



# A year with the RHS 2017





# Saluting good fortune

RHS President Sir Nicholas Bacon reflects on a selection of 2017 highlights.

As I review the activities of the Royal Horticultural Society for the past year, I am awestruck by its achievements. It is testament to the enthusiasm and energy of the staff, led by the indomitable Sue Biggs and the Leadership Team, that has made such successes possible.

The Ornamental Horticulture Roundtable Group (OHRG), chaired by Sue, has brought the many disparate voices of the industry together and, in January, the UK Government has now acknowledged the importance of gardens in its 25 Year Environment Plan – something that the OHRG initiated.

As our £160 million investment plan comes to fruition, a steel structure has emerged that will become Wisley's new Welcome building. Meanwhile, the clearing of 80 years of neglect started at Bridgewater in Salford, Greater Manchester, our fifth garden which is planned to open in 2020. This is the largest gardening project in Europe and the first new garden for the Society in 17 years. It will not only breathe new life into the 154 acre site of Worsley New Hall but will also include a Learning Centre to help bolster the horticultural knowledge of the next generation of gardeners.

At RHS Garden Hyde Hall, Essex, one of our fastest-growing gardens in terms of popularity and horticultural content, a new Global Growth Vegetable Garden (supported by Witan Investment Trust) opened. An edible garden, it takes visitors to far-flung corners of the world and challenges perceptions of what is possible in UK gardens.

One of the mainstays of our education programme, the RHS Campaign for School Gardening last year celebrated 10 years of helping more than 35,000 schools (some 6 million children) to connect with nature and grow plants. To mark the occasion we were privileged to welcome Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Cambridge to one of the Campaign's 'five star' gardens. The Duchess heard at first-hand all about the benefits of gardening for pupil health and wellbeing, and added to the school's existing bug hotel – aptly named 'Bug-ingham Palace'.

RHS Shows performed well, including the inaugural Chatsworth Flower Show. More than 94,000 visitors experienced an interpretation of Joseph Paxton's Great Conservatory and some inspiring show gardens – as well as a dose of biblical wet weather!

For the first time, in 2017 we donated an RHS Chelsea Flower Show garden to a school. After 165,000 people saw it *in situ*, it is now being tended by an army of children in Swansea using it as a



**'The RHS Campaign for School Gardening last year celebrated 10 years of helping more than 35,000 schools to connect with nature and grow plants.'**

resource to learn about plant diversity, habitat needs and the creation of healthy urban environments.

In order to achieve the vital strategic aims of the Society, we need to 'stick our neck out' every now and again for what we believe. RHS Garden Wisley was under threat from an M25/A3 Highways England initiative that would have led to the removal of 500 historic and important trees. With the help of our Vice President Alan Titchmarsh, and a far-reaching media campaign, we collected more than 130,000 signatures from concerned RHS members and the wider public, resulting in important changes that secured the trees. The final plan is yet to be announced but we will be lobbying hard for our preferred outcome.

We have also been outspoken on what we see as some of the immediate challenges for gardeners and the industry. Our *Gardening in a Changing Climate* report outlines ways gardeners can adapt to climate change through plant choice and garden design. We have also strengthened our plant-health team and will hire three new specialists in 2018 to help mitigate the risk of a range of pests and diseases – including the bacterial disease *Xylella fastidiosa* which has wiped

out whole olive groves in Europe and creeps closer.

At a time when the numbers of new pests and diseases are increasing alarmingly, we are investing in our science to identify and then protect our flora from these silent but deadly threats. We are now in the middle of a significant programme to create at Wisley a National Centre for Horticultural Science and Learning, making sure we invest our charitable funds wisely, benefitting as many of our members, and the wider community, as our resources allow.

Cooperation is vital to enable us to derive maximum effectiveness, so we were delighted to renew our television partnership with the BBC. This extended to five 'BBC Radio 2 Feel Good Gardens' at our Chelsea show and resulted in the transmission of a new documentary about the RHS Britain in Bloom campaign in April 2018. We were also delighted to have received renewed support from our long-term sponsor M&G for what is, indisputably, the most famous flower show in the world: RHS Chelsea Flower Show.

**Sir Nicholas Bacon,**  
RHS President



The Global Growth  
Vegetable Garden  
at RHS Garden  
Hyde Hall, Essex  
(see also p16)  
opened July 2017.







Architect's visualisation of the view from the new National Centre for Horticultural Science and Learning at RHS Garden Wisley, Surrey.





# The power of plants

RHS Director General Sue Biggs on gardening and reconnecting with nature.

For more than 200 years we've all known that plants and gardening make our world a better place. Today, more than ever, we need to use the power of plants to reduce the impact of some of the biggest challenges facing us to protect our planet for the future. This is why we're investing more than £160 million into horticulture to give even more people the resources to garden and grow plants, be it in tiny front gardens, huge back gardens, on balconies or in windowboxes.

At RHS Garden Wisley, our scientists are committed to finding solutions that will enable Britain's 27 million gardeners to grow plants in a changing climate and help future generations continue to enjoy this green and pleasant land. Our research shows how plants can help capture pollution, reduce flood damage and assist in the cooling of cities as our climate warms. The RHS report *Gardening in a Changing Climate* recommends the best plants and gardening practices for coping with extreme weather conditions, as well as those for reducing energy demands and removing heat-trapping carbon dioxide.

We are investing millions of pounds into our scientific work as part of our investment programme and this includes the creation of the first National Centre for Horticultural Science and Learning at Wisley. It will be surrounded by three important new gardens – the Health and Wellbeing Garden, the Wildlife Garden, and Kitchen Garden. Planning is well under way and all will be open in 2020. The Centre will be the new home of RHS Gardening Science where our scientists, and the PhD students we support, can continue to save pollinators, manage pests and diseases, and increase plant biodiversity. The survival of our gardens matters – once our plants are gone, they're gone forever.

More people are losing touch with the natural world, which also puts the future of our planet at risk. Through gardening – by growing things – people can discover the excitement, joy and wonder of reconnecting with nature. We do more to connect children with gardening and plants than any other charity in the UK and in 2018, coinciding with Hyde Hall's 25th year as part of the RHS Garden family, we'll be opening a new Learning Centre which will enable children from Essex, East London and beyond to connect with nature and the joy of gardening.

At our newest garden, Bridgewater in Salford, the restoration of the 154 acre site proceeds apace, including the beautiful 11 acre Walled Garden. We have been delighted with the response to our call for



***'We do more to connect children with gardening and plants than any other charity in the UK.'***

volunteers and are most appreciative of the support so generously given for our first volunteer days. Planned to open in 2020, the garden will be a beautiful and inspirational green space for the people of Salford, Greater Manchester and the wider North West.

