



Royal
Horticultural
Society

Sharing the best in Gardening

A year with the RHS 2016



Glorious foliage and texture in June at RHS Garden Wisley.

Celebrating success

RHS President Sir Nicholas Bacon reflects on a selection of 2016 highlights

As I move into my fourth year as RHS President, I am delighted by the progress made by the Society, under the expert guidance of the Director General, Sue Biggs, and our Council. We have been able to effect change on many fronts, and that illustrates the dedication and talent we have within the Society. I consider myself incredibly fortunate to be President at this exciting time.

I am glad to report that during 2016/17 (our financial year runs from 1 Feb 2016 to 31 Jan 2017) a range of RHS developments moved from the planning to the implementation phase. Additionally, we honoured the Queen's 90th birthday at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show in May with two magnificent floral arches and a photographic record of Her Majesty's many visits to the show.

We are ambitious, and much progress has been made with the Ornamental Horticulture Roundtable Group, chaired by our Director General. This group of organisations from across the industry held the initial Health and Horticulture Conference at the RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show in July, which brought together health and public policy departments, and a cross-section from the industry, for the first time, including former CEO of the NHS, Lord Crisp. We all know 'instinctively' that gardening is good for our health. At last we and others are beginning to translate that 'instinct' into evidence that will allow the NHS to treat patients in a more holistic manner.

Promoting horticultural careers

In 2013, the horticulture sector delivered the *Horticulture Matters* report which drew attention to a looming green-skills crisis threatening the long-term sustainability of UK horticulture. We vowed to do all we could to highlight the many highly skilled and valuable career opportunities within the sector. The Ornamental Horticulture Roundtable Group has done much to change the perception of gardening and position it as a viable career choice for the most able in our society and offering career opportunities for people of all skill levels.

We completed this work last year with 'Green Plan It', a new initiative with UK secondary schools. It involves teams of young people working with professional mentors on projects to design green space within their school or community. The project ran in eight UK cities and helped 774 children understand the benefits of plants and gardening generally, and horticulture specifically, as a great potential career.



'If anyone ever doubted the power of gardening to act as a catalyst for inclusion, they should speak to the residents of the Angell Town estate.'

In Greater Manchester, the realisation of the Society's newest garden, RHS Garden Bridgewater, took a significant step forward with the submission of a planning application that will be the biggest gardening project in Europe. We also recruited five high-profile ambassadors to take the horticultural message to new and diverse audiences and are delighted to have the support of our new RHS Ambassadors: Carol Klein, nursery woman and television presenter; broadcaster Baroness Floella Benjamin; herb expert Jekka McVicar; Professor Nigel Dunnett, urban landscape pioneer; and plantsman Jamie Butterworth.

Community gardening was very much highlighted. The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, joined the RHS and residents of Angell Town estate in Brixton to mark the opening of a garden created in partnership with the RHS. This really was a great example of how gardening can unite a community that has suffered violence and isolation. If anyone ever doubted the power of gardening to act as a catalyst for inclusion, they should speak with the residents of the Angell Town estate.

Impressive figure

Our four RHS Gardens reached a significant milestone when they welcomed their two millionth visitor. Quite rightly, staff at all the gardens were immensely proud.

The RHS Campaign for School Gardening celebrated its 30,000th member. Ten years ago, at the launch of the campaign, such a success story could never have been imagined. To put that number into context, it means that 67 percent of all primary schools and 77 percent of secondary schools across the UK are now using our free online resources to inspire gardening activities with their pupils.

Despite the many successes enjoyed over the past year, we at the RHS can say with total confidence that we will not rest on our laurels and will continue to improve our performance. And it appears my confidence in the RHS is shared by Government. Sue Biggs was awarded CBE in recognition of her services to horticulture and the environment.

What a truly positive end to my review of 2016/17.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nicholas Bacon'.

Sir Nicholas Bacon, RHS President

Plans are becoming reality

RHS Director General Sue Biggs on the year ahead

As part of the commitment the RHS made to our members and supporters – to increase the reach and breadth of our work and change the future of horticulture – we are moving many projects from the planning to the development phase. These projects are being delivered as part of a £160 million investment the RHS is making in UK horticulture over the next decade. This is being funded by £60 million from the RHS, a further £60 million made from our operating surplus over 10 years and £40 million from your support.

Throughout 2016 we worked extremely hard to stage the first RHS Chatsworth Flower Show (7–11 June 2017). Although heavy rain and high winds caused traffic challenges on the first members day, I am pleased to say it was overall a great success with several floral exhibitors even completely selling out of plants. Set in the stunning grounds of the Chatsworth Estate, Derbyshire, the show's theme of 'Design Revolutionaries' celebrated the spirit of horticultural 'shining lights' such as Joseph Paxton. It is fitting that the first Chatsworth Flower Show should honour those who have broken new ground, bent more than a few horticultural rules, set new standards and achieved the seemingly unachievable.

Moving in the right direction

The development of RHS Garden Bridgewater, the charity's newest garden, is moving steadily along. Very much like a swan on a lake, the majesty of the movement above the waterline is underpinned by unseen – but crucial – work to ensure we keep moving in the right direction at the right pace. The garden, which will breathe new life into the historic grounds of Worsley New Hall in Salford, will be a major step towards the RHS making good on our promise to help more people, from more communities, to have the opportunity to experience the many life-enhancing benefits of plants and gardens.

But while our capital activity gathers pace, our intellectual activity is also moving forward. This year RHS scientists have developed a report that confronts what is perhaps one of the greatest threats facing UK horticulture: climate change.

The much-anticipated *Gardening in a Changing Climate* report, launched in April 2017, looks at the impact climate change is already having on gardening and gardeners and the practical steps we can take to survive and thrive in a changing world. It



'RHS Garden Bridgewater will breathe new life into the historic grounds of Worsley New Hall in Salford'.

also provides information on the plants we could grow to meet the challenge of climate change in our local area. This incredibly important piece of work places horticultural science where it should be – at the very centre of gardening. Helping the UK's gardeners understand more about the changing world around them is at its heart.

