issues.

We carry out scientific research into plants, their physiology, cultivation, identification, and the pests and diseases affecting them. We also provide authoritative horticultural advice to our members and the public via the RHS website, through lectures and seminars and by leading the debate on issues influencing horticulture and gardening.

## Education

We aim to share practical knowledge and inspire those of all ages and abilities with an interest in plants and gardening.

We are committed to providing a 'ladder of qualifications', from the RHS Level 1 Certificate (accessible to home gardeners as well as the first step in vocational training for professional horticulturists), through to the prestigious Master of Horticulture (RHS) degree-level qualification. All RHS qualifications are distinguished by our commitment to high standards. The RHS is an Awarding Organisation recognised by the Office of Qualifications and

Examination Regulations, ensuring accessibility to RHS qualifications through colleges and other partners across the UK. We also offer practical training schemes through the School of Horticulture to more than 30 trainees working in our four gardens. Here we provide an unmatched opportunity to learn with the best, and to acquire diverse craft skills and a practical understanding of horticulture.

For the gardeners of the future, we run the RHS Campaign for School Gardening to encourage as many children as possible to get growing and to help every child get involved in gardening. For adults we organise a range of lectures, courses and workshops in our gardens and around the country, aimed at inspiring and helping adults to build their confidence to learn and do more.

We are committed to developing a broad range of formal and informal learning opportunities for everyone, enriching their knowledge and quality of life.

The RHS also administers a number of bursary funds and through these we are able to support plant research, study tours, expeditions and conference attendances around the world.



Our magazines include *The Garden*, sent free to RHS members every month, and quarterly periodicals *The Orchid Review* and *The Plantsman*, available to members and non-members on subscription.



In a year full of progress for RHS education, botanist and garden designer James Wong (left) presented certificates to students graduating from the RHS School of Horticulture in 2012.



RHS / JULIAN WEGALL

## Community Gardening

We are proud of our work that aims to spread gardening to as many communities and corners of the UK as possible. We are the national organising body for the renowned annual RHS Britain in Bloom (and sister RHS It's Your Neighbourhood) campaign, which promotes environmental and horticultural good practice in local communities and enables us to support gardeners throughout the UK at a local level. We also link to groups such as schools and a host of Affiliated Societies (including gardening clubs) to expand our reach.

## Ensuring access for all

In common with many charities, we do sometimes need to make a charge for access to our services and work. Equally we try to ensure that as many people as possible benefit whatever their means. In particular, we provide free access to an extensive knowledge base through the RHS website and libraries; offer free open days and facilitate educational visits at all our gardens; award bursaries for horticultural study; make available the benefit of our trials programme to the public and horticultural industry through our RHS Award of Garden Merit and RHS Perfect for Pollinators schemes; and support community gardening initiatives through the RHS Campaign for School Gardening, Britain in Bloom and the affiliation of local horticultural societies. We also ensure that there is extensive coverage of our shows on free-to-air television, radio and websites.

As a membership charity, we rely on the welcome support of our more than 400,000 members to deliver our charitable purpose. In return for this vital and much appreciated contribution, we provide members with access to a range of services and activities such as free entry for themselves and a member of their family to the four RHS Gardens and more than 140 RHS Partner Gardens (free entry for member only in Partner Gardens); reduced admission prices to our shows; an information-packed monthly magazine; and additional plant advisory services. The RHS Members' Advisory Service handled 79,791 queries throughout 2012.

However, our membership programme is also a key means for us to engage with those interested in horticulture and gardening and for us all to share our knowledge and best practice. We place no restrictions on membership and endeavour to keep membership subscriptions at an affordable level.

The Trustees confirm they have complied with the duty in section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.

Members of the Three Close Tenants' Association (part of Loughborough in Bloom) are just some of the many thousands of people actively involved in community gardening in the UK.



RHS / JULIAN WEGALL

Access to the extensive collections in all RHS libraries is free to everyone.

**We aim to ensure we can help everyone with an interest in horticulture and gardening.**

# Gardens

In a year of extremes, our four gardens took all the weather had to throw at them. Despite the drought early on in the year followed by seemingly endless rain, visitors were not deterred: 960,000 were welcomed at RHS Garden Wisley, 154,000 at RHS Garden Hyde Hall, 139,000 at RHS Garden Rosemoor and 320,045 at RHS Garden Harlow Carr.



Princess Alexandra was welcomed to RHS Garden Rosemoor in May to open the Peter Buckley Learning Centre.



Rosemoor's Fruit and Vegetable Garden inspires visitors and supplies fresh produce to its Garden Kitchen Restaurant.

## RHS Garden Rosemoor, Devon

In May, Princess Alexandra officially opened the Cob Shelter, edible Forest Garden and community plots, three new areas within the teaching gardens of the Peter Buckley Learning Centre. The edible Forest Garden is the first of its kind within RHS Gardens, and the first community allotment course has now been completed.

The first stage of redevelopment in the bog gardens within Lady Anne's Garden was spurred on with the donation of a collection of water iris by local Devon nursery Rowden Gardens, totalling around 80 cultivars.

A second children's play area called The Copse and sited at the entrance to the Bicentenary Arboretum was opened to coincide with Rosemoor's Quentin Blake summer exhibition. The exhibition ran from May to August and was visited by just under 22,000 people. A replica of Quentin Blake's 'The Green Ship' was built here by the garden team along with a seesaw and picnic area for families.

School visits were up on 2011 by 18 percent to 5,706 children while secondary students visiting for workshops increased by an impressive 420 percent to 336 students

The Winter Sculpture Exhibition, which ran for three months from November 2011, was a success with 117 pieces sold while a new event, the Eco Fair on 5 April, showed visitors the 'green credentials' of innovations including some used in the garden such as a solar glasshouse and electric quad bikes.

2012 was the first full year of being able to offer mobility vehicles and there have been more than 270 bookings, generating £200 in donations.

Lettings for the three Rosemoor Apartments increased by 23 percent in 2012 and achieved an all year round occupancy of 75 percent which is a record number of bookings. The Rosemoor Garden Kitchen Restaurant won the Garden Centre Association Best Restaurant, Wales and South West Area for 2012, and it catered for six weddings. The extension to the kitchen began in November.

**All four of our gardens were in the top 10 of *Which? Gardening* readers' favourite gardens. Rosemoor was first, Wisley second, Harlow Carr fourth and Hyde Hall was the 10th most popular.**

## RHS Garden Wisley, Surrey

During January and February the Glasshouse at Wisley was home to many tropical butterflies including, for the first time, white morphe and tiger longwing butterflies. This was followed through the year by displays of orchids, pelargoniums, fuchsias, Solenostemon and chrysanthemums, and in December a Christmas tree made from poinsettias.

