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

Today the RHS is committed to providing a voice for all gardeners. We are driven by a simple love of plants and a belief that gardeners make the world a better place. 208 years on we continue to safeguard and advance the science, art and practice of horticulture, creating displays that inspire people to garden. In all aspects of our work we help people transform their lives and communities through gardening, helping gardeners develop by sharing our knowledge and expertise.
President’s Introduction

The RHS works to get as many children as possible gardening, and this year saw RHS Vice President Alan Titchmarsh open the Peter Buckley Learning Centre at the RHS Garden, Rosemoor. This Centre is now helping 7,000 children in Devon to learn about gardening in beautiful surroundings. Across the UK, 3 million children are now gardening at 15,000 schools through participation in the RHS Campaign for School Gardening.

Our community gardening work continues to go from strength to strength with over 30,000 acres of public space being cared for by 200,000 volunteers. In November, we launched our report, “Britain in Bloom: transforming local communities”, that examined the social, economic and environmental impact of our gardening campaigns and there was near unanimous agreement from survey respondents that these campaigns build stronger communities. Almost half surveyed said participation had reduced antisocial behaviour and 40 per cent reported that campaigns created safer environments. One of the highlights of the community gardening year are the RHS Britain in Bloom UK Finals Awards, which were presented in St Andrews, Fife and nearly 500 community representatives attended.

Gardening is also having a positive impact on prisoner behaviour in the many prisons taking part in the annual Windlesham Trophy competition, which recognises prison environments that are transformed through gardening. On behalf of the RHS, which helps fund the judging, I was delighted to present the 2011 Windlesham Trophy to Thorn Cross Young Offenders Institution in Warrington for its outstanding achievements.

Science and evidence-based advice is at the very heart of the RHS, and the advisory area of the Science team answered more than 60,000 enquiries last year. This amazing service gives valuable information and continues to grow, benefitting members and the wider public, on the Society’s website (www.rhs.org.uk). To my delight, the RHS now supports six Science PhD students, some working at other research establishments, as we share horticultural scientific knowledge.

Another highlight was the launch at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show of our special patrons’ scheme – the RHS Fellowship. To date, there are 70 Fellows making a real difference with their considerable and much appreciated contribution to the Society. The Lindley Library, slightly damaged by fire in July, contains a huge collection of treasures and now has been thoroughly cleaned in readiness for its re-opening in the summer of 2012.

The review of the Society’s governance will further emphasise the ‘H’ for Horticulture in the RHS and help us benefit from the immense knowledge of the horticulturalists who make up many of the RHS committees. By simplifying and streamlining the governance structure we are increasing the clarity and efficiency of decision making and ensuring that this wealth of knowledge can be better shared amongst you all.

Members, volunteers, committees, staff, Council, sponsors and the horticultural trade are working together to help millions of people to garden. I would like to thank all of them for their hard work and the magnificent contribution they make in so many different ways.

Over the next few years, the RHS will invest up to £27 million in projects to fuel the growing appetite for gardening, and ensure horticulture is safeguarded for future generations to enjoy. I am pleased that the successes of 2011 have put the RHS in a strong position to build an exciting future for gardeners and everyone involved with our Society.

Elizabeth Banks
President
Director General’s Introduction

Making a difference: the key RHS Investment Projects

RHS Lindley Library & Hall, London
The RHS plans to re-develop the Lindley Hall and Library to create a stunning new space for a larger, open plan library and exhibition gallery. Through more London Flower Shows, exhibitions, lectures, events and courses, everyone will, for the first time, be able to enjoy the RHS collections of literary and botanical art treasures. These are of international significance and chart 500 years of UK gardening history.

Horticultural Science
The Society plans to create a world-class scientific research centre for the benefit of all gardeners and the environment. With the Government and universities cutting back on research expenditure, there is an urgent need to make this investment and it will put the RHS at the forefront of horticultural science.

RHS Urban Garden
The RHS plans to create its first inner city garden as an oasis of green for local residents, offering educational initiatives, including school visits, workshops and inspirational gardening courses. Working with local schools and community groups, the garden will offer hands-on learning experiences, such as Grow Your Own workshops. A wide variety of locations and opportunities will be explored in the search for this first garden, which may take some years to find.