Addressing social and environmental challenges is a thread running throughout our show activity in 2017. At the RHS Chelsea Flower Show, the RHS 'Greening Grey Britain Garden' highlighted the many positive benefits that plants and gardens provide, over and above the aesthetic, such as capturing air pollutants and reducing urban flooding. At the inaugural RHS Chatsworth Flower Show we unveiled the 'RHS Garden for a Changing Climate' with two versions of a small suburban plot. One based on the current climate, the other providing a glimpse into the future. And at the RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show, the Gardens for a Changing World category raised awareness of the UK's declining wildlife highlighting how gardens can again be guardians of our valuable wildlife.

Behind the scenes

In the corridors of power, the Ornamental Horticulture Roundtable Group, made up of the country's major horticultural bodies and which I have the pleasure of chairing, continues to build bridges with politicians, policy-makers and key influencers. This unseen and generally unheralded work is vital if UK horticulture is to achieve its ambitions, including the recruitment of a highly educated, motivated and sustainable workforce. This year we aim to speak to more MPs and Ministers as the horticulture sector, like most other industries in the UK economy, wrestles with the opportunities and threats that our withdrawal from the EU presents.

We have a lot of important work to do, but I am incredibly excited about what we can achieve together in 2017/18. These are exciting times for the RHS and UK horticulture generally.

With your continued support, patience and understanding the RHS will be a much stronger, more innovative and more dynamic charity. You encourage us to be better, brighter and more courageous and for that I am truly grateful.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sue Biggs'.

Sue Biggs, RHS Director General



Designer Tom Stuart-Smith's vision of RHS Garden Bridgewater.



Community planting event in Cornwall supported by the RHS Community Outreach team.



RHS 'Greening Grey Britain Garden' at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2016.

What the RHS does

A summary of our principal activities and how we provide a diverse and broad range of benefits to our members and the UK public.



Horticulture and gardens

We have four gardens; RHS Garden Harlow Carr in North Yorkshire, RHS Garden Hyde Hall in Essex, RHS Garden Rosemoor in Devon and our flagship garden, RHS Garden Wisley in Surrey. Our fifth, RHS Garden Bridgewater in Greater Manchester, is in development. Across our sites we inspire members and visitors with beautiful, diverse plants and innovative design while demonstrating the importance of horticultural best practice and provision for everyone to learn new skills.

Our Plant Trials assess plant performance and those considered to grow well earn the RHS Award of Garden Merit (AGM), enabling gardeners to easily identify plants that will thrive in most garden situations. Additionally, plants particularly good for pollinating insects are identified by the RHS Perfect for Pollinators logo.



Education

We provide a 'ladder of qualifications', from beginner to the prestigious degree-level Master of Horticulture (RHS) and collaboration with universities to deliver PhDs and Fellowships. As an awarding body recognised by the Office of Qualifications and Examination Regulations, our qualifications can be accessed through colleges and other UK partners.

In our gardens we offer practical and scientific training

through the RHS School of Horticulture, RHS Apprenticeships and the National Garden Scheme Apprenticeships.

Our Campaign for School Gardening encourages teachers, parents and children at both primary and secondary schools to get involved in gardening. For adults we organise lectures, courses and workshops around the country. RHS bursaries support plant research and global expeditions, study tours and conference attendance.

Communities

Core to our overall mission is the work we do in communities, with RHS advisors in the East of England, London, South West, Midlands, North West, North East, Yorkshire and Scotland. Teams offer training and advice to schools and volunteer groups so they can make a positive difference to where they live.

Shows

We organise flower shows at Chelsea in London, Hampton Court Palace in Surrey, Tatton Park in Cheshire and in June launched a new show at Chatsworth, Derbyshire. The four RHS Gardens hold seasonal shows, and the Horticultural Halls in London have a full programme of events. Shows held in partnership include RHS Flower Show Cardiff (with Cardiff Council) and RHS Malvern Spring Festival; we also contribute to Malvern Autumn Show (with the Three Counties Agricultural Society). As part of RHS On Tour we demonstrate our work and gave advice at London Farmers' Markets and community shows.



RHS scientific and heritage collections

The RHS Herbarium at Wisley, the largest dedicated to ornamental plants in the UK, holds an internationally important collection of dried and pressed plant specimens of cultivated plants. We also have invertebrate and plant pathogen reference collections.

The history and art of horticulture is centred in the RHS Lindley Library, London which holds more than 30,000 works of botanical art and 80,000 titles (the oldest dating to 1514). It provides an unmatched reference for gardeners, journalists and the public from the UK and overseas. The Library at Vincent Square, London and its branches at each RHS Garden offer free access to everyone most days of the week and a lending facility to RHS members. In the Lindley Hall, London and our four Gardens, art exhibitions and talks are organised for members and the wider public.

Science

Our scientific research and the *RHS Science Strategy* provides evidence-based knowledge to help people, beginners to professionals, garden successfully and sustainably. Each year our scientists publish 60 peer-review and edited papers, which advances horticultural practices and informs government policy. We are the authoritative source for the naming of cultivated plants; through monitoring and knowledge sharing, our science helps safeguard plant health and pest management in UK gardens.

Sharing the best in gardening

We want everyone to be the best gardener they can be, so we share horticultural and gardening information through our website, social media platforms and in print. Our website (rhs.org.uk) attracted 18.5 million unique users, a 5 percent increase in traffic year-on-year.

We publish *The Garden*, a monthly magazine for all members, as well as periodicals such as *Hanburyana*, *The Plantsman* and *The Orchid Review*. Our extensive list of horticultural books keeps our members and the public informed about the latest skills, design and practice of horticulture.

For our members we offer gardening advice via telephone, post and online, while everyone can benefit from advice in person through our gardens, our shows and RHS On Tour.

We are the national organising body for RHS Britain in Bloom and RHS It's Your Neighbourhood community gardening movement, working in partnership with 17 regions and nations. RHS Britain in Bloom promotes environmental and horticultural good practice in local communities and enables the RHS to support UK gardeners at a local level.

We link to schools and groups such as Affiliated Societies (including gardening clubs) to benefit the national and international network of gardeners.