Our work – and that of several other organisations in the UK and around the world – demonstrates the power of growing to promote good mental, social and physical health and wellbeing and in 2018 we're working with the NHS to promote gardening for good mental health. The 'RHS Feel Good Garden' at the 2018 RHS Chelsea Flower Show will go on to live at an NHS Mental Health Trust centre in London for patients and staff to enjoy and garden in.

Another garden at Chelsea, 'The Lemon Tree Trust Garden', illustrated the power of plants. It was inspired by the resilience and determination of those living in Iraq's Domiz refugee camp, who have created gardens to grow vital food and flowers. The gardens go some way to try and help reduce the chaos of forced migration, while also bringing a sense

of normality, wellbeing and calm to so many broken lives. I was so moved by the plans for this garden, and it reminded me of the seeds the RHS sent to the Ruhleben Horticultural Society, a gardening society started in a First World War prison camp in Germany. So it seems the power of gardening never stops transforming lives and, as a strange repeat of history echoing down through the ages, here we are, 100 years later, organising a second 'seed lift' from the RHS, this time to refugees living in Iraq.

Closer to home, the power of growing for our own health, happiness and wellbeing, as well as that of the wider environment, should not be underestimated. Through growing more plants – even on what appears to be a small, domestic scale – we can help support our threatened wildlife, improve air quality in towns, cool cities, reduce our energy use and improve the nation's health and wellbeing. We all have a responsibility to play our part in looking after our green planet.

Nobody is more committed than the RHS to inspire everyone to grow for a better, greener future, and I would like to thank our members, volunteers, donors and supporters for enabling us to work towards this.

**Sue Biggs CBE,**  
RHS Director General

# 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.



## **World-beating horticulture and gardens**

We have four established gardens: RHS Garden Harlow Carr in North Yorkshire, RHS Garden Hyde Hall in Essex, RHS Garden Rosemoor in Devon and our flagship garden in Surrey, RHS Garden Wisley. A phased opening of our fifth, RHS Garden Bridgewater in Greater Manchester is planned to start in 2020. 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.

We hold Plant Trials to judge plant performance and those that do well earn the RHS Award of Garden Merit (AGM) so gardeners can choose the best plants to grow.

## **Passionate about science**

The RHS is the recognised centre of excellence for horticultural science and advice. The *RHS Science Strategy 2015–2019* guides our commitment 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, the pests and diseases affecting them and the role they play in our environment. We provide evidence-based horticultural advice to our members and the wider public via our website, lectures and seminars, and by leading the debate on issues influencing gardening.

## **Shows and retail that inspire**

We organise inspirational flower shows at Chelsea in London, Hampton Court Palace in Surrey, Tatton Park in Cheshire, and Chatsworth in Derbyshire. Seasonal shows are held at all four RHS Gardens and we have an established programme of events at our Horticultural Halls in London. Partnership shows include the RHS Flower Show Cardiff (with Cardiff Council) and the RHS Malvern Spring Festival with the Three Counties Agricultural Society; we also contribute content to the Malvern Autumn Show. We continue with our series of RHS On Tour visits to London venues.

We offer excellent shopping opportunities for members and visitors in our four gardens at our flower shows and on our website. Sales are generated through our plant centres, gift shops, bookshops and online. RHS Garden Wisley offers the best selection of horticultural books and plants in the UK. We earn further income for our charitable purposes from licensing the use of images from the Lindley Library collections. All income generated by these means supports our charitable work.

## **Helping green communities**

Core to our overall mission is the work we do in communities. RHS advisors throughout Britain offer training and advice to schools, volunteer groups and Affiliated Societies (including gardening clubs) so they can make a positive difference to where they live.



### All levels of education

We share practical knowledge and inspire those of all ages and abilities with an interest in plants and gardening. We provide a ‘ladder of qualifications’, from the RHS Level 1 Certificate (accessible to amateurs, and a first step in vocational training for professional horticulturists), through to the prestigious Master of Horticulture (RHS), a degree-level qualification.

The RHS is an awarding body recognised by the Office of Qualifications and Examination Regulation, ensuring accessibility to RHS qualifications through colleges and other partners. Within our own gardens we offer practical training schemes for students through the RHS School of Horticulture, RHS apprenticeships. Our Campaign for School Gardening encourages children at primary and secondary level to become involved in gardening and, for adults, we organise lectures, courses and workshops in our gardens and around the country.

### Sharing unrivalled collections

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

The history and art of horticulture is centred in the RHS Lindley Library which holds 30,000 works of botanical art and photographs, and 80,000 titles (the oldest dating to 1514). These provide an unmatched horticultural reference and are used by gardeners, researchers, garden writers, journalists, RHS members and the public from the UK and overseas. The Library at Vincent Square, London, and its branches in each RHS Garden offer lending facilities to members and access to everyone including the Lindley Library exhibits.

### Helping everyone to grow

To help everyone be the best gardener they can, we share horticultural and gardening information through our website, social media platforms and in print. Our website ([rhs.org.uk](http://rhs.org.uk)) attracts more than 20 million unique users in the UK and around the world.

We publish our monthly membership magazine *The Garden*, and periodicals such as *The Plantsman* and *The Orchid Review*. Our extensive list of horticultural books – specialist and general – 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, shows and RHS On Tour.

We are the national organising body for RHS Britain in Bloom and RHS It’s Your Neighbourhood community gardening movements, working in partnership with 16 regions and nations to support UK gardeners at a local level. Our Windlesham Trophy, run annually with the Ministry of Justice, awards and encourages gardening in prisons.



Central to the charitable purpose of the RHS is inspiring everyone to grow. We do this in various ways, including Britain in Bloom (above: Elswick, Lancashire), our world-class flower shows (right: Hampton Court Palace Flower Show 2017) and the Greening Grey Britain campaign (below: the Angell Town estate, London).









# Our Vision

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

We want to inspire and maintain a passion in horticulture and gardening among people of all ages, cultures and backgrounds. This will benefit the environment and the health and happiness of us all, today and in the future. Plants are vital to life, and the benefits of growing them are vast, from strengthening communities and building a more resilient society to supporting biodiversity, cooling cities, protecting against flooding and improving air quality.

This is why, over the 10-year period to 2023/24, the RHS is making a landmark £160 million investment in the future of horticulture. It will allow us to bring the joy of gardening to millions more people and make some of the most significant and exciting changes in our history.