Wisley's bonsai collection was relocated from the Model Gardens to the walkway between the Vegetable Garden and the Alpine Houses. Everyone is especially grateful to Peter Chan from Herons Bonsai for his support, help and advice which enabled Wisley to display these impressive trees to their optimum in this new location.

A wildflower meadow on the site previously occupied by the old glasshouses was a riot of colour during July and August and was the setting for a new demonstration of bedding violas and pansies, which flowered from winter into spring 2013. These were planted during October by staff and volunteers.

Education and learning in the garden has continued to encourage and inspire people of all ages to learn new skills in horticulture. In 2012, more than 19,000 children came to the garden on school visits and used the Clore Learning Centre; 45,700 children and adults experienced and enjoyed family

activities; and 1,371 adults participated in a range of courses in horticulture and creative arts. Pupils from local secondary schools worked with an environmental artist to create wonderful sculptures in the garden as part of an arts week, which also included an exhibition of students' work in the Glasshouse.

Courses and workshops expanded in variety and included a new programme of learning in partnership with the London College of Garden Design alongside new creative skills including Japanese woodblock printing.

In March Wisley hosted the inaugural Spring Plant Fair over the same weekend as Grow Your Own events, and in May the Craft Fair expanded to cover three marquees. In June a quintessentially British garden party took place with the 'Best of British' theme. It included model boats on the Glasshouse lake, a live brass band and ballroom dancing. In September the Wisley Flower Show broke all records with more than 41,000 people attending during five days of glorious sunshine. Despite poor weather, visitors turned up in their thousands to the October Taste of Autumn Festival to hear talks from James Wong, Pippa Greenwood and Cleve West, plus live cookery demonstrations from chef Peter Osborne.



# Gardens

## RHS Garden Hyde Hall, Essex

Even though 2012 was the year of rain, RHS Garden Hyde Hall still attracted more than 154,000 visitors. A major boost to numbers was the Hyde Hall Flower Show in the first week of August. This is now the garden's most popular event with visitor numbers up on the previous year by 20 percent.

The wet weather was a boon for planting and assisted many new plants to establish quickly. The extension of the Dry Garden was completed and is now double its original size, encompassing the area formally taken up by the former plant centre and shop. A pair of new Courtyard Gardens, designed in-house, were also completed. One has a traditional country-courtyard feel while the other has a more contemporary style with shrubs, grasses and perennials planted in blocks, and structure provided by yew trees which will be trained into pyramid shapes.

In the same month large coir rolls were laid around the bank of the ornamental lake to provide stability and within these were planted marginals – this project, too, is now complete.

Sunflowers sown to the south of the garden put on a good show and were visible on the approach to the garden from Creephedge Lane. There are plans to repeat-sow this year.

Visiting the garden was further helped with the provision of a new bus stop. The existing route between Chelmsford and Southend (two key hotspots for visitors) was diverted and now stops at the Visitor Centre six times a day during the week.

An exhibition of work by David Watkinson was well received and six pieces were placed around the garden. Of metal construction, they move in the wind and all had a horticultural theme. Kinetic Seed Sculpture displayed on Millennium Avenue was so well received that a fundraising campaign has been launched to purchase it as a permanent feature.

A refurbishment of the Barn Restaurant was undertaken and completed and visitors now have table service. Planning permission was gained for the first of the Key Investment Projects for Hyde Hall – the BeWILDerwood Look Out Tower.

A staff initiative led to the creation of two bug hotels made from pallets, straw, flower pots and other recycled garden items. One is sited near the beehives at the edge of the estate and the other near the Visitor Centre.

RHS Hyde Hall has engaged with 4,500 children on school visits this year, who have enjoyed a range of workshops and activities for all ages. A successful new offer has been the Little Acorns Horticultural club for toddlers: monthly sessions are held where young children can learn to plant seeds, dig, explore the garden and make something using materials from the garden.

The number of families attending family events has increased and they have also enjoyed the seasonal and themed trails around the garden. Courses and workshops for adults were well attended and covered skills such as pruning and propagation.

The 3m (10ft) high sculpture *Poppy Heads* in the Dry Garden was one of several of David Watkinson's works on display until October at RHS Garden Hyde Hall.

## RHS Garden Harlow Carr, North Yorkshire

One of the highlights of 2012 was the completion of the bespoke Craggle Top Treehouse in the woodland, designed to help connect children and adults with nature. It gives a superb view of the tree canopy and the woodland beyond.

The garden team were kept incredibly busy with new planting, including the addition of around 250 dahlias to the main borders; irises around the newly enlarged lake; and further planting of the Streamside Garden, including collections of *Filipendula* and *Astilbe* and a complete rejuvenation of the peat terrace. Even more spring interest was added throughout the garden with large swaths of snakes-head fritillary in the new woodland approach path and English bluebells under the tree canopy.

The appeal of the Kitchen Garden continues to broaden with a new glasshouse, cold frames and cedar store to highlight growing under glass in the north of England, as well as a clay oven to demonstrate 'plot to plate' cooking.

Harlow Carr continues to be an important place for learning with nearly 13,000 pupils (7,743 from primary schools) coming to the garden on free educational visits. The garden's education programme for secondary school pupils took flight and welcomed more than 1,240 young people.

Sustainability days were offered for local primary and secondary schools including an enterprise project with the Pupil Referral Unit, and in the Bramall Learning Centre a wonderful display of artwork from children at 11 schools was exhibited in conjunction with the Harrogate Rural Art Network project.

The RHS Campaign for School Gardening Regional Conference took place at Harlow Carr in March and at Christmas a new range of adult education courses including willow weaving, photography and day workshops on kitchen gardening and herbaceous border management was launched.

In September, our Yorkshire Regional Development Team was established and based at Harlow Carr. It has been looking at new ways to increase the number of people involved with the RHS as members or through Society campaigns, by increasing outreach work with school gardening clubs and local horticultural associations, and by building networks of gardening initiatives through working with partners.

For seven out of 12 months in 2012 more people than ever enjoyed visiting RHS Garden Harlow Carr.

RHS / GEORGI MABEE



Opened in April, the Craggle Top Treehouse was an instant hit with RHS Garden Harlow Carr's younger visitors.



Teachers attending the RHS Campaign for School Gardening regional conference at Harlow Carr in March were shown how gardening can be used to teach maths and science.



# Shows

RHS Flower Shows provide a stage for the world's new and established talent to create sensational show gardens and displays.

The excitement created by RHS Shows gives us a powerful platform to share our knowledge and skills, and to communicate key messages about gardening with a large audience, including our members and the world's media. Each show has its own distinct character, which is captured in the plants and gardens on display and within the programme of events, and while they only run for three to five days, they leave an important legacy for local communities. Throughout the year we liaise with local councils, prisons, community groups and charities to develop new content, ensure exhibits are sustainable and that they find a good home after the shows have finished.