Our Windlesham Trophy, run annually with the Ministry of Justice, awards and encourages gardening in prisons. The 2016 winner was HMP Wymott, Lancashire.

Our Vision

To enrich everyone's life through plants, and make the UK a greener and more beautiful place

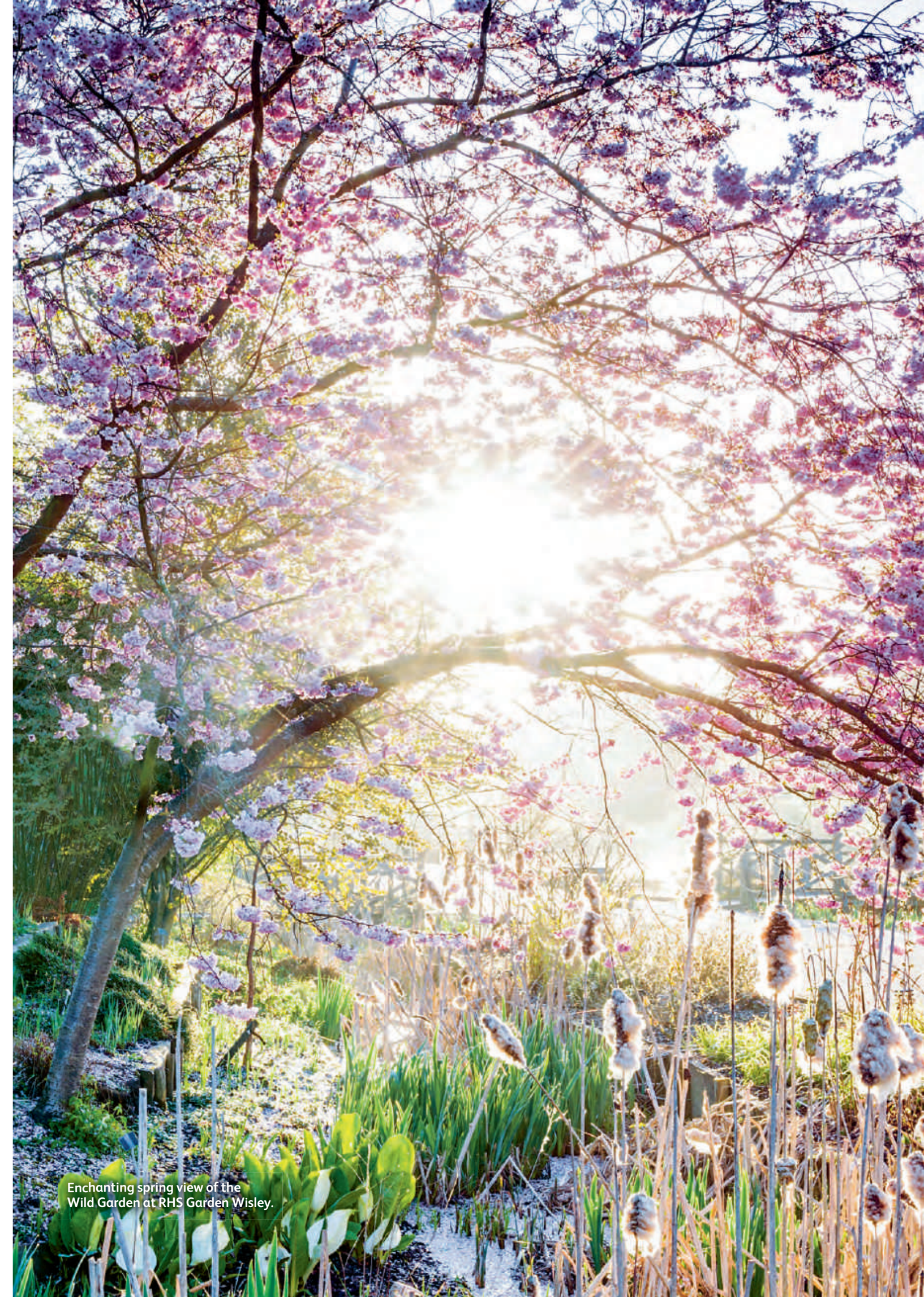
Horticulture touches all our lives – from the food we eat to the clothes we wear and the house plants in our office. But it is at risk through too few people choosing it as a career, front gardens being turned to paving and parking, a squeeze on public funding for community green spaces, and an influx of new, potentially devastating pests and diseases.

The RHS Vision has led to our Strategic Investment Programme – our promise to invest £160 million into the future of horticulture so we can shine a light on the industry and encourage more people to work in it, enjoy it and celebrate it. As part of this we are actively seeking to raise funds of £40m, to make the UK a greener, healthier and more beautiful place.

Key Investment Projects

We have established seven new projects so we can deliver our £160m investment programme.

- 1** An extensive programme at RHS Garden Wisley, Surrey including a Centre for Horticultural Science and Learning, a new Welcome Building, plant centre and investment in the Wisley village community
- 2** Creating a new Learning Centre, Visitor Centre, activities hub and restaurant, and new horticultural features at RHS Garden Hyde Hall in Essex
- 3** Restoration of the Harrogate Arms and Bath House and surrounding landscape at RHS Garden Harlow Carr, North Yorkshire
- 4** Develop RHS Garden Bridgewater, in Greater Manchester (our fifth garden)
- 5** Invest in Community Outreach so gardening can transform more lives across the UK
- 6** Provide new access to the RHS Lindley Library so we can better share our collections
- 7** Raise the profile of careers through the Horticulture Matters campaign



Enchanting spring view of the Wild Garden at RHS Garden Wisley.

2016 – a very active

Through all our work we use horticulture and science to make a positive difference to everyone's lives and wellbeing.



Working with inner-city communities

A diverse London community came together to transform the Angell Town estate, Brixton, using plants and materials from the 'RHS Greening Grey Britain Garden' designed by Ann-Marie Powell for the RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2016. Members of the local community and RHS staff worked together to relocate plants from the show garden and rehome them in their community garden, as part of the *Evening Standard* 'The Estate We're In' project. The garden was officially opened by London Mayor Sadiq Khan (above).