**We have established seven projects so we can deliver our £160m investment into horticulture**

- 1 RHS Garden Wisley**  
an extensive programme including
  - new National Centre for Horticultural Science and Learning
  - new Welcome building and visitor experience
  - stunning new gardens
  - a restored and vibrant Wisley village
- 2 RHS Garden Bridgewater**  
our exciting fifth garden in Salford, Greater Manchester
- 3 RHS Garden Harlow Carr**  
restoration of the Harrogate Arms and the Bath House, as well as their historic landscape
- 4 RHS Garden Hyde Hall**  
including a new Learning Centre, activities and restaurant building, an enlarged Welcome building and beautiful new gardens
- 5 RHS Lindley Library**  
new access to better share our collections
- 6 Community Outreach**  
transforming more lives across the UK through the power of plants, and bringing gardens to cities
- 7 Horticulture Matters**  
raising the pride in, and profile of, professional careers in horticulture





# Involving more people than

Through all the Society's work we use horticulture, science, our collections and our love of plants to make a positive difference to everyone's lives and wellbeing.

**94,000**  
**VISITORS**

## Our inaugural show at Chatsworth House

We added to our line-up of events with the RHS Chatsworth Flower Show, partnered by Wedgwood. Held in June on the estate owned by the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire, this new show enabled us to share the joys of gardening with more people living in and around the North of England and beyond.







DANIEL HAMBURY / STELLA PICTURES LTD

# 6m CHILDREN

## A decade of bringing gardening to children

A visit from HRH The Duchess of Cambridge to Robin Hood Primary School in Kingston Vale, London helped us celebrate the 10th anniversary of the RHS Campaign for School Gardening. She joined the children planting spring bulbs and building a bug hotel which was aptly named 'Bug-ingham Palace'.

During the year the campaign recorded more than 35,000 members, equivalent to bringing the joys of gardening to around 6 million children.



ever

# 88 PAGES

## Understanding climate change

We published *Gardening in a Changing Climate* to help gardeners future-proof their gardens. The report looks at how climate change shapes the opportunities and future of gardening, while offering advice on how to adapt gardens to realities of climate change. On a specially commissioned garden at the RHS Chatsworth Flower Show, the authors offered advice and support to our visitors.



# 2.1m GARDEN VISITORS

## Our four gardens are home to horticultural inspiration for everyone to share

We welcomed a record 2.1 million visitors to our four gardens. This was bolstered because each RHS Garden registered its highest-ever visitor numbers. By the end of the year the Society had 490,205 members, the most in its 214-year history.





# £5.5m

IN DONATIONS

## Building our fifth garden

We made great strides at RHS Garden Bridgewater thanks to a £5 million grant from the Garfield Weston Foundation to support work in the walled garden, and a £0.5 million pledge from Arcadia, a charitable fund of Lizbet Rausing and Peter Baldwin, to develop the garden's lakes and improve biodiversity.



# 1st SUSTAINABLE GARDEN GIVEN TO A SCHOOL

## Horticulture helping to boost education and wellbeing

The RHS Greening Grey Britain Garden designed by Nigel Dunnett for the RHS Chelsea Flower Show was relocated to Burlais Primary School in Swansea. The school won a competition with BBC One's *The One Show* to rebuild the garden and transform a space within its grounds from grey to green.



# 5,000

BULBS

## 10 years of delighting visitors with the Winter Walk

Harlow Carr's Winter Walk celebrated its 10th anniversary, marked with the planting of 5,000 iris bulbs ranging in colour from yellow through to pale blue and purple-black.

The garden also received the highly acclaimed Visit England Gold award for the second year running.







# Headlines from our £160m investment so far

Thanks to our members and supporters, we reached several milestones in 2017.

## Breaking ground at Wisley

The journey towards creating the new Welcome building, restaurant and shops within a landscape designed by Christopher Bradley-Hole began with a 'breaking ground event'. The Wisley Garden Library was relocated to Gardiner's House and staff were relocated to a new building called The Barn. Visitors can watch progress of the developments from a Site Exhibition Centre and viewing platform.



## New dawn for Bridgewater

In June 2017 full planning permission was granted by Salford City Council, opening the doors to an exciting programme of developments. The first phase of RHS Garden Bridgewater is planned to open in 2020. RHS staff and volunteers are now on site full time, cataloguing existing trees and shrubs, and clearing brambles and invasive plants. Thanks to generous grants, work has already begun to revitalise the walled garden and lakes.



## Events galore in Devon and a warm welcome in Essex

Our new venue, The Garden Room, opened at RHS Garden Rosemoor, Devon, with a capacity of up to 420 people. With its bifold doors opening out onto the garden it offers an inspirational setting for corporate events, wedding receptions or parties. A versatile space, it can be used as one large room or split into two smaller areas. The Garden Room increases the capacity of events at Rosemoor so more people can experience the beauty of the garden.

Visitors now experience extra shopping areas and a restyled café at RHS Garden Hyde Hall, Essex following the opening in spring 2017 of an expanded Welcome building, making visits even more enjoyable.





# With you every step of the way

We help to build skills, careers and confidence by sharing our passion for plants and gardens with as many people as we can.



## **Helen Lerner** RHS Bloom Community Champion 2017, and Coordinator of Walthamstow Village in Bloom, London

I became involved with RHS Britain in Bloom in 2003. At the time, where I live was pretty ropey, so I got involved with the residents' association. People were fed up with litter, graffiti and burnt-out cars so we decided to spring clean the village.

Over the years the initiative has grown and has had an amazing impact on me – it takes me a couple of hours to pop out and get the newspaper now because I bump into everyone. I really feel part of the community and we all feel the benefit of working as a team, getting out there in all weathers, building up a sweat and being satisfied with a job well done. We've more than 75 volunteers and have formed strong friendships that go beyond gardening.



## **Ryan Bodsworth** RHS Horticulturist, RHS Garden Bridgewater

I started working for the RHS in 2015 as part of the Trials Team at RHS Garden Wisley and have benefited from an RHS Bursary trip to Holland. My career progressed and in 2017 I become the first horticulturist at RHS Garden Bridgewater. It's so exciting to be involved in this new chapter in the history of the RHS.

Currently the main focus of my role is clearance work and it is fascinating to uncover the secrets of the garden, especially the remains of the historic estate. I also organise our volunteers and have set up sessions for career changers, providing tuition and practical experience on horticultural skills. Hopefully, when the next batch of positions become available we will have a pool of even more talent to recruit from.

## **Francesca Camilleri** Student, RHS Garden Wisley

I am studying at RHS Garden Wisley as a Diploma student and am privileged to have a vast expanse of horticultural opportunities on my doorstep.

At school I undertook an AS in Design Technology and our teacher linked our project with the RHS Campaign for School Gardening. To help us, we had a visit from a garden designer and a member of the RHS Community Outreach team. I always had an interest in gardening as a hobby, but during this project I realised my true desire to make my career in horticulture. I am extremely lucky to have had the RHS come to my school, discuss my options for a career in horticulture and for suggesting the Wisley diploma. I am learning so much and enjoying every second of it.