## RHS Flower Show Cardiff, April

The 2012 show welcomed more than 20,000 visitors across three days and had a wonderful family-festival feel. Working in collaboration with Cardiff Council, the town centre was decorated in street banners using a striking daffodil image that proved successful in raising the show's local awareness. Highlights included the Schools Wheelbarrow Competition, tree surgery demonstrations and local crafts and produce stalls.

## Malvern Spring Gardening Show, May

The Malvern Hills provide a beautiful backdrop for 50 acres of gardening heaven. In 2012 The Malvern Spring Gardening Show, staged in partnership with the Three Counties Agricultural Society, involved pupils from local primary schools who created 20 show gardens – 15 of these were based on the theme of Sustainability of All. The new People & Plants Arena provided the venue for a lively theatre for new ideas and gardening advice.

## RHS Chelsea Flower Show, May

Sponsored by M&G Investments, this iconic show is the most glamorous in horticulture. The grounds of the Royal Hospital, Chelsea are the setting for a star-studded occasion, where visitors are treated to a glittering array of gardens from some of the world's most renowned designers and to new garden plants, many making their world debut.

2012 marked a significant year with a display of Royal Autographs from the RHS Lindley Library and a new area called Fresh, which displayed innovative approaches to gardening. Another show highlight was Diarmuid Gavin's impressive 'The Westland Magical Garden': a 21m (70ft) high pyramidal tower that welcomed more than 100 Chelsea Pensioners on Press Day for the perfect photo opportunity.

## BBC Gardeners' World Live, June

Staged in association with the RHS, this event at the NEC in Birmingham brings the television programme to life, with inspiring show gardens, top-quality plants and non-stop shopping on tap. The RHS Floral Marquee was a key highlight while the new RHS Members' Lounge provided a place to take a break and recharge the batteries.



One of the regally themed displays at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2012. This bedding feature was created by the RHS with the Parish of St Helier, Jersey.



Colourful *Heuchera* display at the Malvern Spring Gardening Show.



Television gardener David Domoney helps judge Cardiff's best school wheelbarrow.



'When in Drought' by Ray and Marney Hall at BBC Gardeners' World Live.



RHS / NEIL HEPWORTH

**'Remount', designed by Stephen Dennis, at RHS Flower Show Tatton Park.**

## Shows

### RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show, July

The show in 2012 was brimming with inspiration, ideas, plants and products for visitors to take home. The World of Gardens (a new category of Show Garden) displayed the best in garden design from countries such as Jordan and the Hermitage Museum in Russia. The Summer Gardens encapsulated an array of plants and colour, and the Low Cost, High Impact gardens showed visitors just what could be achieved on a budget. A popular exhibit was the Olympic sport-themed Schools Scarecrow Competition.

### RHS Flower Show Tatton Park, July

Set in one of Cheshire's Gardens of Distinction, RHS Flower Show Tatton Park has always had strong community involvement. Displays in the National Flowerbed Competition and the schools Back to Back Gardens celebrated a year of sporting achievement, and both were favourites among visitors. Floristry talks and a fashion show that took place in the RHS Talks Theatre on Ladies' Day were triumphs.

### Malvern Autumn Show, September

Hosting a range of cookery demonstrations, gardening talks, vegetable displays, vintage tractors and crafts, this show has more of a county feel. The 2012 show featured cookery demonstrations with celebrity French chef Jean-Christophe Novelli in the Good Life Pavilion, floral displays and edible gardens.

### RHS London Shows, February, March, April and October

A wealth of horticultural designers and early-flowering plants were on show to inspire visitors to the RHS London Plant and Design Show in February. Exceptional displays of orchids from UK and international growers were exhibited alongside some of the world's best floral artwork at the RHS London Orchid and Botanical Art Show in March, while in April the RHS Great Plant Fair was the setting for a riot of colour from spring-flowering plants and RHS competitions.

In October, the London Shows were split for the first time. The RHS London Harvest Festival combined gigantic vegetables and local produce while the RHS Harvest Festival Late (evening opening) proved to be a great success and helped us to reach out to a wider audience. Botanically inspired quilts designed by celebrated artist Kaffe Fassett were displayed with a wonderful celebration of autumn planting at our RHS London Shades of Autumn Show.



RHS / JULIAN WEGALL

**Colourful displays at the RHS London Orchid and Botanical Art Show.**



BETHANY J CLARKE

**Carving pumpkins at the RHS Harvest Festival Late.**



RHS / NEIL HEPWORTH

**Switzerland comes to Surrey: 'The Swiss Alpine Garden', designed by Sadie May Stowell, at RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show.**



In 2012 our scientists published the RHS Perfect for Pollinators wildflower list.



The new John MacLeod Field Research Facility at RHS Garden Wisley has enabled RHS scientists to carry out experiments in controlled environments.



Senior Entomologist Andrew Salisbury identifies insect samples as part of our Plants for Bugs project.

# Science

We have a duty to keep up to date with the latest scientific evidence and translate it into practical information for use in our gardens, and to advise and support gardeners and members through our publications, Advisory Service and the RHS website.

Science is the basis of good gardening, and the projects we undertake are aimed not only to tackle current problems for gardeners but also prepare us for those that may arise in the future.

Plant health has become much more significant over the past year and our Advisory Service, through diagnosis of samples sent in by members, enables us to act as an early warning system for new pests and diseases. We usually detect one or two pests and diseases new to the UK every year, and as a result develop timely advice for members and feed into the national awareness of new plant health threats.

The weather was particularly challenging this year and our Advisory Service was kept busy, with pest enquiries – especially slug and snail control – unsurprisingly heading the list. But the weather did not stop the completion of our new John MacLeod Field Research Facility at RHS Garden Wisley, which was officially opened in May by botanist David Bellamy.

The announcement of the Key Investment Projects and the decision by Roger Williams, RHS Head of Science, to take up a new post in New Zealand was used as an opportunity by RHS Council to review the Society's science programme. This was completed at the end of 2012 and plans are now being drawn up to implement the recommendations.

## Research

The Plants for Bugs project continues and the first research papers are expected to be published during 2013. In total more than 34,000 insects were recorded during the first two years of monitoring. So far this has included in excess of 5,000 individual flying insects visiting the plants and flowers in the trial plots at Wisley including 13 species of butterfly, seven



With the completion of putting the *Dianthus* Register into a database, all nine of the international cultivar registers for which we are responsible are now computerized.

species of bumblebee; 27 species of spider and more than 211 species of ground-dwelling insect, 40 of which are ground beetles.