Record number of members

472,157
RHS members

Each one of our 472,157 members, the most ever recorded by the Society, has direct access to the RHS so they can enhance their enjoyment and knowledge of gardening, and improve their health and wellbeing through plants and green spaces.

year



DANIEL HAMBURY / STELLA PICTURES LTD

2m
garden
visitors

Giving everyone access to beautiful gardens

The four RHS Gardens, with free access to members, are places where everyone can appreciate and benefit from the beauty of nature and ornamental plants.

In 2016–2017, for the first time, we welcomed a record 2 million visitors to our gardens.



The Cottage Garden at RHS Garden Rosemoor.

30,000
schools and
groups

Using horticulture to improve science and learning at school

From its launch 10 years ago, the RHS Campaign for School Gardening now works with 30,000 primary and secondary schools and youth groups in the UK. Through our scheme to bring horticulture into the school curriculum, children have spent valuable time outside the classroom, learnt how to grow and understand the value of fresh food, and experienced how gardening can help with learning in other subjects such as maths and art. They are supported by RHS Regional Advisors and via schoolgardening.rhs.org.uk



The RHS is helping to get children to grow their own.

2016 – a very active year

Be hands-on while listening to an RHS podcast.



3m
podcast
downloads

Gardening with your ears

More than 3 million downloads of our podcasts were listened to by gardeners accessing them through iTunes and the RHS website (rhs.org.uk/podcasts). By combining our horticultural knowledge with available technology we create fortnightly podcasts (and monthly 'specials' for members) of around 20 minutes, and reach out to our valued regular listeners and new audiences. Subjects range from the science of gardening to behind the scenes tours of our shows to more practical gardening advice.

Exploring space through Rocket Science

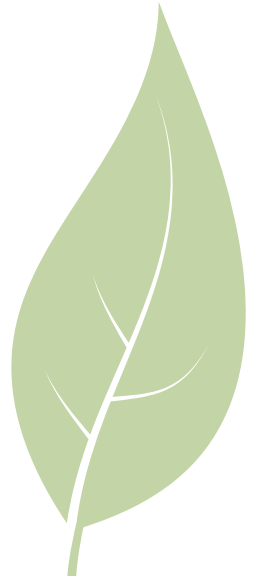
Our most ambitious school project to date involved 600,000 children in more than 8,000 schools. Rocket Science, a partnership project with the UK Space Agency, involved sending seed of salad rocket (*Eruca sativa*) into space to spend time on the International Space Station with British European Space Agency astronaut Tim Peake. On the seed's return to Earth, after a 90,629,181km round trip, pupils grew them alongside seed from the same batch that had remained on Earth – and found the latter grew the best. Our special concluding report *Rocket Science: Our Voyage of Discovery* can be downloaded from our website (rhs.org.uk).

182
days in
space



The Rocket Science project enthralled schoolchildren.

Bringing happiness through horticulture
by community gardening in Leeds.



Health, happiness and horticulture

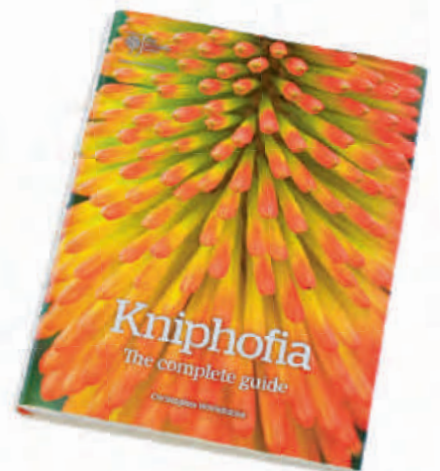
At the RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show we hosted the first Health and Horticulture Conference. As part of the Ornamental Horticulture Roundtable Group we welcomed 150 delegates from many different sectors. It resulted in the Health and Horticulture Charter Framework to better understand and use horticulture for the good of the nation's health (rhs.org.uk/health-and-horticulture-charter).



440
pages

Red-hot monograph

RHS Science and RHS Media worked together to publish our first monograph in 60 years. *Kniphofia: The Complete Guide* by Christopher Whitehouse covers all 70 species and 160 cultivars of this perennial, also known as red-hot poker. This is the first in a new suite of horticultural publishing by the RHS that will help us share our scientific knowledge better.



A helping hand from the RHS

We provide opportunities to build skills, careers and confidence by sharing our passion for plants and gardens.



Liz Maynard

Gardener at Sissinghurst Castle, Kent

I received an RHS bursary for a two-week visit to New York to learn about community, urban and school gardens, and the role that botanical gardens play supporting them. In addition to visiting key New York gardens I shadowed Bronx Green-Up – the community gardening outreach team of the New York Botanical Garden.

The bursary allowed me to embark on a varied and educational adventure. I returned with a sound belief that there is a huge opportunity for large institutions and botanical gardens to reach out to communities and provide the guidance and support they need to start their own horticultural adventure.



Matthew Brewer

Senior Horticulturist,
RHS Garden Harlow Carr, Yorkshire

After gaining my horticultural degree in 2011 when I was 22, I decided I needed more practical experience so I undertook a one-year traineeship with the floral and woodland teams at RHS Garden Wisley, Surrey. It was my year spent with the RHS that turned me from a keen enthusiast to a professional horticulturist. It was not just the well-structured course or being surrounded by knowledgeable RHS staff that helped me get to where I am today. Training with the RHS opened many doors for me. It enabled me to successfully work through the Kew Diploma Course at Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew and then gain my current role at Harlow Carr.



Reegan Watt

Attended 'Grow to Eat', an
RHS Community Outreach
Learning Programme, Renfrewshire

I had never really settled into a position I enjoyed. My career aspirations were to work with young people and I was approached by my employability worker to see if I would volunteer on the RHS 'Grow to Eat' project. It encouraged me to learn about gardening while I supported young people in their learning, and prepared me to maintain a good working routine and enhance my skillset. This gave me the opportunity to apply to Community Jobs Scotland and I am now a Barnardo's project worker assistant which proves that I was worth the investment.





