



Plants for the Future

6 November 2014 Hillside Event Centre, RHS Wisley

This document contains a précis of the information gathered at the Plants for the Future workshop held on 6 November 2014 and from feedback forms collected on the day and following the event.

These are not minutes of the meeting, but do contain some quotes from participants and ideas for taking this new initiative forward.

Aims and objectives

~Plants for the Future “was a workshop designed to spark discussion amongst plant breeders and the horticultural trade, to discover ways in which the RHS may assist British plant breeding to reach its potential.

This was the first workshop event of its type held at RHS Wisley.

Some facts and figures

108 delegates confirmed places and of these **92** attended.

There was representation from Plant Breeders, Plant Breeders’ Agents, Wholesalers, Retailers, Plant Heritage and National Collection Holders, Plant Societies, Propagators, RHS Plant Committees, RHS Groups & RHS Senior staff. Many attendees represented more than one specialism.

We received written feedback from **30 attendees** and noted live comments from **27 attendees** as well as the numerous comments and discussions held within the lunch break.

Delegates were asked to rate the three elements of the workshop - Presentations, Q&A and Networking according to their value and interest. The results are below.

Presentations	Low = 2	Med = 7	High = 18
Q&A	Low = 1	Med = 8	High = 16
Networking	Low = 1	Med = 9	High = 15

All delegates who answered the question **Would you like to receive updates re the progress of this initiative?** replied **Yes**

Here are some of the responses to the question **How would you like to see the RHS helping the UK Plant Breeding industry?**

You said...

One issue that was discussed and is a big dilemma for amateurs and small scale breeders. Plants which are excellent but of limited appeal or limited sales potential. Could the RHS get involved with a scheme of accreditation for people or businesses that potentially can produce or market these plants and by joining this scheme commit to providing a reasonable return to the breeder? This was mentioned by someone in the audience as how they ran their own schemes but an accredited RHS list would be similar to one for builders or plumbers. If you don't behave, you are off the list.

Organise more meetings for various stakeholders including agents, propagators, growers etc to provide a space for sharing information and knowledge and maintain 'face to face' contact.

As developments take place (micro prop especially) keeping societies and growers informed

Protocols for small breeder/low volume 'plant royalties' - information on Nagoya

For me personally the RHS is doing a good job my plants are featured in the Garden Magazine and through ProVar many of my plants were given to the RHS Gardens an excellent way of bring them to the notice of the thousands of Gardeners who visit every year.

Further opportunities for networking - on-line forum?

As Coordinators and conduits of advice & information it could produce for nurseries etc, an easy accessible list of AGM Plants and ornamental plants affected by PBR/PVR - remove 'available' as a criterion for AGM.

RHS could help by providing a forum for Plant Breeders to meet Commercial Wholesalers/Plant Breeders Agents etc once a year. Treat like a University Milk round.

RHS has considerable influence within the horticultural sector, but it is very difficult for newcomers to break in, feels like a closed shop with long established relationships with suppliers who do their best to discourage new entrants to the market. It may be convenient for RHS to continue this arrangement, but the organisation needs to encourage/incentivise new entrant to the market, particularly where new varieties of plants are involved.

Code of conduct – one of the factors that makes it difficult for new breeders offering new varieties of plants is that some established suppliers within the sector see this as an opportunity to propagate and market these new varieties themselves, without the approval consent of the breeder. This acts as a disincentive to introduce new varieties without the added protection of plant breeders rights, a process which is both time consuming and very expensive. I believe that wholesalers should be required to compensate breeders of new material and be required to sign up to a Code of Conduct that respects the rights of the individual plant breeder.

I thought it was very interesting . I would like to have seen one presentation outlining the route from creating a cross to production, with description of hurdles or hazards. Also to have heard a little more about differences in the US tho some comment was given in the answer session.

The whole session directed at Qu/Ans. Was v. good particularly as there was a whole panel to answer that broadened the ideas and gave rise to additional comments from the floor.

A list of plant advisors would be useful, and how to access facilities such as genetics which was just touched on. Maybe that isn't widely accessible except in research institutions like Kew.

I am enthused that the RHS has in recent years, offered support to small societies and now hybridisers and I am sure this will pay dividends in years to come.

The day was well organised and as ever the team were very efficient – thank you.

The timings were good and if contributors has said less more succinctly and allowed time for questions it would have worked well. Also, the audience was full of tremendously experienced people and the level of the presentations was aimed way too low.

Would like to see a guide from the RHS - 'What do I do with a new plant?' Options explained - important that breeders know all the options before making a choice. Good plants will sell!

Can the RHS offer an opportunity for breeders to provide exposure of their new plant to market?

What next?

A working party will be formed to explore the ways that the RHS may be able to help. Once the group and schedule are established, this delegate list will be notified.

'Roadmap for Plant Breeders' – the working party will work towards a roadmap to help the breeder make informed decisions and realise the potential of their work.

'All About Plants' – 20/21 June 2015 – is a new event to be held at RHS Wisley exploring and showcasing the Past, Present & Future of plants. The exhibitors will be Plant Societies and there will be an opportunity to show evidence of new breeding work.

Enquiries for space at this event to be sent to Lesley Whayman, RHS Partnership Coordinator lesleywhayman@rhs.org.uk

'Chelsea Plant of the Year' – to find out the criteria for submitting your newly bred plant to this competition please contact Jill Otway, RHS Plant Committee Coordinator jillotway@rhs.org.uk

'HTA National Plant Show New Plant Award' held annually in June, is currently sponsored by the RHS. Contact the HTA directly to find out how to enter your newly bred plant to this competition.

Thank you once again for your input to this workshop and giving your support to this new initiative.