## Patrick Kirwan Science Teacher, Hammersmith Academy: RHS School Gardening Team of the Year 2017



Winning the RHS School Gardening Team of the Year in 2017 was awesome. Our gardening activities, which includes volunteering in the garden at a local care home, have had a phenomenal impact on both students and staff. Everyone delights in the gems found in the school garden and truly appreciates the garden space as a place to chill out. It has had a huge impact on the wellbeing of everyone in our school: students are surprised by how much they love working outdoors and they want more.

The activities provide respite for those who need to get away from the pressures of school life and a sense of accomplishment, particularly for those who lack confidence in an academic setting. One of our younger students who was always getting into trouble has now found something of interest for which he can take responsibility.

Many of our students lack opportunities to engage with nature but this is now changing, and I've already been to another school to talk about setting up a new garden; I walked away feeling like I had offered them something. We continue to explore opportunities for our school garden and are excited about projects that will unfold in the future.



## Kálmán Könyves RHS Horticultural Taxonomist

My work in the RHS Herbarium at Wisley is highly varied and is always challenging me to grow as a researcher and team member. My day-to-day duties range from molecular laboratory work and genetic data analysis, to taxonomic research and mentoring of an RHS-sponsored PhD student. The RHS has been behind me in every step of my academic training, providing sponsorship through my MSc and PhD and helping me conduct research fieldwork. It has given me access to expertise within the Society through its vast network of contacts. Unlike most organisations, the RHS is able to fund long-term research which has allowed me to be involved in exciting projects, such as our current work on the plastid genome of *Narcissus* with the University of Reading, and our work on wisteria linked to the new horticultural monograph on the genus. The Society has also enabled me to expand my skills further, through funding intensive training on programming, essential for data analysis. This year I also have the opportunity to give a presentation on our research at a conference in Brazil.



## Waheed Arshad RHS Flower Show Volunteer

I am a PhD student at Royal Holloway, University of London, researching ways that plants adapt in challenging environments.

I keep volunteering because I love sharing my passion for all things green, and growing and inspiring a new generation of gardeners. In recent years the focus has shifted towards sustainability, health and wellbeing, and inspiring a new generation with the benefits of nature and green spaces. The RHS Chelsea Flower Show is a fantastic place for beginners and experts alike and it's a great privilege to be part of the most famous flower show in the world.

Through my volunteering I have met a huge range of people and have had diverse roles, from engaging with children exploring the microscopic world in a garden to helping visitors from the furthest corners of the world.



# RHS highlights from 201

Some of the remarkable and varied achievements from our many teams around the Society.







## Gardens

### RHS Garden Hyde Hall, Essex

- ❖ The Global Growth Vegetable Garden (pictured), supported by Witan Investment Trust, opened in July. Filled with edible plants from around the world, it inspires visitors with the range of crops that can grow in the UK.
- ❖ In December, for the first time, Hyde Hall welcomed the 300,000th visitor in one year.
- ❖ The Welcome building opened, providing a revamped café and larger shopping area.
- ❖ For the second year running, gardeners cultivated a record-breaking pumpkin. It weighed 635kg (1,400lb) and was the centrepiece for an autumn display.
- ❖ The garden was found to be home to a rare caterpillar – that of spurge hawk moth. This insect had not been seen in Essex for more than 150 years.





## RHS Garden Rosemoor, Devon

- ❖ The Garden Room, a new function and garden events building, opened in May just a few days before hosting the RHS National Rhododendron Competition.
- ❖ Rosemoor held its inaugural Flower Show in August. More than 9,000 visitors attended, enjoying a mix of local and national nurseries and tradestands.
- ❖ The six-week Rose Festival returned to the garden in summer and incorporated a special Rose Weekend.
- ❖ For the first time in the Society's history, Rosemoor hosted the RHS Annual General Meeting.
- ❖ The garden's annual Glow event, with ornamental lights throughout the garden, began in November and featured an extended light trail.
- ❖ To celebrate the opening of the garden's Heritage Orchard of 45 cultivars of rare Devon apples, the garden hosted the exhibition Codlins, Costards & Biffins – curated by the RHS Lindley Library.



## RHS Garden Harlow Carr, North Yorkshire

- ❖ 2107 was another record breaking year with more than 450,000 visitors.
- ❖ Sustainable water management techniques were put in place to help the garden adapt to the changing climate.
- ❖ Gardens Behind Barbed Wire, an exhibition about how the RHS helped soldiers in the Ruhleben internment camp in First World War Germany, was staged in the Bath House.
- ❖ The Hedgehog Street garden, designed by Tracy Foster, was opened.
- ❖ Work began on the new Lakeside Gardens area (formerly Gardens Through Time) and included completion of the Greening Grey Britain Garden.



## RHS Garden Wisley, Surrey

- ❖ We upgraded paths around Seven Acres and in the Bowes-Lyon Rose Garden. A new Conifer Lawn Path now connects upper and lower parts of the garden.
- ❖ Aberconway House was demolished to make way for the new Welcome building.
- ❖ RHS Wisley Garden Library moved into its new home: Gardiner's House. The building is open to the public for the first time.
- ❖ The third annual Plant Society Show had exhibits from 18 plant societies
- ❖ Raymond Blanc (left) opened the 25th Flower Show.
- ❖ The new Exotic Garden opened.
- ❖ We grew bacopa and bird's foot trefoil in hanging baskets for the RHS Blooms for Bees experiment.
- ❖ Wisley Christmas Glow returned, allowing night-time visitors to see the garden in a new light.
- ❖ 130,000 people signed up to prevent Highways England using RHS land for motorway upgrades.

## RHS Garden Bridgewater, Greater Manchester

- ❖ Planning permission was granted in June 2017 and volunteers began to help with garden clearance.
- ❖ Garfield Weston Foundation and Arcadia, a charitable fund of Lizbet Rausing and Peter Baldwin, committed major grants to develop the walled garden and lakes.
- ❖ Television gardener and author Carol Klein was announced as RHS Ambassador for Bridgewater.
- ❖ A project to gather memories from people who lived, worked and played in the grounds of Worsley New Hall was launched with Salford University's Centre for Applied Archaeology.





# RHS Flower Shows 2017

## RHS Flower Show Cardiff

Bute Park, Cardiff: 7–9 April 2017

- ❖ The theme of the show was Welsh Myths and Legends. Best Show Garden was 'Blodeuwedd' from Chris Myers Design, representing the fable of a woman created from flowers.
- ❖ Show features included 'Cast of Dreams' by Pugh's Garden Village garden centre, re-creating nearby fairytale-like Castell Coch.
- ❖ R&A Scamp Quality Daffodils won the Best Exhibit in the Floral Marquee for its display.
- ❖ RHS Master Grower was Tale Valley Nursery of Devon, specialist in perennials and alpine plants.
- ❖ Dotted around the showground were four giant willow bug sculptures as a quirky reminder of the importance of attracting wildlife to our gardens.