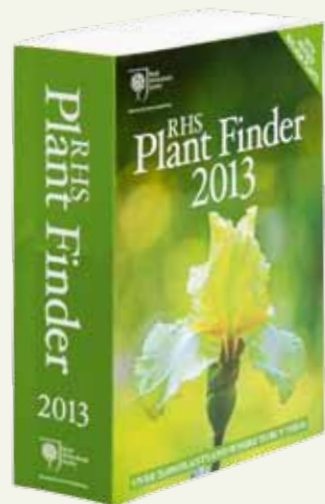
Climate change is a growing area of our research. Senior Horticultural Scientist Tijana Blanus has secured funding for a four-year Engineering Doctorate/PHD programme from the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council. The project will look at removing the barriers to retrofitting green walls in an urban setting.

In collaboration with the University of Reading, the RHS was awarded its second Knowledge Transfer Partnership from the UK Technology Strategy Board. This project will enable us to decide the scope of a larger five-year post-doctoral fellowship research programme to investigate the impact of climate change on gardening. This has been made possible by a generous legacy.

A welcome development has been the RHS and Horticultural Development Company jointly funded Horticultural Scientist position at Wisley. This new role will enable us to carry out much-needed research into watering, plant nutrition and growing media at home-gardener and professional levels.

Our botanical research has led to a better understanding of giant hogweed in the UK and interim results suggest there may be as many as three different species in the natural environment. This work feeds into wider considerations about invasive alien species, particularly where these are thought to have escaped from gardens. Working with garden staff, we also produced the first Biodiversity Action Plan for Wisley.

The transferring of the *Dianthus* entries onto a database at the beginning of the year meant that the nine plant registers the RHS looks after are now fully computerized. We are grateful to those who helped transfer more than 20,000 entries from the International *Dianthus* Register. Having the records



Our botanists keep *RHS Plant Finder*, and the RHS Horticultural Database, on which it is based, up to date. In 2012 both the RHS hardiness rating system and the list of plants with an RHS Award of Garden Merit were revised.

## Science

on computer makes it easier to share the information and to keep the data up to date.

The RHS Horticultural Database passed another milestone this year when we entered the 300,000th plant. The database now holds plant names from the complete 26 editions of *RHS Plant Finder* as well as all RHS Gardens and herbarium accessions, and substantial data from wild and cultivated world floras. We are also continuing with the programme of scanning our herbarium specimens to make them available online. The first images were put online this year through the JSTOR website.

### Public outreach

The second John MacLeod Annual Lecture was held in November and given by Professor Julia Slingo, Met Office Chief Scientist, on gardening in a changing climate. This proved highly successful and attracted some attention from the media, especially on the issue of lawn care. The lecture was videoed and is available on the RHS website.

To raise the profile of plant health, the RHS, with the Food and Environment Research Agency and the National Trust, ran a series of workshops across the UK. These were aimed at reducing the spread of pests and diseases by sharing knowledge and best practice, with professional gardeners involved in running public gardens and parks.

RHS Science hosted a one-day 'Box Summit' to share what is known about



RHS / PATHOLOGY

More than 400 records of pear rust were captured via a public online survey run with the TreeWatch initiative. Reports of the disease have increased during the last decade and survey results are helping us understand its distribution.

pests and diseases attacking box plants, and to identify and prioritise further work needed, especially research requirements. Around 50 delegates attended from eight different countries.

RHS Principal Botanist Chris Whitehouse undertook a three-week trip to South Africa to study red-hot pokers (*Kniphofia* species) in the wild, to contribute to his research of these plants in cultivation. While he was there he wrote a daily blog that attracted more than 26,000 views.

Our scientists also developed a science trail for all four RHS Gardens that children and the not-so-young could follow during National Science and Engineering Week (9–18 March 2012).

The RHS website now has more than 700 web profiles covering 'frequently asked advisory questions' and our website advisory section receives 750,000 page views each month. Our Advisory Service continues to be popular with more than 79,700 enquiries answered.

### Looking ahead

RHS Science continues to develop and raise its profile at national and international levels, through collaboration, publications and involvement with expert societies. We look forward, as our Key Investment Projects come on stream, particularly the one for science, to seeing RHS Science make a greater impact, through its research, to the benefit of gardeners.

RHS / HELEN BOSTOCK



Visitors find out more about the Plants for Bugs project.

RHS / CHRISTOPHER WHITEHOUSE



Chris Whitehouse (inset) studied *Kniphofia* in South Africa.

RHS / WILLIAM J SHAW



Our Advisory Service travels to all RHS Flower Shows.

RHS



Specimens in the RHS Herbarium are being digitized.



RHS / MIKE MOORE

around the world. We had 135 applications in 2012/13 and 74 percent received a bursary. The combined total of £83,993 enabled professional and student horticulturists and other related professionals to broaden their skills, knowledge and experience.

### RHS/The Garden Club of America Interchange Fellowship

This exchange programme is sponsored jointly by the RHS in the UK and by the GCA in the USA, in association with Longwood Gardens, Pennsylvania. It helps foster British-American relations, promote horticultural studies and develop the horticultural and educational leaders of the future.

The financial aid offered by the programme allowed 2012/13 Ronan Watson to undertake the first year of a post-graduate course in Landscape Architecture at North Carolina State University and Danielle Ballweg to undergo work placements at leading botanic and historic gardens in the UK. Last year's Interchange Fellows, Alex Summers and Ellen Woods, have made the most of their invaluable experience: Alex secured the role of Glasshouse Supervisor at Cambridge University Botanic Garden, while Ellen was accepted into Imperial College London to undertake an MSc in Conservation Science.

### The National Garden Scheme Elspeth Thompson Bursary

The National Garden Scheme Elspeth Thompson Bursary, a fund created by the NGS in 2011 and administered by the RHS, awarded bursaries totalling more than £10,000 to winners who will undertake a wide range of community urban gardening-based projects throughout the UK in 2013.

### RHS Qualifications

In 2012, a total of 2,597 qualifications were awarded by the RHS awarding body. The practical skills qualifications introduced in 2010 showed an overall increase in numbers, with 66 awards made at level one, 513 certificates awarded at level two and 134 certificates at level three. For the theory qualifications, 1,547 certificates were awarded at level two and 178 at level three. Over the year, 159 of the previous style qualifications were awarded for the last time.



RHS / CAROL SHEPPARD

*Leucanthemum vulgare* (above), from the Perfect for Pollinators wildflowers list, which was launched in 2012.

Having travelled to North Carolina with an RHS Bursary, Katie Price of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew and Lucy Hart, Head Gardener at Fulham Palace (below) won top prize for their bursary report.

# Horticulture & Education

By delivering the highest possible standards and sharing our expertise we can help everyone reach their own horticultural goals.

