



South & South East in Bloom & London in Bloom

Growing Greener Communities

June 2023



**Nod to the past, with an eye on the future.**

I have had the good fortune to visit and judge several entries in the Heritage Category over the last couple of weeks. During my visits, I am reminded that the world of Horticulture and Gardening is wide-ranging and amazingly diverse. I am also reminded that while we pursue sustainability, transitioning from annuals to perennials, our historic gardens beat us hundreds of years ago. These traditional gardens seek to achieve a balance between maintaining the garden's recent historical past with recent events such as Box Blight and Box tree caterpillars, which have become a serious threat, completely defoliating them and ruining prized topiary and historic designs.

The Head Gardener and their teams maintain these most horticulturally diverse gardens, including Royalty plantings from days of yore. Extensive herbaceous borders, Orchards, Rose Gardens, ornamental ponds and lakes and such things as Nutteries, Ferneries, and, of course, miles of Yew hedging all add to the complexity of managing these spaces.

Clearly a challenge for us mere mortal gardeners. So, gone are the "suited and booted" with their Bowler Hats ( Cheers, Jim) to the now modern Head Gardener dealing with the challenges of maintaining gardens as their owners require, ensuring that the paying visitor has a successful visit and bringing gardens many hundreds of years old into the modern world using new methods and techniques.

To someone who has spent a lifetime in professional horticulture, it never ceases to amaze what these gardens represent as we seek to become more modern in our approach to climatic change. I salute the Head gardeners of today entrusted with maintaining these unique places and whose knowledge, skill and experience leave these gardens in safe hands for the next generation of Gardeners, Head Gardeners and to the visitors who flock to see these very special places.

Ed:

## The first experience of the Chelsea Flower Show was in 1966. – Jim Buttress VMH, Patron, Judge & Bloom Advocate



I was a student at the Royal Horticultural College at Wisley and was fortunate to be selected with another student to be part of a team creating a Japanese Garden.

Since that first visit, I look forward with the same excitement every year.

Unfortunately, I believe the Show has suffered the effects of COVID and the loss of regular exhibitors over the last two years.

I am pleased to say at Chelsea 2023, the Main Pavilion and some of the Gardens were stunning.

The Pavilion was awash with colour and quality.

As a Chair of one of the judging teams, I am fortunate to attend the Show on the Sunday and assess the Exhibits my team will judge very early on the Monday morning.

I arrived at the Showground at 7am on the Sunday and proceeded through the Hospital Gate with my suitcase and walking stick to be greeted by the Security Guard who asked if I was a resident at the Hospital!

The advantage of an early start means you can visit and enjoy all the Gardens which many of the visitors struggle to do when the Show opens.

Sponsorship is vital in creating these Gardens.

This year most of the Gardens were dedicated to a charity.

I endorse the opportunity to highlight the incredible work of the various Charities. The media and television coverage ensures their work is seen by a vast audience.

The Garden which I enjoyed the most was Horatio's Garden which incidentally was selected by the judges as Best Show Garden. I did not know this when I visited the Garden.

The Charity was started by Dr. Olivia Chapple whose son Horatio died in a polar bear attack in the Arctic aged 17 in 2011 in Svalbard, North of Mainland Norway. At the time he was a volunteer at a spinal injury unit.

This was the Shows first fully wheelchair accessible garden and like the previous seven will be relocated to the Princess Royal Spinal Injuries Centre in Sheffield.

The aim of the Charity is to see a thriving Horatio's Garden in all 11 Spinal Centres in the UK.

The designers Charlotte Harris and Hugo Bugg are extremely talented with tremendous potential for the future.

The design highlights the key qualities of these special places while incorporating influences from the Sheffield region.

This is very evident in the planting which is influenced by the Flora and Fauna of the wooded valleys that once provided the essential timber for the forges and furnaces of the Steel City and in a water, table inspired by Sheffield's Cutlers Heritage.

The designers discussed their ideas with people who had suffered life-changing spinal injury and they all agreed that whilst providing the necessary mobility needs, the main aim is to provide a restorative haven incorporating sensory experiences like water and encouraging wildlife into the garden.

Everyone is to be congratulated on one of the Best Show Gardens I have seen at Chelsea.

The Savills Garden designed by Mark Gregory evoked the experience of stepping into the intimate walled garden, seasonal potager setting of a country hotel.

The Garden combined beautiful ornamental and edible planting. At the heart of the Garden is a working kitchen with a true pot to plate experience which was a first for Chelsea.