## RHS Chelsea Flower Show

Royal Hospital, Chelsea, London:  
23–27 May 2017

- ❖ The five BBC Radio 2 Feel Good Gardens were announced by Sue Biggs on Chris Evans' radio show. These were Show Gardens named after Radio 2 presenters, created by garden designers and all representing a different sense.
- ❖ Through a competition with the RHS and the BBC *The One Show*, the 'RHS Greening Grey Britain Garden' by designer Nigel Dunnett was won by Burlais Primary School, Swansea and later relocated to its school grounds.
- ❖ Sponsorship of the show was renewed for three more years by M&G Investments.
- ❖ The show had more than 165,000 visitors.
- ❖ New exhibitors such as Hare Spring Cottage Plants joined old favourites in the Great Pavilion.
- ❖ Members of the RHS Gardening Advice team were on hand at this and all RHS shows to help visitors with their horticultural queries and questions.



## RHS London Flower Shows 2017

Lindley and Lawrence Halls, Westminster

**RHS London Early  
Spring Plant Fair**  
13–15 February

**RHS London  
Botanical Art Show**  
23–25 February

**RHS London Spring  
Plant & Orchid Show**  
28–30 March

**RHS London Summer  
Urban Garden Show**  
11–13 July

**RHS London Harvest  
Festival Show**  
3–4 October

**RHS London Autumn  
Garden Show**  
24–26 October

**RHS On Tour:**  
4–5 March  
29–30 April  
16–17 June  
15–16 July  
3 September  
16–17 September  
2–3 December

- ❖ The three finalists from the RHS Young Designer of the Year Competition designed a ‘Pocket Park’ for urban environments which was exhibited at the RHS Spring Plant and Orchid Show.
- ❖ Exotic, dazzling and unusual plants were the stars of the RHS Spring Plant and Orchid Show.
- ❖ Visitor numbers for the RHS Botanical Art Show were up 32 percent in comparison to 2016.
- ❖ Bottle garden workshops, terrarium masterclasses and botanical perfume making all featured at the RHS Summer Urban Garden Show, co-curated by Cityscapes.
- ❖ The RHS Autumn Garden Show Late Event was our most successful of the year with 603 people attending out of a grand total of 3,084 visitors.
- ❖ The RHS On Tour inspired London neighbourhoods to get gardening with free events.





## RHS Chatsworth Flower Show

Chatsworth Estate, Derbyshire:  
7–11 June 2017

- ❖ The Society's inaugural flower show welcomed more than 94,000 visitors over the five days in a magnificent setting in front of Chatsworth House.
- ❖ Within the show's theme of Design Revolutionaries, a contemporary version of Joseph Paxton's Great Conservatory was filled with tropical plants.
- ❖ Local Peak District skills and heritage were celebrated in the Well Dressing competition, featuring colourful floral and foliage mosaics.
- ❖ Wedgwood, headline partner of the show, agreed a three-year partnership.
- ❖ Hoyland Plant Centre from South Yorkshire was RHS Master Grower. The family-run nursery grows *Agapanthus* and *Tulbaghia*.
- ❖ The 'RHS Garden for a Changing Climate' presented a small garden now and in the future, highlighting the RHS report *Gardening in a Changing Climate*.



## RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show

Hampton Court, Surrey: 4–9 July 2017

- ❖ BBC One broadcast *Kitchen Garden Live* with the Hairy Bikers (left) daily from the 'RHS Kitchen Garden'.
- ❖ The Festival of Roses marquee had a new look and many new cultivars were displayed.
- ❖ Headline sponsor Viking Cruise's 'World Discovery Garden', by Paul Hervey-Brookes, won Gold.
- ❖ 'The Zoflora and Caudwell Children's Wild Garden' by Andrée Davies and Adam White received an RHS Gold medal, Best in Show and People's Choice.
- ❖ Ways for gardens to cope with environmental challenges were addressed in the new Show Garden category Gardens for a Changing World.
- ❖ The Scarecrow Competition theme was A Walk on the Wild Side and had entries from 70 schools.
- ❖ Penberth Plants was RHS Master Grower. The Cornish nursery specialises in unusual plants, many from South Africa.
- ❖ More flowers are sold per square mile at the show than anywhere else in the UK.



## RHS Flower Show Tatton Park Knutsford, Cheshire: 19–23 July 2017

- ❖ ‘The Bruntwood Experiment’ by the show’s headline sponsor explored how overlooked plants enhance spaces.
- ❖ Future Spaces Gardens was a new category for 2017. Three gardens delivered positive messages about gardening in the future.
- ❖ New for the show was the Butterfly Dome – its 280sq m (3,050sq ft) was filled with 2,000 tropical butterflies.
- ❖ The title of RHS Young Designer 2017 was won by Ula Maria for her garden ‘Studio Unwired’.
- ❖ A new feature, Bus Stop Boulevards (pictured), included five bus stops dressed and planted by Greater Manchester communities, and included a double-decker bus.
- ❖ Dutch nursery WS Warmenhoven, famed for alliums, was RHS Master Grower.
- ❖ As at all shows, Plant Finders were on hand to help visitors track down the plants they were looking for.



## RHS Malvern Spring Gardening Festival

Three Counties Showground,  
Worcestershire:  
11–14 May 2017

- ❖ At 195m (640ft), the show’s new floral marquee was the longest in the UK.
- ❖ RHS Master Grower was Fibrex Nursery of Warwickshire, grower of begonias, ferns and ivies.
- ❖ Jekka McVicar, RHS Vice President and herb specialist, created ‘The Health & Wellbeing Garden’, now a permanent feature at the showground.
- ❖ In the Floral Marquee, the Plant Hunter Parlour was hosted by Joe Swift.



## Malvern Autumn Show Three Counties Showground, Worcestershire: 23–24 September 2017

- ❖ In the Harvest Pavilion, National Plant Societies showed off their fruit and vegetables and experts from the RHS Tender Plant Committee hosted talks.
- ❖ Malvern Autumn Theatre hosted talks by experts and celebrity gardeners.
- ❖ Ideas for making great dishes with seasonal vegetables were presented in the Cookery Theatre.
- ❖ Best Exhibit in the RHS Flower Show was Medwyns of Anglesey, which won Gold for a display of vegetables.