### Plant trials and relations

The RHS Horticultural Trials and Relations team has had a good year working with plant societies, holding plant society events and open days across our gardens and with the RHS Partner Gardens.

Our Plant Committees have had an incredibly busy year reviewing all RHS Award of Garden Merit (AGM) plants; we relaunched the AGM plant list in February 2013 and it is now even more relevant and valuable for UK gardeners. The AGM continues to get great support from the retail sector and the AGM logo on the labels of plants for sale in garden centres give gardeners the confidence that they are making the most informed decision about the right plants.

At the RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show a Perfect for Pollinators list for wildflowers was launched, adding to the existing list of garden plants. This was in response to the success of the Perfect for Pollinators campaign introduced in 2011 and the growing interest of UK gardeners in wildflower meadows.

In 2012, via the RHS website and other media, we invited people to join our trials forums. We are delighted with the response and are pleased to welcome many new members. We look forward to commencing some exciting trials in 2013, include of *Digitalis*, *Solenostemon*, *Allium*, *Euphorbia* and *Streptocarpus*.

### Bursaries

Through the RHS Bursaries scheme we provide financial support for a wide range of horticultural projects, including overseas expeditions, study tours, conference attendance and work placements at botanic and historic gardens



An RHS Trial Assessment Panel (above) inspects plants at RHS Garden Wisley. The entire list of RHS Award of Garden Merit plants was reviewed last year.



JOHN TURNER

# Communities

Our work helps bridge the gap between generations and strengthens ties within the community.

Through RHS Britain in Bloom, It's Your Neighbourhood and RHS Affiliated Societies, our community horticulture programme went from strength to strength in 2012. There were 3,367 communities, neighbourhoods, parks and schools participating within the 17 'Bloom' regions and nations across the UK. The number of horticultural societies and gardening clubs registered to the Affiliated Societies scheme remained constant, with 2,789 groups in Britain and abroad. The RHS insurance scheme for community groups remains popular, with 2,752 policies sold – this generates additional income for our charitable work.

It was the most successful communities year to date: 1,200 Britain in Bloom and It's Your Neighbourhood groups, Affiliated Societies and Campaign for School Gardening schools signed up to our Wild about Wildflowers activity, and sowed nearly 2.2ha (5 acres) of annual wildflower seeds. The activity also attracted new groups and raised our profile through extensive press coverage.

In late 2012 we embarked on a programme of development to build RHS teams in Yorkshire and Scotland, providing the opportunity for us to offer increased direct support for community-gardening groups in those areas. We look forward to working with a range of partners in 2013, to develop our work with schools, gardening clubs and local horticultural associations.

## RHS Campaign for School Gardening

By January 2013, our Campaign for School Gardening was providing online inspiration, resources and advice to more than 16,250 schools. Through teachers, club leaders and school gardening champions we continue to give 4 million children and young people in the UK the opportunity to grow plants and learn new skills.

Training teachers in practical horticulture skills continues to be a key focus for our work, and in 2012 we trained more than 2,100 teachers in specific skills and techniques to get their school gardens to flourish, as well as helping them to develop their gardens as a rich and dynamic learning resource.

Our four Regional School Gardening Advisors were joined in September 2012 by Sarah Carrie, our new Advisor for north east England. Supported by The Children's Foundation Sarah's work uses horticulture to improve the mental and physical health of vulnerable young people moving from primary to secondary school. Each Regional Advisor contributes to the innovation and development of our educational work as a whole; as well as widening access to horticulture for schools in hard to reach areas.

In 2012 we also launched our Young School Gardener of the Year, which calls on teachers across the country to nominate a young person between the ages of five and 16 who has made an outstanding contribution to his or her school through gardening. The title went to Lucas Hatch aged 11 from Suffolk. Since winning the competition Lucas and three other finalists have had exclusive behind the scenes tours at our shows and gardens, and we now look forward to deciding this year's category winners.

Our Get Your Grown-ups Growing initiative attracted 1,300 schools to organise planting, bed building and celebratory events in their gardens with a little help from parents, grandparents, carers and friends.

## Windlesham Trophy Award

We continued our support of the Windlesham Trophy, awarded by HM Prison Service, by providing the judging panel. The 2012 award, aimed at developing prisoners' sense of worth and to encourage garden excellence among the prison community, went to HMP Whatton, Nottingham.



Alison Findlay, Schools Advisor (east of England) with pupils from Meadowside Primary School, Knaresborough.



L: RHS / FIONA SECRETT; R: RHS / JULIAN WEGALL



RHS / JULIAN WEGALL



L: HMPs; R: RHS / FIONA SECRETT

Top left: Lucas Hatch, 11, RHS Young School Gardener of the Year, spent a day with staff at RHS Garden Wisley.

Top right: Kings Heath in Bloom volunteers plant roses in Birmingham.

Above: Local residents on the Shelthorpe Community Garden allotments, Loughborough in Bloom.

Left: Windlesham Trophy garden at HMP Whatton.

Right: Using horticulture to help teach art: Debbie Hovell employs skills taught by the RHS.



# Libraries & Collections

We curate an unrivalled collection of gardening literature and a world-class collection of botanical art.

In June 2012 the Lindley Library London reopened following a 12-month closure due to a fire in 2011. Extensive smoke and soot deposits had to be cleaned, which involved removing and cleaning thousands of books, rare artworks and manuscripts. This was a massive undertaking that unfortunately caused unavoidable disruption to our service for our users. However, library staff and volunteers used the period of closure to improve the way collections are stored, and significant improvements were made to the building's fire and security systems. Following reopening, the Library relaunched its programme of Early Evening Talks, the first by Alex Denman, RHS Shows Development Manager, giving an 'insiders' view of the RHS Chelsea Flower Show. All the talks have sold out and attracted a new audience to the Library. We plan to run a full and varied programme of talks in 2013.

On reopening the Lindley Library London, we introduced an appointment system so researchers can access material held off-site. Space limitations mean a large part of our collection has to be stored in external specialist storage. The appointment system means we can arrange for the requested material to be ordered so it is available before the researcher arrives. It also allows us to direct staff resources in a more organised way, freeing them up to do essential collection care and cataloguing work.

Meanwhile the Lindley Library Wisley and the Lindley Library Harlow Carr remained open as usual. Between them they were visited by more than 39,000 people and issued more than 13,000 loans to RHS members. The library service also answered in excess of 14,000 queries ranging from gardening queries and assisting garden-restoration projects to helping people with their family history research.

Several items from the Lindley Library were displayed at The Plant Seekers exhibition at the Garden Museum, London from July to October. The wooden box, used for transporting plant specimens, is thought to date from a plant-hunting trip of 1917–18. The watercolour of what is now known as *Jatropha multifida* is by Claude Aubriet (c.1703–1742).