The attention to detail was excellent and like many of the visitors, I could not understand the judge's decision to only award a silver gilt medal!

Around 60% of the Gardens at this year's Show have some form of edimentals.

The Grow Your-Own Movement is very popular with many young families looking at edible flowers as opposed to rows of onions!

I am delighted the RHS will only consider Gardens that are to be relocated to a permanent site after the Show.

This year the main pavilion provided fantastic colour and quality.

Due to the previous warm summer and hard winter the rose displays were stunning.

A first-time entry this year by the Caley Brothers was a delightful stand of homegrown edible mushrooms.





Founded in 2019 by sisters Jodie & Lorraine, taking the heritage of their Grandparent's '1950s grocery business, Caley Brothers are a small independent business based in West Sussex.

They designed a curious display of engineered paper plinths that can be seen growing out of the moss-covered forest floor. On top of each plinth was an individual mushroom variety, grown its own unique medium.

Growing on coffee grounds, sawdust, soy hulls and books.

All the mushrooms that were on display were grown on waste products. They can be grown at home from ready-to-grow kits.

The exhibit received a gold medal and thoroughly deserved the New Design Award.

Finally, for the first time at Chelsea, a co-operative of small nurseries joined forces with eight members of the Plant Fairs Roadshow (a collection of Growers from across the South of England, some showing for the first time). It was known as Speciality Corner.

Each Nursery was given a 22 sq. foot space and a shared central hub.

They had an excellent selection of unusual plants for sale.

The RHS are to be congratulated on the new initiative, which I hope will be replicated at some of their other Shows.

Roll on Chelsea 2024.

Next time my judging travels, take in Bloom Phoenix Park Dublin, Gardeners World at the NEC and Hampton Court.

Keep safe, keep smiling and keep Gardening.

Jim

## What can I use instead of slug pellets? Jean Griffin – S&SEiB Deputy Chair, Trustee, Judge & Broadcaster

Slug Pellets containing metaldehyde were banned over a year ago and can no longer be used or sold. So what can we do to protect our precious plants? There is a UK ban on using this type of slug pellets to control slugs and snails in gardens. Some gardening experts have advised that DIY beer traps are the best way to



contain the slimy critters. Other alternatives to slug pellets are.

- **Trapping them under cardboard** - the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) recommends trapping slugs by putting a piece of cardboard down in your garden, held down by a stone. Once in a while, check for slugs stuck to the cardboard and remove them.
- **Slug and snail tape** can create a protective barrier around your plants with a copper wire, creating a small electric charge that wards off slugs and snails. Fix the self-adhesive onto pots, seed trays and garden furniture.
- **Egg Shells** - a cheap and quick fix is to break up egg shells and place the crushed pieces around the soil of the stems. Slugs and snails find it difficult to move over the sharp material.
- **Coffee Grounds** - slugs and snails are said to dislike the aroma of coffee so putting coffee grounds in

key snail/ slug areas will ensure they move swiftly on.

- **Wool Waste Pellets** - when wet, wool waste pellets swell, and slugs dislike their fibres, so kindly make it an eco-way to remove them.
- **Changing watering habits** - try to avoid extra wetness, consider your watering habits and if they could be changed. **Water in the morning so plants have time to dry out throughout the day and absorb the water.** Always water at the base of the plant and not overhead. Use drip irrigation or water by hand.
- Keep plants healthy and growing strongly; plant more than you need; remove as much debris and detritus as possible; this is where they hide and lay eggs.

## Hosepipe Bans – what can you water.

Water companies covering Kent and Sussex have temporarily banned the use of hosepipes. One of the companies, South East Water defines a garden as "a private or public garden, a lawn, a park, a grass verge, an area of grass used for sport or recreation, an allotment used for non-commercial purposes, and any other green space".

The company says it does not include agricultural land or land used for growing crops, fruit, or vegetables.

The main rule is that you cannot use a hosepipe connected to mains water to water your plants or lawn. You will need to use a watering can or bucket instead.

The ban also applies to sprinklers, but that is OK if you have a drip-fed irrigation system. You cannot use a hosepipe to clean paths, patios, or other artificial outdoor surfaces.



An exception is if you have a pond with fish in it - you are allowed to use a hosepipe to top it up if it is unavoidable and for the welfare of the fish.

New lawns, as long the turf was laid before the ban came into force, can only be watered using a hosepipe for the first 28 days and then not between 08:00 and 10:00 and 17:00 and 21:00.