Rosalyn Marshall

Monographer on a five-year internship at RHS Garden Wisley

I started as RHS Monographer in 2015, straight after finishing a Biology degree, so am now two years into the internship. It is an exciting opportunity to play a part in producing a new series of monographs, which are important resources for gardeners.

Based at the Herbarium at RHS Garden Wisley, I use its collection of cultivated plant specimens to describe the cultivars I am writing about. The RHS Lindley Library collection of books, journals and historic articles is a unique source of research material and has been vital for gathering facts and throwing light on the origins of plants in our gardens today. Access to this and the expertise of the people I work with (the largest team investigating cultivated plant diversity in the UK) is invaluable.

As well as being inspired by the research taking place at the RHS, I have, so far, become familiar with the specialised terminology used in botany, learnt to adapt my writing style and got to grips with publishing software – all valuable skills to build on.



Nicola Oakey

Assistant at Adam Frost Design, and former Trainee Horticultural Journalist for the RHS members' magazine, *The Garden*, in Peterborough

Since finishing my year's training with the team on *The Garden*, I have been working for garden designer Adam Frost. Although I now spend more time on garden layouts than writing, my journalistic experience equipped me with an eye for attention to detail – I use this every day, from checking plant names to writing letters to clients. I have absorbed a great deal of plant knowledge from writing plant profiles and being around people who all share a common interest.

I've been really involved with creating the content for Adam's new website, which has been greatly helped by all that I learned with the RHS website team. I have also felt confident enough to start doing some freelance writing for a county magazine.

I felt privileged to visit so many RHS Flower Shows during my year's training and it definitely fixed my next career aim – my own show garden.



Karen Cooke

**RHS Volunteer,
RHS Garden Hyde Hall, Essex**

For almost a decade, Hyde Hall was an integral part of my work/life balance. Visiting the garden on a regular basis helped me cope with my demanding, and sometimes stressful, job as a head teacher. It seemed natural, therefore, to offer my services when I retired almost six years ago.

Primarily, I volunteer in the Education Department, with school visits and the Little Acorns pre-school gardening club, but I also volunteer for the events team, particularly children's events and the RHS Garden Hyde Hall Flower Show. More recently, I have trained to lead Woodland Walks and tours of the garden. Preparing for these tours and walks has helped keep my brain active, as has studying for a RHS Level 2 qualification in horticulture at Writtle College. Walking around the garden also helps keep me physically fit.

I love the fact that I am able to continue to use my skills and knowledge to work with visitors more or less from the cradle to the grave.



Glasshouse

How the planned developments at RHS Garden Wisley may look from the air. Work begins in July 2017.

RHS highlights of



Welcome Building (2019)

Cherry avenue

Laboratory

Car park

Centre for Horticultural Science and Learning (2020)

Hilltop: three new gardens (2020)

Gardens

RHS Garden Wisley, Surrey

- To celebrate Her Majesty The Queen’s 90th birthday, a floral display based on The Queen’s Royal cypher was created outside the Laboratory, and a lawn was artistically mown with the inscription *Dieu et mon droit* (‘God and my right’, the motto of the Royal Arms of Great Britain).
- Artist Hannah McVicar created a botanical mural for the wall in the Glasshouse Café.
- Plans by landscape designer Christopher Bradley-Hole for the new investment project at RHS Garden Wisley were unveiled.
- Planning permission was granted and work began on The Barn to accommodate staff from Aberconway House.
- Actress Penelope Keith opened the RHS Garden Wisley Flower Show in September. Over six days more than 53,000 people visited the show – a new record.

2016

Gardens



RHS Garden Hyde Hall, Essex

- The Global Growth Vegetable Garden (pictured right), sponsored by Witan Investment Trust, started construction. Its edible plants from around the world will challenge perceptions of conventional kitchen gardening.
- Structural planting of the Hyde Hall Winter Garden was completed.
- The RHS Garden Hyde Hall Flower Show in August set a new record with more than 27,500 visitors.
- A pumpkin, 'Atlantic Giant', grown from a seed bought for £1,250 by Thompson & Morgan, weighed 605kg (1,333 lb 13oz) and set the new world record for the heaviest outdoor-grown pumpkin.
- Work continued on extending the Welcome Building with new garden admissions area and restyled café.
- Fundraising for the new Learning Centre progressed well with more than 80 percent of our target achieved.

Aerial view of RHS Garden Hyde Hall.

RHS Garden Rosemoor, Devon

- Rosemoor welcomed its 200,000th visitor – a new record for the garden.
- In August construction began on a new events space, the RHS Garden Rosemoor Garden Room.
- Work began on a new orchard of heritage apples specialising in cultivars from Devon.
- The Rose Festival took place in June–July and offered flower arranging and a botanical art exhibition from the Lindley Library; a record number of 596 members were recruited.
- We hosted a Rocket Science exhibition 16 Jul–21 Aug.
- Rosemoor donated around 300 hay bales to Dartmoor-based pony charity South West Equine Protection.



The Hot Garden in summer at RHS Garden Rosemoor.



Candelabra-type primulas, one the signature plants at RHS Garden Harlow Carr.

RHS Garden Harlow Carr, North Yorkshire

- Nigel Dunnett, landscape designer, was appointed to develop the masterplan for Harlow Carr. Plans will open up the Streamside planting area and restore the historic landscape from the Harrogate Arms to the Bath House.
- The garden has attracted record visitor numbers for the sixth year running, topping the 400,000 mark for the first time on 1 January 2017.
- RHS Garden Harlow Carr held its first flower show (10–13 June), attended by more than 11,000 people.
- A three-year *Meconopsis* RHS Plant Trial came to its end and the plants were assessed and evaluated. They have now been replanted in pockets along the stream, which will be their permanent home.
- For enhanced winter and spring displays, we planted 30,000 snowdrops (*Galanthus nivalis*) and the same number of bluebells in the woodland ride and by the Doric columns.

RHS Garden Bridgewater, Salford: our new fifth garden

- A new masterplan by landscape architect Tom Stuart-Smith was unveiled for the 62ha (154 acre) site.
- Marcus Chilton-Jones was appointed as the garden's first Curator.
- Public consultation events were held in November and an application for planning permission was submitted to Salford City Council in December.