## Exhibitions

It has been a busy year for exhibitions, with the library service curating a display of Royal autographs at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2012 in celebration of The Queen's Diamond Jubilee. Royal autographs are botanical drawings dedicated to and signed by members of British and European royalty since 1816.

Lindley Library Wisley hosted a display by digital botanical artist Nikki Simpson in the autumn. However, the main project was 'The Plant Seekers', an exhibition jointly organised with the Garden Museum in Lambeth.

Made up mostly of collections from the RHS Lindley Library, the exhibition charted the exciting tales of plant hunters from the 1500s to the present day. It offered a chance to see rarely viewed material such as a plant-collector's box used to transport plant specimens.

Exciting new developments for the coming year include a new Lindley Library blog and a programme of online exhibitions. We also have ambitious plans to document and digitize our unique collections to make them more accessible to a wider audience.



Referencing back issues of *The Garden* in the RHS Lindley Library, London.



From the RHS Lindley Library collection of Royal Autographs, this 1863 watercolour by Augusta Innes Withers bears the signature of HRH Alexandra, Princess of Wales (1844–1925).

IMAGES: RHS LINDLEY LIBRARY

RHS / JULIAN WEIGALL

# Membership

Thanks to the vital support of our members we can continue to share the best in gardening.

The combination of an increasingly loyal membership base and strong sales (our second best year on record) meant that, despite a challenging economic and physical climate, the RHS grew by more than 17,500 members in 2012/13.

Including Gift Aid contributions, income generated from membership contributes more than 28 percent of our annual income, underpinning our drive to secure a future for gardens and gardening. At the close of the financial year came the news that, for the first time in our history, RHS membership had grown to more than 400,000 members – a milestone to celebrate.

Despite nature's best efforts, coupled with other worthy national distractions, our members demonstrated once again, the strength of their loyalty to the RHS. Renewal rates climbed to more than 86 percent and, measuring levels of satisfaction, loyalty and advocacy across the membership population, for the second year running we scored of 8.47 out of 10.

The four RHS Gardens continue to be pivotal in engaging new members: more than 38 percent join on-site. Nearly half our members cite garden visits as their primary reason for joining – and staying with – the RHS, which confirms the key role that gardens play in educating, inspiring and influencing visitors. Our members can enjoy a growing network of 149 RHS Partner Gardens across the UK, and we are committed to expanding our nationwide presence, providing green spaces for all generations. Demand for our family-friendly Joint Membership (entitling two adults to visit RHS Gardens with a family guest and up to four children) has risen this year as families seek value-for-money days out.



With more people joining – and staying – in 2012, our membership topped 400,000.



Alice Muggeridge, here with daughter Scarlett, became the Society's 400,000th member. She was congratulated by Colin Crosbie, Curator, RHS Garden Wisley.

**RHS members continue to be at the heart of everything the Society strives to be and do as the world's leading gardening charity.**

## Communication

Smart phones and tablets are becoming increasingly commonplace tools for all generations, and many members have opted for digital communications. In 2012 more people than ever before joined online. The number of members keeping up to date with Society news and events near them through the monthly members' e-newsletter is growing rapidly.

Throughout the year, our members continued to add their voice to national campaigns such as RHS Britain in Bloom and It's Your Neighbourhood initiatives, and the RHS Campaign for School Gardening. Increasingly involved with various social media, our members keep RHS online communities active by sharing and debating on platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. Both the launch of National Gardening Week in 2012, and the case for 'Horticulture: A Career To Be Proud of', have been keenly supported online by RHS members.

Using social media we can easily and quickly communicate our charitable messages to a wide and varied audience.



RHS Partner Garden, Furzey Gardens in Hampshire is known for its collection of rhododendrons, azaleas and rare and choice trees.



Summer borders at The Garden House, Devon (above), one of 149 RHS Partner Gardens with special opening arrangements for RHS members. Visits by families (below) help us encourage the next generation to enjoy and learn about gardening.





# RHS people

Along with delivering our core purpose of sharing the best of gardening, the RHS is also committed to listening to, developing and recognising its employees.

This year was a challenge but one, the Society is proud to say, to which its staff rose admirably. They battled the dreadful weather – wind, rain, hail and snow – to keep RHS Gardens and Flower Shows open; they devised creative and innovative ways to attract more visitors, including exclusive events for members; they celebrated The Queen’s Diamond Jubilee, and the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games with fabulous displays for all to enjoy; and with their enthusiasm and passion they helped the RHS grow to more than 400,000 members.

During 2012/13 some additional initiatives were put into place to engage employees with each other and the Leadership Team. ‘Speakeasy’ events were established, which are useful discussion forums enabling staff and management to explore ideas and issues. A Staff Suggestion Scheme was set up, and ideas, suggestions and responses are shared with everyone.

Through the Employee Consultation Group the Society is reviewing key policies to ensure they are fair, consistent and straightforward. All who work for the Society can keep updated on the latest RHS news via the staff intranet service and the monthly employee newsletter, *Clippings*.

The 2011 Employee Satisfaction Survey confirmed that RHS employees desired more development opportunities. To supplement in-house courses to improve IT and management skills, the Society broadened its training range to include Effective Communication, Presentation Skills, Feedback and Project Management – as well as ‘Getting Smarter with our Money’, a course designed to improve commercial awareness and financial skills when managing the all-important RHS charitable resources. During the year 1,348 participants attended training courses run both internally and externally, including 93 managers on the Management Development course.

To recognise and reward staff the RHS launched a new Reward Policy, which provides transparency regarding how pay levels are determined, introduces a dedicated pay framework for Curatorial, Visitor Services, Catering and Retail Staff, and sets out a clear process for progression. This new policy has been welcomed by staff in these departments, as they now have the tools and

responsibility to manage their own progression.

Another way the RHS is recognising staff is through the new Long Service Awards, honouring significant anniversaries of lengths of service. Recipients receive a thank-you letter from the Director General with a small financial sum to treat themselves. In 2012, 106 people were recognised for their tremendous service to the RHS.

The Leadership Team continues to explore ways to show appreciation to the Society’s fabulous staff who always go the extra mile.

Alongside our staff, more than 1,000 volunteers generously donate approximately 50,000 hours of their time and expertise to support our charitable work. We are incredibly grateful for their dedication and in 2013 will launch our first Volunteers Day as a way of saying thank you. In addition, we will be creating more volunteering opportunities and improving communications to our volunteers.