# Horticulture

- ❖ To help gardeners choose the best plants, the RHS Trials Team completed 15 plant trials, including strawberries, chrysanthemums, carnations, runner beans, parsnips and cherry tomatoes, and continued with an ongoing 30.
- ❖ Members of the RHS Bulb Committee gave talks on displaying and showing daffodils during the Daffodil Competition at RHS Garden Rosemoor. They also helped with a school competition for growing daffodils in pots.
- ❖ Shoppers at Waitrose were able to buy a new orchid, *Phalaenopsis* Hsinying Yenlin 'Purple Princess', which earned an RHS Award of Garden Merit from the RHS Orchid Committee. It was produced by a major British pot plant nursery and sold with clear RHS AGM-branded packaging.
- ❖ To reinvigorate and refresh our collection of heathers, the entire collection at RHS Garden Wisley (around 1,000 cultivars) were repropagated prior to replanting.
- ❖ A trial of 25 species and cultivars of golden pines was planted at RHS Garden Wisley to assess how they would thrive in a garden situation.
- ❖ In light of the threat to UK plants from *Xylella*, the RHS asked gardeners and the industry to consider only purchasing plants from UK sources.

# Libraries and Collections

- ❖ Gardeners and the public saw at first hand some of the treasures from our collections with five exhibitions in the RHS Lindley Library. Of those, the *Gardeners' World at 50* exhibit toured the four RHS Gardens.
- ❖ Orchid portraits were displayed at the RHS London Orchid Show. At all RHS London shows we organised curator tours of the Lindley Library.
- ❖ Botanic art from RHS collections inspired a limited edition line of clothing and accessories made by fashion brand, Coast.
- ❖ Through our short courses for gardeners and enthusiasts, students worked through more than 500 years of garden history, looking at original materials from the historic collections.
- ❖ The archive of plantsman EA Bowles was catalogued and made available for research.
- ❖ To further share our collections, we set up a Lindley Library Facebook page.
- ❖ To conserve our collections for the next generation of gardeners, extensive work was carried out on Gertrude Jekyll's scrapbook, the papers of plant collector Hartweg, and six albums of 19th-century Chinese paintings







## Communities and Education

- ❖ 3,500 people and 46 communities benefited from our Greening Grey Britain regional projects. With financial and practical support from RHS Community Outreach Advisors, they reported an increase in physical activity, pride in open spaces, and that communities felt safer and less isolated.
- ❖ To boost the protection of bumble and solitary bees, we joined with the Wildlife Trusts in the Wild About Gardens campaign to urge gardeners to make their gardens more pollinator friendly.
- ❖ More than 1,000 schools and youth groups used vegetables from their school and community gardens for the RHS Big Soup Share, which celebrated the 10th anniversary of the RHS Campaign for School Gardening.
- ❖ Elswick in Bloom, Lancashire was crowned Champion of Champion in what was the 53rd year of RHS Britain in Bloom.
- ❖ Around 40 communities transformed unused and unloved local spaces in our 'Greening Grey Britain for wildlife' programme.
- ❖ As part of the 10th anniversary of the Takeover Challenge organised by the Children's Commissioner's Office, around 30 young people took part in a Youth Takeover Day at RHS Garden Wisley to experience the world of horticulture.
- ❖ We awarded 82 RHS bursaries, totalling £140,000, to enable the further education, experience and skills of gardeners and horticulturists.
- ❖ Debbie Austin from Cornwall visited Japan and Singapore to investigate best practice in garden design aimed at promoting wellbeing. As a wheelchair user, her project focused on accessibility. Debbie's travels were enabled by a Winston Churchill Trust Travelling Fellowship Award, in partnership with the RHS.
- ❖ The RHS Qualifications team staged its first exhibit at the RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show.
- ❖ In 2017, 4,236 certificates were issued to those who successfully achieved an RHS Qualification.
- ❖ We redeveloped the RHS Master of Horticulture programme – our degree-equivalent qualification.
- ❖ The 'Green Plan It' secondary schools programme, which gives young people an insight into the skills and range of jobs in horticulture, was rolled out across Britain for a second time.
- ❖ We now have 92 RHS Approved centres (up by 10).
- ❖ We trained 1,019 teachers through our extensive and varied teacher-training programme.
- ❖ After completing their training at RHS Gardens, eight apprentices and 35 students graduated from the RHS School of Horticulture.





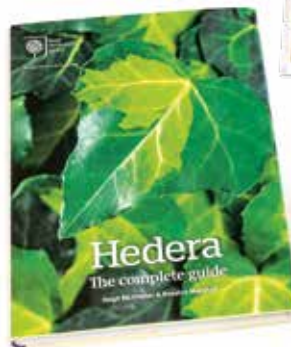
## Science

- ❖ So that everyone – from new gardeners to professionals – can benefit from our research, we published 49 peer-review and edited publications in botany, plant health and horticultural and environmental science.
- ❖ The RHS Gardening Advice service dealt with 107,102 queries, with customer satisfaction scoring 9.6 out of 10.
- ❖ To educate the next generation of scientists, we collaborated with 10 universities, supporting five BSc, one MSc, 10 PhD students and one horticultural fellowship.
- ❖ In recognition of the need to protect UK gardens from established and new pests and diseases, we introduced a plant health policy and six key plant-health principles.
- ❖ In our role as International Cultivar Registration Authority for the genus *Dianthus*, we published *The International Dianthus Register and Checklist*. Bringing together 44,000 names, this is the first comprehensive guide to the naming of pinks and carnations since 1984.
- ❖ As vital resource to orchid enthusiasts, collectors and the industry, we published the *Sander's List of Orchid Hybrids – 3 Year Addendum 2014–2016* with 9,000 new names added to the 168,000 already registered.
- ❖ To help gardeners manage and mitigate future climate change challenges we published *Gardening in a Changing World*, the culmination of four years research.
- ❖ To identify best gardening practice and maximise the health benefits of gardening, we worked with Coventry University to understand the biomechanics of digging.
- ❖ We encouraged gardeners to become citizen scientists with the Blooms for Bees project. With Heritage Lottery funding and support from Defra, gardeners were asked to record which flowers were favoured by bees.
- ❖ We involved 45 schools in Slug It!, a project to test five cultural control barriers to slug and snail damage. Over six weeks pupils harvested lettuce leaves and measured the area of damage caused by slugs and snails.