Part of the 4ha (11 acre) walled garden at RHS Garden Bridgewater.

RHS Flower Shows 2016

RHS London Flower Shows 2016 Lindley and Lawrence Halls, Westminster

RHS London Early Spring Plant Fair
16–17 February

RHS London Botanical Art Show
26–27 February

RHS London Spring Plant Extravaganza featuring RHS London Orchid Show
1–2 April

RHS London Rose Show 3–4 June

RHS London Harvest Festival Show
4–5 October

RHS Shades of Autumn Show
28–29 October

RHS Urban Garden Show 12–13 November

RHS Christmas Show
17–18 December

RHS On Tour: 12 March, 30 April, 15 May, 19 June, 16–17 July, 11 September

- More than 35 artists submitted work for the RHS London Botanical Art Show in February, which recorded a 14 percent increase in visitors.
- At the RHS London Harvest Festival Show, the Plants Trials team from Wisley created a display to celebrate edible produce that holds the RHS Award of Garden Merit for 'plants that perform'.
- In the RHS Young Designer of the Year Competition, three finalists used plants to create an indoor office and outdoor working space at the RHS London Spring Plant Extravaganza.

RHS Flower Show Cardiff Bute Park, Cardiff: 15–17 April 2016

- The show celebrated 100 years since the birth of author Roald Dahl in Llandaff with a 3.7m (12ft) willow sculpture of the Big Friendly Giant.
- Dozens of local schools competed in the show's Dahl-inspired School Wheelbarrow Competition.
- A display of shade-loving perennials from Tale Valley Nursery, Devon won Best Exhibit in the Floral Marquee.
- Show Gardens took on the themes of wildlife, medieval medicine and art. Best Show Garden went to 'Hiraeth', designed by Melinda Thomas and Fleur Porter, which captured a sense of yearning and longing.

RHS Malvern Spring Gardening Festival Three Counties Showground, Worcester: 5–8 May 2016

- Glorious weather contributed to a record number of more than 100,000 visitors.
- Children from 12 local primary schools took part in the School's Garden Challenge Competition to design a space on the theme of the 400th anniversary of the death of William Shakespeare.
- Three new designers were each given £3,000 to create their own Festival Garden, with tuition from a panel of horticultural and design professionals.



The RHS London Shades of Autumn Show 2016.



RHS Chelsea Flower Show Royal Hospital, Chelsea, London: 24–28 May 2016

- 200,000 knitted poppies from Australia and around the world were displayed in the Royal Hospital grounds.
- Cleve West's garden for show sponsor M&G inspired by Exmoor National Park won Gold and Best Construction Award, and Andy Sturgeon's 'The Telegraph Garden' won Best Show Garden.
- Her Majesty The Queen visited for the 51st time. A floral arch at the Bull Ring Gate marked her 90th birthday. The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge made their first visit.
- Experts at the RHS Front Garden Summit asked: 'how we can turn our front gardens green again?'



Thousands of handmade poppies adorned the terrace from the showground to the Royal Hospital.

RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show

Hampton Court, Surrey:
5–10 July 2016

- A 283sq m (3,406sq ft) tropical Butterfly Dome gave visitors the opportunity to walk amid thousands of Indonesian and South American butterflies among lush tropical planting.
- Drawing on its Nordic heritage, 'The Viking Cruises Scandinavian Garden' by Stephen Hall won a Gold medal for the show's headline sponsor.
- City Gardens was a new category, as were gardens to celebrate the tercentenary of the birth of Lancelot 'Capability' Brown.
- In the Conceptual Garden category, the UNHCR 'Border Control Garden', which highlighted the plight of refugees, was a visitor favourite.
- Ornamental Horticulture Roundtable Conference held (see p26).
- Voted 'Britain's Favourite Day Out' by *LandLove* magazine.



Hampton Court Palace
from the Long Water.

RHS Flower Show Tatton Park Knutsford, Cheshire: 20–24 July 2016

- An outdoor office that offered a tranquil way of working was a Show Feature by new headline sponsor Bruntwood.
- To find the best, emerging talent from the landscape and plant design arena, new categories of RHS Young Landscape Contractor and RHS Young Planting Designer 2016 were introduced.
- A Gold and Best Blooming Border (a space 2 x 2m / 6½ x 6½ft) was won by an evocation of Beatrix Potter's garden at Hill Top in Cumbria.
- 'Through the Looking Glass' (right) was Pip Probert's dual-levelled contemporary design with outdoor kitchen.
- The title of RHS Young Designer 2016 was won by Caitlin McLaughlin for her 'Nature and Nurture' garden inspired by meadows and natural spaces.



'Through the Looking Glass', designed by Pip Probert was Best Show Garden.

Malvern Autumn Show Three Counties Showground, Worcester: 24–25 Sept 2016

- Hampshire Carnivorous Plants won Best Exhibit in the RHS Floral Marquee.
- There were 380 entries in the UK National Giant Vegetable Championships, which the show hosts. Four world records were broken, including the heaviest red cabbage.
- In the Orchard & Hopyard Pavilion, visitors gained expert guidance on caring for orchards and ideas on how best to use their fruitful harvest.



Enjoying a break and a glass of cider at Malvern Autumn Show.

New show at Chatsworth

- Plans for the first RHS Chatsworth Flower Show in 2017, partnered by Wedgwood, developed apace, adopting the theme of 'Design Revolutionaries'.
- Applications were received for Show Gardens, and for FreeForm gardens – an unjudged category that encourages freedom of expression.