RHS Centres
Across the UK, in urban and rural locations, the RHS plans to work with partners to create regional centres based at RHS Gardens, partner colleges and gardens or Botanical Gardens. The first centre will be opened in Scotland, followed closely by Yorkshire during 2012. Working in all forms of community gardening, we will support local groups such as Britain in Bloom, It’s Your Neighbourhood, local gardening clubs, plant societies and schools involved in the RHS Campaign for School Gardening. We aim to share the best in gardening, to recruit more supporters and to create links with community groups and local businesses to ensure the long-term sustainability of the centres and their work. Once these two pilot schemes have successfully completed their first year, we hope to gradually roll centres out across all the regions and nations of the UK.

RHS Online
The RHS plans to invest in its online presence to provide a more engaging, interactive website with a wealth of ideas and expertise, which will be the first port of call for all levels of gardeners. The site will include enhanced content and new online tools and ‘Apps’ aimed at helping gardeners, increasing shared knowledge and providing a voice for them.

RHS Garden Wisley, Surrey
One million adults and children visit our flagship Garden, RHS Wisley, each year. To deliver an inspiring and interactive learning experience, the RHS plans include two additional teaching rooms as well as a new exhibition space and event facility. More space is planned to enable specialist nurseries to promote British-grown, rare and unusual plants with additional room to enjoy the most extensive range of horticultural books on sale for gardeners in the UK. A new restaurant will be added and RHS Wisley’s entrance transformed to befit a garden of such international importance.

RHS Garden Hyde Hall, Essex
The plan at this relatively young garden is to dramatically increase the spectacular horticultural content, including the creation of a 70 acre perennial meadow and a beautiful Mediterranean edible garden, featuring olives, lavender and grapevines. A new Learning Centre is also planned for children and adults to develop their gardening skills, meaning all four RHS Gardens will then have significant education facilities.

Over the next five years or so, these projects will deliver the very essence of the Society’s charitable purpose. We re-shaped the RHS structure in April 2012 to ensure we’re in the best possible shape to manage this major investment programme. We will now work together to deliver these significant new initiatives, whilst continuing to maintain and grow our extensive current activities.

The RHS also led the way with the first National Gardening Week, from 16-22 April this year. This is another way for us to engage with more people, to encourage and inspire novice and expert gardeners alike to grow, and for every sector of horticulture to show their pride in the part they play in making Britain a green and beautiful country in which to live.

We hosted a whole range of activities throughout the week to get the nation to garden, including a conference in London entitled “Horticulture: a Career to be proud of”, which was chaired by Alan Titchmarsh. The conference celebrated horticultural careers, showcasing the rich and diverse roles and the critical impact they have on our lives, those of our communities, the economy and the environment. We will continue to find new ways to promote and celebrate horticulture to a wider audience in 2012, and to support and work with the whole gardening world.

At the time of going to press, we have just celebrated Her Majesty The Queen’s Diamond Jubilee at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show. The Society is honoured that The Queen is our Patron and we were delighted that Her Majesty was able to unveil a new royal autograph during her visit to the RHS Chelsea Flower Show.

Going forward into 2012, we want to continue to build relationships and share the best in gardening. We’ll work hard to be as relevant, involving and accessible to as many people as possible, and we hope we can help and inspire them to garden. We also need to ensure we’re delivering best practice and constantly reviewing how we work – to this end, we are now implementing the recommendations of two reviews we’ve undertaken recently, on judging and governance. This fine-tuning will help us try to be as effective as we can possibly be, to continue delivering world class horticulture and to share the best in horticultural knowledge.

Last but most definitely not least, I would like to thank the hundreds of volunteers and thousands of members who enable all of us at the RHS to achieve the results we do. Without our volunteers, we simply could not manage the Gardens, the Shows, the libraries, the research, the committees and boards; without our members and their contributions, we could not undertake our scientific research, our education and our community gardening work. So, on behalf of everyone at the RHS, thanks a million to all of you for your amazing and generous support.

Sue Biggs
Director General

Looking to the Future
What the RHS does

Gardens
We have four renowned Gardens at RHS Harlow Carr in North Yorkshire, RHS Hyde Hall in Essex, RHS Rosemoor in Devon and RHS Wisley in Surrey. Through them, the Society helps gardeners across the UK by providing: access to diverse plant collections; examples of innovative and attractive planting design; and the highest horticultural standards and practices. The RHS Gardens also hold plant trials to judge the performance of plants. Those that are considered to perform particularly well receive the RHS Award of Garden Merit (AGM) to help gardeners identify plants that will thrive in most garden situations. Those that are particularly good for pollinating insects, so vital for a healthy, sustainable environment, are identified by the new RHS Perfect for Pollinators easily recognisable logo.