**RHS Garden Wisley staff who helped with the planting of the pansy and viola demonstration.**



RHS / TMSANDALL



L: RHS / NICOLA HARVEY; R: RHS / GEORGI MABEE



L & R: RHS / SIRASTUDIO



**Top left: Behind the scenes of the RHS Chelsea Flower Show.**  
**Top right: Meeting visitors at RHS Garden Hyde Hall.**  
**Above left: Working with teachers at RHS Garden Harlow Carr.**  
**Above right: Staff at RHS Garden Harlow Carr and the Bramall Learning Centre.**  
**Left: Offering advice through the Campaign for School Gardening.**  
**Right: Volunteers generously donate their time and expertise.**



L: RHS / SIRASTUDIO; R: RHS / NEIL HEPWORTH



# Money matters

The financial results set out below show how money was raised and spent. The figures come from the *Annual Report & Consolidated Financial Statement 2012/2013*.

In 2012/13 we generated income of £81.3m (2011/12: £65.8m) boosted by the lease sale of the Lawrence Hall, London for £18m in May 2012. (Net proceeds of the sale are included in 'Other income').

Income from Membership, Arts and Media continued its year-on-year growth and increased from 2011/12 by 7 percent. Much of this was driven by achieving the highest-ever RHS membership at 400,795.

Income from RHS Gardens, Shows, Special Events and trading activities suffered from falling visitor volumes. Garden visitors reduced by 3.9 percent, although paying visitors within that fell by 18 percent from the previous year. Visitors to our shows also fell compared to 2011/12; by 12.5 percent at Hampton Court Palace and 15.5 percent at Tatton Park – yet despite conditions, the Society managed to deliver every one of its shows.

Total expenditure in the year was £60.4m (2011/12: £58.3m), an increase of £2.1m. The Key Investment Projects, which started during 2012/13, account for £970k of the increase from the previous year. Substantial investment is being made to the Society's regional reach with new offices in Scotland and Yorkshire. The RHS website underwent a total redesign and vital improvements made to the Society's IT infrastructure include a new customer relationship management system.

The exceptional lease sale of the Lawrence Hall is reflected by the net surplus of £20.9m. The historically more-normal operating surplus of £3.6m is a considerable reduction from last year's comparable surplus of £7.5m.

## CONSOLIDATED INCOME 2012/13 £m

	2012/13	2011/12
Membership, Arts and Media	18.1	16.9
Shows and Special Events	14.9	15.6
RHS Gardens	4.7	5.0
Legacies, donations and grants	2.9	4.1
Net trading and sponsorship	21.6	22.8
Other income	19.1	1.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>81.3</b>	<b>65.8</b>

## CONSOLIDATED EXPENDITURE 2012/13 £m

	2012/13	2011/12
Membership, Arts and Media	8.4	8.1
Shows and Special Events	14.4	14.3
RHS Gardens	15.4	13.8
Horticulture and Science	2.6	2.5
Community and Education	2.7	2.2
Net trading and sponsorship	16.0	16.3
Other expenditure	0.9	1.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>60.4</b>	<b>58.3</b>
<b>NET SURPLUS £m</b>	<b>20.9</b>	<b>7.5</b>



L: RHS / LEE BEELE; R: RHS / ANDY PARADISE



Plant diversity at RHS Garden Hyde Hall (left) will be enhanced through Key Investment Projects. Activities during National Gardening Week (above) made more people aware of our charitable work.

# Objectives, Achievements and Developments

The RHS was founded in 1804, and our core objective is to be the world's leading gardening charity by inspiring passion and excellence in the science, art and practice of horticulture. We are now embarking on a long-term investment plan that will change the face of the RHS and help secure the future of horticulture.

In everything we do, we will aim to use our guiding principles, which are to **inspire, involve, inform and improve.**

## Strategic objectives for 2012–2013

Summary of our key achievements against our strategic objectives:

**1 To be known, loved and trusted as the charity for all gardeners. We believe in the simple pleasures of gardening and all the benefits it brings, because gardening matters.**

- The RHS Experience exhibition, explaining the work we do, was staged at our flower shows at Cardiff, Malvern Spring, Chelsea, BBC Gardeners' World Live, Hampton Court Palace and Tatton Park. 45 percent of visitors to RHS Chelsea Flower Show commented that it was essential or very important to their enjoyment of the show.
- 1.76 million visitors were welcomed to our gardens. This was 5.7 percent fewer than in 2011/2012.
- Our website attracted an average of 631,000 unique visitors every month (an increase of 30 percent on the previous year). The number of 'friends' on our Facebook page doubled to 22,000 and we now have 29,000 followers on Twitter.
- Our Advisory Service answered 79,791 enquiries from gardeners.
- We organised the first annual National Gardening Week (6–22 April 2012). It was supported at all RHS Gardens and 150 gardens and nurseries across the UK.

**2 To safeguard and advance the science, art and practice of horticulture for the benefit of future generations and the environment. Who will protect all of the nation's individual gardens and plants if we don't?**

- In April 2012 we hosted the conference Horticulture: A Career to be Proud Of, chaired by Alan Titchmarsh drawing together speakers from across the sector of all ages and backgrounds, to raise the profile of horticulture as a viable and rewarding career.
- The John MacLeod Field Research Facility opened at RHS Garden Wisley in May 2012 to enable our scientists to carry out enhanced research into pests and diseases of concern to our members and all gardeners.



Members of Chapman Street Gardening Association, Loughborough work together to green-up their neighbourhood.



Inspirational displays at shows such as the RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show bring excellence in horticulture to hundreds of thousands of people every year.

- RHS Bursaries provided financial support for a range of horticultural projects including overseas expeditions, study tours, conference attendance and work placements at botanic and historic gardens around the world. Of 135 applications received, 74 percent were given a bursary. A combined total of £83,993 was awarded, enabling professional and student horticulturists, and other related professionals to broaden their skills, knowledge and experience.

### 3 To transform communities through gardening. We want to make the UK a better, greener and more beautiful place.

- Our Campaign for School Gardening welcomed its 16,160th member school in 2012. More than 3.5 million children are now involved with the campaign and school visits to our gardens have increased to 40,500.
- RHS Britain in Bloom had one of its most successful years – 1,686 communities were involved and 1,680 more local groups took on the It's Your Neighbourhood challenge. More than 300,000 volunteers across the country invested some 4.4 million hours last year.
- Working with the National Garden Scheme, we established the Elspeth Thompson Bursary. This annual fund provides financial assistance to amateur gardeners within community groups so they can create a garden or horticulture-based project for the benefit of the community, or to enable them to acquire horticultural knowledge and skills and to develop and share their love of gardening for the benefit of their community group.

### 4 To create world-leading horticulture that inspires people to garden. We want to 'wow' visitors with the wonder of gardening and encourage them to grow plants.