Communities and Education

- A new Britain in Bloom category, 'Overcoming Adversity', was awarded to 12 communities to recognise their efforts restoring their green spaces after vandalism and flooding.
- 2,189 Bloom groups were involved and 1,955 more local groups took on the It's Your Neighbourhood challenge – more than 300,000 volunteers invested 11.7 million hours in this work.
- Our involvement with the London *Evening Standard* newspaper on its 'The Estate We're In' project transformed a community space in Angell Town, Brixton. Residents helped designer Ann-Marie Powell plant the RHS Greening Grey Britain garden at RHS Chelsea Flower Show in May; afterwards the plants used were donated to Angell Town.
- The first Greening Grey Britain Front Garden Summit took place during Chelsea Flower Show week. The event attracted more than 100 people and was shown via a live link on YouTube.
- Garden designer Andrew Fisher-Tomlin was guest speaker at the RHS Student and Apprentice Graduation ceremony.
- Nigel Dunnett, landscape designer, was welcomed as a new RHS Ambassador to focus on Greening Grey Britain.
- In October, RHS Science, the Bat Conservation Trust and The Wildlife Trusts held a bat-themed Wild About Gardens Week with events and a competition for the best bat-friendly border.
- Our fifth National Gardening Week (11–17 April 2016) was supported across the industry, at our four gardens, in private and public gardens, and by the UK garden centre and nursery industry.
- British astronaut Tim Peake sent a message from space calling on the nation's schoolchildren to sign up for the RHS experiment Rocket Science.
- Our Rocket Science project concluded with 600,000 children growing seeds that had spent time in space with Tim Peake and comparing them to seeds that had remained on Earth. They found those in space did not grow as well as those that stayed behind.
- Our new 'Green Plan It' secondary schools programme was rolled out across the country.
- The RHS Qualifications team consultation for Approved Centres at RHS Garden Wisley was attended by 45 people from 33 centres. We now have 92 RHS Approved centres (up by 10).
- We trained 1,019 teachers through our extensive and varied teacher-training programme.





Members of the RHS Woody Plant Trial Assessment Panel at RHS Garden Wisley.

Horticulture

- The Rhododendron, Camellia and Magnolia Society celebrated its centenary with a show at RHS Garden Wisley in May. A top 100 list was created with *Rhododendron yakushimanum* 'Koichiro Wada' voted number one in the world.
- Our fortnightly series of RHS Podcasts receives an average 272,667 downloads per month, and there were more than 3 million downloads over the year.
- A delegation of nine senior managers from Suncheon in South Korea, along with two members of the South Korean Embassy, visited RHS Garden Wisley to find out more about the work of RHS education and learning, and the horticultural management of our gardens.
- A total of more than £100,000 for 87 bursaries was awarded to professional and student horticulturists to broaden their skills, knowledge, and experience.
- In 2016 we concluded 13 RHS Plant Trials, and continued with a further 21 at sites including RHS Garden Wisley and nurseries across the UK.
- Members of the RHS Bulb Committee offered a series of talks on 'Tulips and Other Bulbs' at the Forde Abbey Tulip Festival in May.

Libraries and collections

- As part of our £160 million investment programme, we completed the restoration of more visible and welcoming entrances to the Lindley Hall and the Lindley Library at Vincent Square, London.
- The first stage of the catalogue of the Roy Lancaster collections was completed; it is available online and in the Lindley Library reading room. It includes correspondence with eminent botanists and horticulturists from the 1960s right up to the 2010s.
- We completed our second phase of cataloguing records from the Northern Horticultural Society 1960s–70s. The papers chart the development of the garden (now RHS Garden Harlow Carr) under the leadership of Geoffrey Smith.
- We held the 'Rose: A Celebration of the Nation's Favourite Flower' exhibition, coinciding with the RHS London Rose Show and the publication of *The Rose* by RHS Historian Brent Elliott.
- During September and October the newly conserved and only known account book of 'Capability' Brown went on display alongside 18th-century books and prints that shed light on the way Brown worked.



Some of the cartes de visite held by the RHS Lindley Library in Vincent Square, London.



An RHS scientist measures chlorophyll fluorescence as part of the RHS / Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board project.

Science

- Our Gardening Advice Service handled a record 91,715 gardening enquiries, and we had 53.5 million separate views of our online advice and plant pages.
- This year our Science team produced 60 publications (20 peer-reviewed and 40 edited). This scientific work advances horticulture practice and adds to the global knowledge bank on gardening and garden plants.
- We shared our scientific expertise to train 11 PhD students. These PhD students contribute to new horticultural knowledge and will become the next generation of horticultural and environmental scientists.
- The RHS is the only organisation that monitors plant pests in UK gardens. We work closely with DEFRA and inform them when we discover new pests and diseases. Our scientific work helps to safeguard UK horticulture and reduce the plant health risks for our members, gardeners, our horticultural networks and the wider environment. This information is also used to contribute to the UK Government's Pest Risk Register.
- We are the international leader in horticultural taxonomy. In 2016 we published the 9th edition of the International Code of Nomenclature for Cultivated Plants and the supplements for the International Registers for *Dianthus*, *Dahlia*, *Daffodil*, *Rhododendron* and orchids. This work helps our members, gardeners, garden designers, media, horticulturists and the horticultural industry by providing them with the right name or the right plant to use in their garden.
- In July we hosted the Ornamental Horticulture Roundtable Group Health and Horticulture Conference 2016, bringing together 150 key stakeholders to promote health and wellbeing. Attendees drafted a Health and Horticulture Charter Framework that aims to incorporate horticulture into everyone's lives.
- In November's John MacLeod Annual Lecture, Ross Cameron spoke about 'Repairing the Rift; putting humans back in touch with their own ecology'.
- More than 53 percent (44,247) of the RHS Herbarium's 80,000 specimens have been digitised.
- Work started on the new Horticultural Database and UK Garden Flora to help us better share information to members, gardeners, schools and the industry.

Media and membership

- At the end of the financial year, we had 472,157 members, a record high and a net increase of more than 23,000 members on the previous year.
- Our website became mobile responsive allowing phone and tablet users to access and enjoy RHS online at their convenience. Around 60 percent of those using the website access it via a mobile device.
- In April we celebrated 150 years of sending out *The Garden* to our members.
- We welcomed 144 Fellows, the apex of our membership and a much appreciated source of support.
- At the annual Garden Media Guild awards in November, the RHS won two awards and was finalist in 13 other awards across eight categories.
- For the first time in 60 years we published a monograph, *Kniphofia: The Complete Guide* by Christopher Whitehouse. All 70 species are covered and 160 cultivars are illustrated.
- We added two lists to *RHS Plant Finder 2016*: RHS Award of Garden Merit vegetables and RHS Perfect for Pollinators Plants.
- The RHS Hub toured each major RHS Flower Show to promote our charitable work. The theme of the stand was Health, Happiness and Horticulture.