# Media and membership

- ❖ At the end of the financial year, we had 490,205 members, a record high, and a net increase of more than 18,000 members on the previous year.
- ❖ To support everyone in their gardening journey, we share knowledge and offer guidance in a number of ways (from books to social media) and had increases in all streams. There were 1.65 million unique users per month on rhs.org.uk; on Facebook we had 202,134 friends; Twitter had 142,944 followers; on Pinterest 145,412 members; and we almost doubled the number of those using Instagram to 43,081.
- ❖ Our podcasts offer a range of gardening topics – we had about 5 million listens through the year. During the year there were 417,581 downloads per month.
- ❖ We welcomed 15 new Fellows, the apex of our membership, bringing the total to 159.
- ❖ To streamline our creative processes we improved our image database, Iris. We now hold 120,000 assets including video and images.
- ❖ We published our second monograph, *Hedera: The Complete Guide*, to share the benefits for people and the environment of growing ivies.
- ❖ *RHS Plant Finder*, an important resource for home and professional gardeners, promotes stability in plant names and supports the UK nursery trade. Our special 30th anniversary edition included a new colour section and contributions from plantspeople, nursery owners and noted horticulturists.
- ❖ Helping members grow as gardeners, and to reflect the evolving gardening scene around the world, the October issue of our monthly members' magazine *The Garden* was the first new design for six years.
- ❖ To enjoy the breadth of gardening and horticulture in the UK and abroad, our members can take advantage of preferential admission to more than 200 Partner Gardens.



# Employees and volunteers

- ❖ We created our first Volunteer Strategy identifying five areas of development.
- ❖ We welcomed 268 new volunteers at Harlow Carr, Hyde Hall, Rosemoor, Wisley and the Lindley Library.
- ❖ At RHS Garden Bridgewater, 219 new volunteers joined forces to help us develop our new garden.
- ❖ More than 1,700 volunteers have contributed nearly 90,000 hours of their time to make our gardens more beautiful, enhance our visitors' experience and shared their passion and knowledge with thousands of people.
- ❖ We gave 88 long-service awards to staff during 2017 including four for 30 years' service and one for 35 years' service.
- ❖ As a result of our fourth employee engagement survey with Best Companies we remain a 'One to Watch' organisation.









# Investment in horticulture

Membership is the cornerstone of the RHS and we value the support given by each of our 490,205 members. Our Members and Marketing division (£21.8m) accounts for 23 percent of our total income and represents a major source of funds to reinvest in our charitable work.

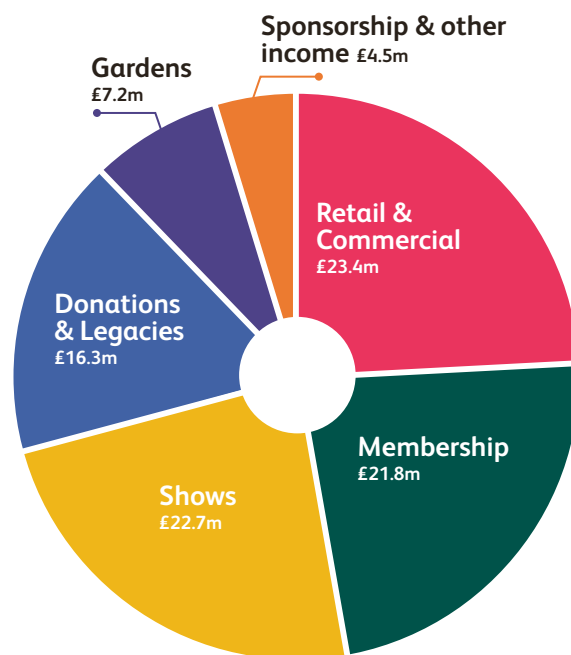
## Total income £95.9m: Where our income comes from

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 by £8.0m to £16.3m, which included donations of £7.2m towards the Strategic Investment Programme. Fundraising has been a major priority and will remain a key focus over the next few years.

All four RHS Gardens had record visitor numbers and collectively welcomed more than 2.1m people, up 5 percent. This increase in gate receipts and catering helped income reach £7.2m (2016/17: £6.8m), up £0.4m (5.9 percent).

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* magazine and hiring of the Lindley Hall. At £23.4m they represent 24 percent of the total.

Income from RHS Shows, representing 24 percent of RHS income, increased to £22.7m (2016/17: £18.7m) thanks mostly to the inaugural RHS Chatsworth Flower Show which attracted 94,000 visitors.

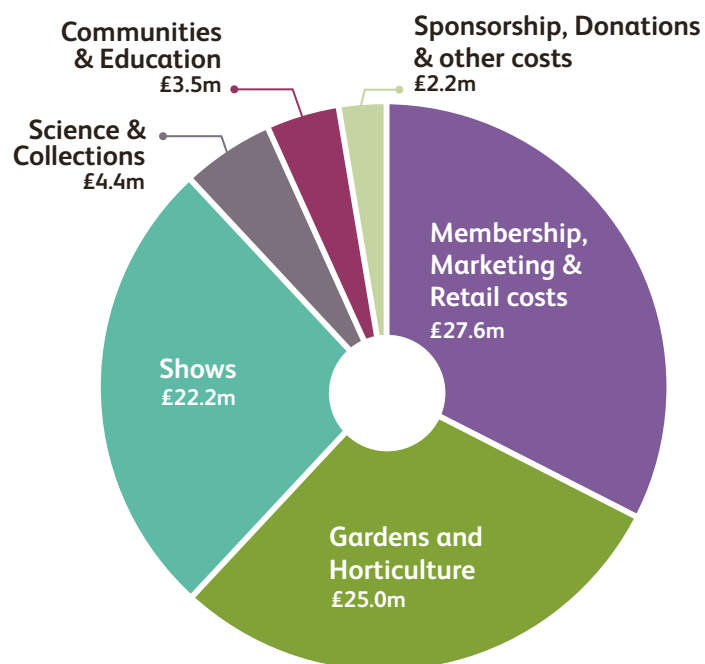


## Total expenditure £84.9m: Where our income goes

This year we spent £84.9m (2016/17: £76.4m), an increase of £8.5m (11.1 percent) which included spending of £4.6m on our Strategic Investment Programme.

Investment in headcount and horticulture are the major reasons for our £25.0m spend (up £1.7m) on Gardens and Horticulture to ensure our world-class gardens are maintained, improved and developed. RHS Shows costs increased by £5.2m to £22.2m – most coming from staging the new show at Chatsworth. Membership, Marketing and Retail operation expenditure increased by £0.6m; with expenditure in Science and Collections in line with the previous year as we continue to recognise and reward talent to ensure the future of great scientists. Communities and Education expenditure increased by £0.1m due to additional support for the RHS Campaign for School Gardening.

Our Strategic Investment Programme is now well under way. Over the next three years it will deliver several of the large capital projects, including the new Welcome building and the National Centre for Horticultural Science and Learning at Wisley, and opening RHS Garden Bridgewater.