Trees, saplings and hedging planted before the ban can also be watered with a hosepipe if this cannot be done "reasonably" with a watering can.

Plants in the ground or pots don't count as a garden as long as they are under cover - such as in a greenhouse, outbuilding or a permanent canopy.

If you're growing food crops in your garden or allotment, they can be watered using a hosepipe, again "if this cannot be reasonably" watered with a watering can.

Hope this helps, but please check what's permissible in your area.

## Plants & Trees of Folklore – Kate Harris – Co-Campaign Manager

Before the time of science and modern medicine, folklore, legend, and mythology played a huge part in people's lives. From the time humans gained the ability to record their experiences, dragons, witches, wizards, fairies, sea monsters, mermaids, willow-the-wisps, and more became part of written tales shared and passed down. They became part of images, sea shanties and songs. You only have to look as far as the witch trials on our own shores to understand how seriously these subjects were taken. From Druids, Pagans, Celts, Vikings and more, stories from all across Europe and beyond form cautionary tales and when something is so commonplace, why would it not be real? Invading forces were also bound to have left their own mark on our mythological history.

But it wasn't just about mythical creatures; trees and plants were also a huge part of folklore. Commonplace trees and plants also had their part to play, both good and bad. They could be a shelter for mythical creatures or ways to ward off evil spirits and protect our homes. The power of everyday flora was immense, and given my love of all things mystical and a little spooky, how could I resist looking into this a little further?



There is a difference between myth, folklore and legend. Myths are generally seen as tales of gods and the divine. Legends are those stories of heroes, like our own Robin Hood or King Arthur. And finally, folklore involves tales of fairies, kelpies, dragons, witches or even the illusive Nessie, to name just a few.

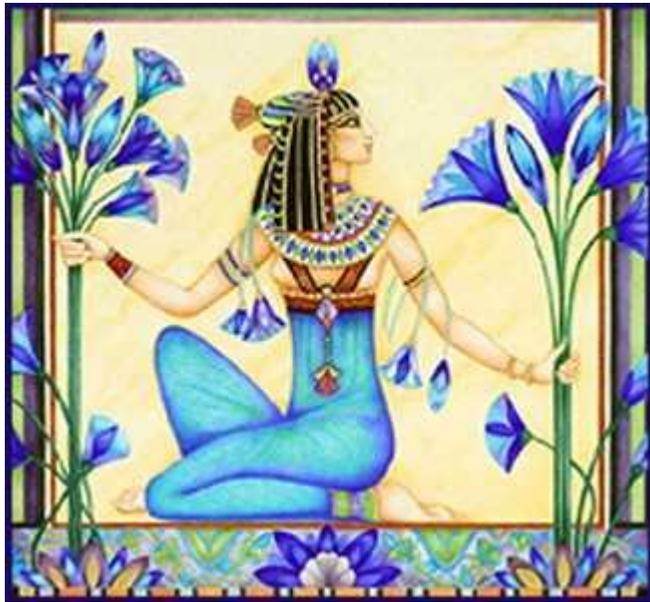
You can't deny the feeling that you get whilst walking in our native woods and forest; there is something quite magical and calming and sometimes a little eerie. Given how much of the land would have been covered in the forest at the time, it is no wonder the important role plants and trees played. Most of us have heard of the phrase "knock on wood" or "touch wood" when we hope that our good luck will continue or are looking for a little extra luck. But where did this come from? There seem to be versions of this superstition in many parts of the World, but our strongest link here in the UK comes from German paganism. Pagan, Germany. The premise behind most of the versions is that touching wood is to gain the protection of tree spirits as they watch over you.

But the importance of trees goes further. Specific trees held different significance through the ages. Take the mighty Oak, for example. Druids saw Oaks as holy trees and believed they had magical properties. Water collected from these trees was said to have healing properties. The tannins in these trees were said to contain healing magic. But were these ideas so farfetched? Tannins are still used today to calm fears and to stanch wounds by modern herbalists and healers.

The Rowan also has a history rooted in folklore, this time for its protective qualities. It was said that a baby's cradle made of Rowan would protect the baby from evil spirits and even witches. And planting a Rowan outside your door was believed to ward off black magic.