Employees and volunteers

- In the first four months of the year we welcomed 86 new volunteers.
- In October more than 170 managers came together to hear about the RHS Vision and OneRHS concept of working together across the Society for shared benefits and aims.
- We gave 103 Long Service Awards during 2016: three were for 30 years service and three for 35 years service. Our longest serving employee has been working with us for more than 46 years.
- In our third employee engagement survey with Best Companies we improved our response rate and overall level of engagement as we remain a 'One to Watch' organisation in the Best Companies rankings.
- Our new online volunteer database 'Better Impact' allows us to build an improved picture of our volunteers, the hours they give, and improve how we support, recognise and value their time.
- We hosted our now Annual Volunteers Day in September to thank our 600 volunteers working in RHS gardens and offices for their valuable contributions.



Watercolour of *Dahlia* by
Sydenham Teast Edwards
(1768–1819).



Investment in horticulture

Income and support from our membership is vital for our ongoing and future work.

• For full details, download the *Annual Report and Consolidated Financial Statement 2016/2017* from rhs.org.uk/agm

Where our income comes from

Membership is the cornerstone of the RHS and we highly value the vital support given by each of our 472,157 members. Our Members and Marketing division (£20.2m) accounts for a quarter of the Society's total income and represents a major source of funds to re-invest in our charitable work.

Donations, legacies and fundraising are also key, enabling us as a charity to improve the lives of many people through horticulture and gardening. This year income from these streams increased to £8.4m as awareness of the Key Investment Projects grows. Over the next few years, this will become a critical income stream allowing us to support projects in our gardens and communities.

All four gardens had record visitor numbers and collectively welcomed more than 2m people. The increase in gate receipts and catering helped income reach £6.8m (2015/16: £6.0m), up £0.8m (12.6%). It was also bolstered by new events such as Christmas Glow.

Other important income streams are retail operations at the four RHS Gardens, gala nights at the Chelsea and Hampton Court Palace Flower Shows, advertising in *The Garden* and hiring of the Lindley Hall. At £23.8m (2015/16: £23.3m), it represents 29% of the Society's total and was £0.5m (2.4%) higher than 2015/16.

RHS Shows income increased to £18.7m (2015/16: £18.2m), up 0.3% and representing 23% of RHS income.



In the year we received **£82.5m** of income with the substantial support of our members and the commercial activities including in our shops and shows.

How we invested our money

This year we spent £76.4m (2015/16: £71.1m), an increase of £5.3m (7.4%), which included spending £4.0m on our Key Investment Projects.

Investment in headcount and horticulture across the gardens are the major reasons for our £22.1m spend (up £2.9m) as we continue to ensure our world-class gardens are maintained, improved and developed.

Our new central hub at all the RHS shows and increased costs of security accounted for a higher spend, up £0.9m to £22.1, while tighter purchasing and better resources management reduced our trading expenses by £0.4m to £15.6m.

Science and Collections expenditure increased by £2.0m as we continue to recognise and reward talent to ensure the future of great scientists.

Communities and Education expenditure increased by £0.2m due to additional support of the RHS Campaign for School Gardening.



Key areas we invested in

Our total expenditure for this financial year was **£76.4m** and through strong and focused management we have continued to invest in our charitable activities – from our gardens and horticulture to community and educational work.

Fundraising

The money we raise from fundraising and our members helps us transform lives through horticulture, science and gardening, to make the world a greener, healthier and happier place.

£42,000
in six
weeks

Horticulturists of the future

We are helping bridge the green-skills gap and give young people life-changing opportunities with the RHS Apprenticeship Scheme and the long-established School of Horticulture, where students gain practical knowledge and qualifications to help them work in this vital industry.

In the first six weeks of its launch, the RHS Students and Apprentices appeal raised more than £42,000 to train horticulturists of the future. At the end of 2016 we had raised £74,000. We have 16 apprentices taking part in our two-year programmes across our four gardens.



Summer fun in The Copse play area at RHS Garden Rosemoor.

Delighting schoolchildren

Education and teaching schoolchildren about the joys of gardening were supported by two members' appeals. At RHS Garden Rosemoor, local members gave to our Schools' Travel Grants appeal, allowing local schools to hire coaches to bring children to the garden, and attend free programmes at the Peter Buckley Learning Centre. More than 7,000 Devon children have been given this opportunity to learn about plants, horticulture and nature.

7,000
children

The RHS Campaign for School Gardening was supported by members through our appeal via adverts and inserts in *The Garden* magazine, as well as the RHS website. This contributed to our being able to recognise progression and achievements through the campaign's annual awards.



Trainees examine specimens in the Entomology department at RHS Garden Wisley.

Saving for the next generation

1,222 titles saved

Our Restore a Book appeal to safeguard some of the horticultural treasures in the RHS Lindley Library, including books and manuscripts, raised £35,700 in the year. We have now restored 1,222 books and other publications.



Thanks to members' support, many 19th-century books in the Lindley Library are being restored.



Artist's impression of the new Learning Centre, restaurant and activity centre at Hyde Hall.

New look for Hyde Hall

A transformation is under way at RHS Garden Hyde Hall, with new horticultural highlights, improved infrastructure and the foundations started on the new Learning Centre, all benefiting through fundraising support from our members, corporate supporters and from generous Trusts and Foundations. The centrepiece of the Witan Global Growth Vegetable Garden will be an octagonal Hartley Botanic glasshouse partly funded by our members' appeal that raised £35,000.



We are grateful for the generous gifts, donations and bequests from members and supporters. During the year we received more than £13 million which directly impacts our ongoing work. If you would like to support the RHS, please contact developmentoffice@rhs.org.uk or telephone 020 7821 3125.

For a copy of the *Annual Report and Consolidated Financial Statements 2016/2017*, please contact The Secretary at the address below or email secretary@rhs.org.uk