**As a result of all of our trading activity, we used our surplus of £11.0m to invest in the future of horticulture, science and collections, in communities across Britain and in celebrating the power and beauty of plants.**



# With your support

The money we raise from our donors and members through fundraising enables us to make the UK a greener, healthier and happier place.

## Life-long learning

The Opening of the Clore Learning Centre (right) at RHS Garden Hyde Hall in June 2018 completes the transformation of the garden's Hilltop area. An exceptionally generous grant from the Clore Duffield Foundation, together with a number of trusts and supporters, has created this wonderful new space to provide learning opportunities to around 9,000 children annually, engaging them with the natural world. Visitors of all ages will benefit from developing horticultural skills and the new Teaching Garden will provide a range of hands-on learning facilities.



## Supporting young people

We have expanded the RHS Apprenticeship Scheme by two places and are now providing career opportunities to 18 apprentices across our four gardens. These apprentices are supported thanks to major grants from the Topinambour Trust and the Schroder Foundation, as well as other generous trusts and individual donors.



## Conserved for the next generation

One of Gertrude Jekyll's albums of tracings, sketches and handwritten notes has been conserved thanks to a generous grant from The John Ackroyd Trust. Half-bound in green leather with the words 'Designs for carving' on the front, the book dates from around 1875 and has since been displayed in a exhibition at the RHS Lindley Library in spring 2018.





## Transforming our gardens

Support from our members has enabled us to enhance spring displays by planting 400,000 bulbs across our four gardens. Thanks to the Streamside Appeal, at RHS Garden Harlow Carr we are strengthening the stream banks (below), renewing planting schemes and adding new paths to make this natural water course, which is a haven for wildlife, more accessible to visitors.



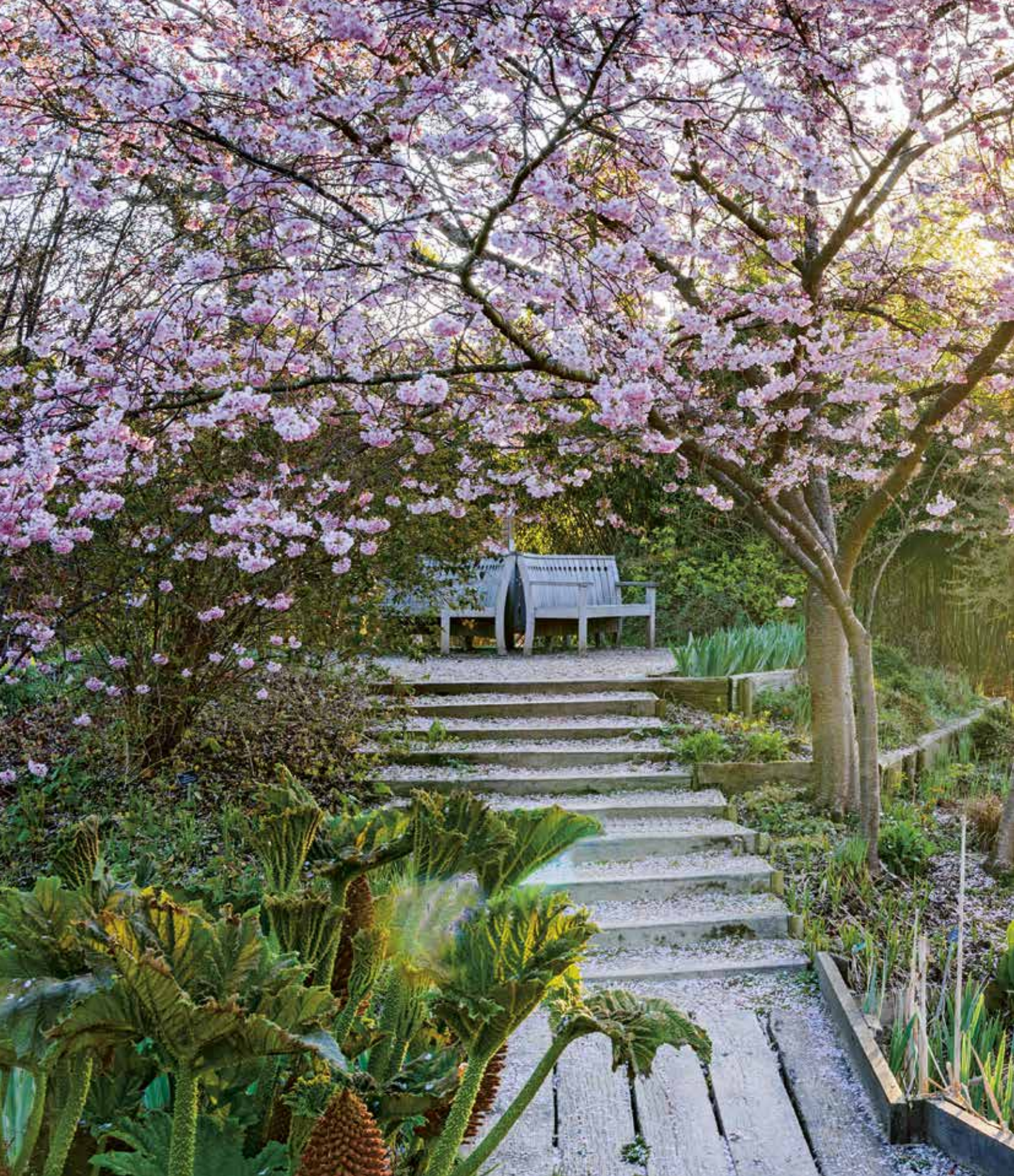
## Building on the Wisley 'wow' factor

A generous legacy gift from Katie and Keith Harland has supported two beautiful new features to inspire visitors at Wisley. The Exotic Garden (left) opened last year and is home to tropical-looking plants with large leaves and vibrant flowers. It provides visitors with a living catalogue of exotic-looking plants that can be grown outdoors in the UK.

The new Wisteria Arch, a 75m-long (250ft) tunnel supporting numerous plants of this incredible climber, opened in June 2018. It will become a true show-stopper for all visitors to Wisley as it matures and displays masses of beautiful dark purple and light mauve flowers in early summer.







We are grateful for the generous gifts, donations and bequests from members and supporters. During the year we received more than £16 million which directly impacts our ongoing work. If you would like to support the RHS, please contact [developmentoffice@rhs.org.uk](mailto:developmentoffice@rhs.org.uk) or telephone 020 7821 3125. [rhs.org.uk/supportus](https://rhs.org.uk/supportus) For a copy of the *Annual Report and Consolidated Financial Statements 2017/2018*, please either contact The Secretary at the address below, email [secretary@rhs.org.uk](mailto:secretary@rhs.org.uk) or download from [rhs.org.uk/annual-report](https://rhs.org.uk/annual-report)