- Our successful and acclaimed flower shows continued to attract thousands of gardeners. Tickets to RHS Chelsea Flower Show sold out a record 30 days in advance and it welcomed more than 161,000 visitors – the highest number ever. Poor weather and the distraction of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games had a negative impact on attendance to the RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show (123,855 visitors) and the RHS Flower Show Tatton Park (69,127).
- We ran another successful Grow Your Own campaign with nearly 24,000 gardeners registering their interest. Of these, 89 percent were non-members. To date, more than 372,000 people have downloaded the RHS Grow Your Own iPhone app.
- We began planning the RHS Garden Hyde Hall Key Investment Project to address two main issues. One is to increase the diversity of the plant collection suited to Hyde Hall's climate and topography, and the second is to improve educational facilities through a new learning centre.

### 5 To nurture and grow our membership throughout the UK. We want to be accessible, relevant and indispensable to all gardeners, so that increasing numbers want to join us.

- At the end of the financial year, we had 400,795 members, a record high, and a net increase of 18,000 members on the previous year. Pleasingly, this growth was built on improvements in the recruitment of new members and the retention of existing members.
- The number of Fellows, our top tier of membership and another important source of support, reached 88.

### 6 To provide a voice for all gardeners. Our aim is to be the trusted voice of authority for the many and the few.

- We held a number of meetings with Affiliated Societies and their specialist panels and plant committees with the aim of improving the service we give to those gardeners with specialist interests.
- The RHS Plant Trials team worked closely with the gardening trade to explore ways for the RHS Award of Garden Merit (AGM) to appear more frequently at point of sale. We continue to work closely with organisations such as the

Horticulture Trades Association to ensure that the AGM and Perfect for Pollinators logos are used to maximum benefit, and so a united front can be given to government, for example, when needed for the benefit of gardeners.

### 7 To share and build expert knowledge – anything anyone ever wanted to know about horticulture from beginners to experts.

- Our Advisory Service handled a record 79,791 gardening enquiries, ranging from pest and disease identification to the best ways of growing specific plants.
- Work is well under way to redevelop our website. The newly designed site will significantly improve ease of navigation through more than 1,200 pages of content and provide additional functionality including premium content for registered users and members.

### 8 To delight our customers with exceptional service and products. We will put our customers at the heart of everything we do, improving their experience at every point throughout our organisation.

- The Company of Cooks has been reappointed as our catering partner at RHS Garden Wisley. Together we have created the Taste of Wisley where fresh seasonal produce grown in the garden is used in the preparation of the food, and our catering offer becomes part of visitors' experience of the garden.
- This year we began the process on investing in new interpretation across our four gardens. This project will enhance visitor enjoyment by improving orientation signage, and introducing discreet interpretation panels to increase understanding of how and why our curators have developed the plantings.

### 9 To be a great place to work where everyone makes a difference. We want RHS employees to enjoy their work, to know they make a difference and play their part in creating an exciting future together.

- Greater employee engagement in the working of our Society has been promoted by setting up 'Speakeasy' sessions where staff can discuss issues or queries directly with the Leadership Team, and the establishment of an employee suggestion scheme.
- Long service is being recognised by awards for people who have been with us between five and 30 years.
- We launched a new Rewards Policy in 2012, which includes new pay progression frameworks in retail, catering, curatorial and visitor services teams.

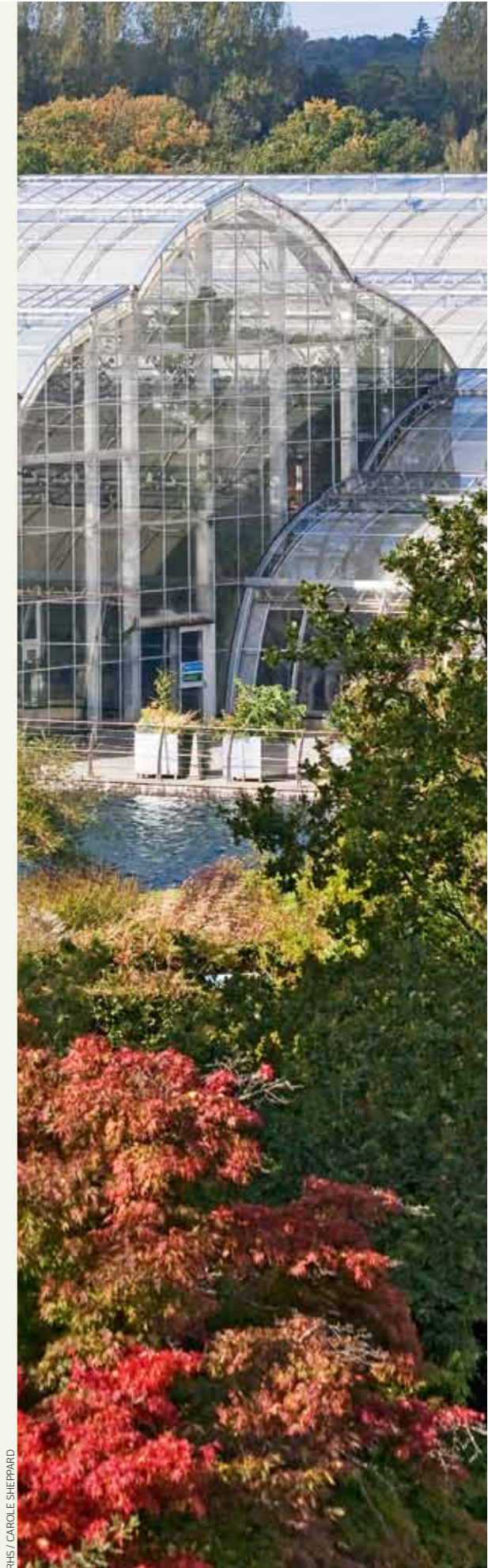
### 10 To have efficient business practices that deliver maximum income for our charitable purpose. We want to move fast and keep things simple, strip out bureaucracy, wage war on waste and have an effective, stable infrastructure.

- We appointed Blackbaud as our partner to develop a new customer relationship management system. 'Project Connect' will provide a comprehensive view of our members', and other customers' interactions with us – therefore enabling us to provide them with a more targeted and personal service.

## The year ahead

Developing the Key Investment Projects remains a major focus in order to change perceptions of the RHS and deliver improved results and more benefits for our members and the public. In this way we will increase our income to fund our charitable projects and deliver maximum public benefit.

There are, of course, many challenges ahead this year. An on-going recession, difficult retail conditions and erratic environmental and weather patterns – from drought and hosepipe bans to floods and seemingly never-ending cold and rain – could adversely affect our predominantly outdoor world. We firmly believe, however, that our strategic objectives, Key Investment Projects and our aim to work in ever-closer cooperation, will deliver more benefits to an increasingly broad range of beneficiaries. We are confident these activities will create a strong future for us, our members, staff and supporters.



RHS Garden Wisley, where The Company of Cooks now uses garden-grown and seasonal produce to offer visitors a Taste of Wisley.



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