But not all trees are good, it would appear. Now I have read contradicting versions of the power of the Elder. A few said it was to protect from witches. However, most said the opposite, with Elders having a resident witch living inside. If you had one near your door, the witch could jump out and into your home when you opened your front door. And you definitely do not want to build your baby's cradle of Elder wood, as this would have invited a witch into your home and given direct access to your sleeping infant.

There are so many that I could mention, the Yew symbolised death and rebirth in Celtic and Norse mythology, and the mighty Pine symbolised longevity and resilience in many cultures. Or the Apple, a symbol of both knowledge and temptation. But it is not just trees that were important in folklore. Throughout history, plants have been used for their healing properties, medicinal benefits, and spiritual benefits and protection.



The Lotus flower is associated with creation and enlightenment in Egyptian, Hindu and Buddhist cultures. Or the Mandrake, long linked to witchcraft and magic. Wolfsbane deterred werewolves, and garlic is deadly to vampires, so they say. The Rose symbolises love and passion, romance and even divinity. Aphrodite is said to have created Oregano to symbolise happiness.

I could go on and list many more plants and trees and their importance to cultures all over the World, but you get the idea. And even though we have moved on in how we see the World around us and how we heal, plants and flowers' healing properties have formed the basis of many modern medicines.

The fear of mythical creatures may no longer govern our lives, but we still have a good fascination for the unknown. Our TVs and movie theatres are still full of stories of witches, wizards and vampires, and all manner of creatures. Many cultures have beliefs still heavily rooted in superstition and herbal medicine and homoeopathy still harness the power of flora to heal all over the World.

Your garden or local park may contain plants with magical properties, which I think is amazing. But whatever you do, remember not to plant an Elder near your front door because, after the few years we had, no one needs to allow a witch to escape and start causing all havoc.

## Did you know?

Horticulture and Gardening is a most diverse subject area containing many different branches, many of which we, the public, may need to be made aware of and their importance to our way of life, economy and well-being.

- Pomology - dealing with fruit cultivation is known as pomology.
- Olericulture - dealing with vegetable cultivation such as beans, tomatoes, et,
- Floriculture deals with flower cropping, such as roses, carnations, and Gardening.
- Arboriculture Branch of horticulture deals with the assortment, planting, maintenance, and removal of trees, shrubs, and other woody plants.
- Landscaping - producing, presenting, and caring for landscapes, flowers, and other plants.
- Viticulture – The cultivation and retailing of grapes are known as viticulture, including Oenology- the Study of all the characteristics of wine and winemaking.
- Including Plant Breeding and Genetics, Seed Science, Crop-Physiology, Plant Pathology, Plant Protection, Soil Science, and Entomology, to name just a few

## Theresa Short

Sadly we hear of the passing of a dear friend of London in Bloom, Theresa Short. Theresa was Royal Parks Assistant Manager at Kensington Gardens and a long-time supporter of London in Bloom, judging for over 25 years. An obituary will appear next month.

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London in Bloom is grateful for the continuing support of the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association, which has provided a grant to London in Bloom for 2022. MPGA is a long-established Charity that has played a vital role in preserving and improving countless gardens, neglected sites, and green open spaces across London. We provide modest grants to those who share with us a desire to improve the environment and, thus, the quality of life for the local community. Our work brings us into contact with various groups, including local councils, schools, hospitals, hospices, museums, voluntary organisations, and community groups.

The Worshipful Company of Gardeners, first mentioned in City Corporation records in 1345, is a survivor of the medieval craft guilds which exercised control over the practice of their crafts and ensured proper training through the system of apprenticeship. The Company is a "living" guild, and the numbers of its members are both professionals and amateurs actively involved in the craft. A common bond of horticulture and gardens unites all.





Grosvenor Landscape Management manage many green spaces across Belgravia and Mayfair as part of Grosvenor Property UK. Grosvenor Landscape Management has worked closely with London in Bloom for many years. It is an award-winning organisation that joins as a partner to further its and London in Bloom's aims of supporting diverse and sustainable Landscapes, Parks & gardens across Greater London.



The Royal Parks Guild is a voluntary Partner Organization of The Royal Parks responsible for managing and preserving over 5,000 acres of historic parkland across London. Our aim is a serious one – championing The Royal Parks by promoting their qualities, including horticultural excellence and historical significance, whilst offering practical support where appropriate. Allied to this is the service to its members through providing and developing a broad range of social activities and keeping members abreast of current and past news of The Royal Parks.

The Royal Parks has worked with London in Bloom since its inception in 1967.

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Windowflowers support the London in Bloom Annual Seminar & Awards.

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