As we go to press, we are pleased to advise that all four RHS Gardens were ranked in the Top 10 of a Which? survey of the UK’s gardens, with RHS Garden Rosemoor achieving the top accolade of Best UK Garden to visit – a tremendous achievement.

Retail
The RHS offers excellent shopping opportunities in all four Gardens and at all our Shows for members and visitors. Sales are generated through our plant centres, gift shops and bookshops, with RHS Garden Wisley offering the best selection of horticultural books in the UK to browse through. In addition, shoppers can use our online sales facilities or mail order service. We earn further income for our charitable purposes from licensing the use of images from our extensive library.

Shows
The RHS is responsible for organising inspirational Flower Shows at Chelsea, Hampton Court Palace in south west London and Tatton Park in Cheshire, as well as seasonal shows in RHS Gardens Wisley and Hyde Hall and at the Society’s Horticultural Halls in London. Partnership Shows include the RHS Spring Show in Cardiff (in conjunction with Cardiff Council), the Malvern Spring and Autumn Gardening Shows (organised jointly with the Three Counties Agricultural Society) and BBC Gardeners World in Birmingham (in conjunction with the BBC).

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

In the adjacent RHS Lindley Hall, flower and garden design Shows, art exhibitions and talks are held for the benefit of our members and the wider public.

Activities in 2011/12

The following is a summary of the Society’s principal activities and how we provide benefit both to our members and the wider public.
The RHS aims to share our knowledge with all gardeners. To that end, we publish widely, both online and in print. Our website (www.rhs.org.uk) attracts c. 500,000 unique users a month and our book titles, including the new 2012 edition of the RHS Plant Finder, are amongst the bestsellers in gardening bookshops.

We also publish a monthly magazine, The Garden, as well as The Plantsman, The Orchid Review and a host of horticultural books that help to keep our members and the public informed about the latest skills, design and practice of horticulture.

Science
RHS scientists are the recognised centre of excellence for independent horticultural science and advice; they are committed to helping gardeners improve and develop their horticultural skills, as well as identifying and promoting solutions to major issues. The Society carries out scientific research into plants, their physiology, cultivation, identification, and the pests and diseases affecting them. We also provide authoritative horticultural advice to our members and the wider public via our website, through lectures and seminars, and by leading the debate on issues influencing horticulture and gardening.

Education
The Society aims to share practical knowledge and inspire those of all ages and abilities with an interest in plants and gardening. We are committed to providing a ‘ladder of qualifications’, from the RHS Level 1 Certificate (accessible to the amateur as well as the first step in vocational training for the professional horticulturist), through to the prestigious Master of Horticulture (RHS) qualification. All RHS Qualifications are distinguished by our commitment to high standards. The RHS is an Awarding Organisation recognised by the Office of Qualifications and Examination Regulations (Ofqual), ensuring accessibility to RHS qualifications through colleges and other partners across the UK. We also offer practical training schemes through the School of Horticulture to over 30 trainees within our own Gardens which offer an unmatched opportunity to learn with the best and to acquire diverse craft skills and a practical understanding of horticulture.

For the gardeners of the future, we run the Campaign for School Gardening to encourage as many children as possible to get growing, and to help every child get involved in gardening. For adults, we organise a range of lectures, courses and workshops in our Gardens and around the country, aimed at inspiring and helping adults to build their confidence to learn and do more. We are committed to developing a broad range of formal and informal learning opportunities for everyone, enriching their knowledge and quality of life.

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

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

As a membership charity, we rely on the welcome support of our over 383,000 members to deliver our charitable purpose. In return for this vital and much appreciated contribution, we provide our members with access to a range of services and activities such as free entry for themselves and a member of their family to our Gardens and over 140 recommended gardens (only free entry for the member at recommended gardens); reduced admission prices to our Shows; an information-packed monthly magazine; and additional plant advisory services. However, our membership programme is also a key means for us to engage with those interested in horticulture and gardening and for us all to share our knowledge and best practice. We place no restrictions on membership and endeavour to keep membership subscriptions at an affordable level.

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty in section 4 of the Charities Act 2006 (now section 17 of the Charities Act 2011) to have regard to the Charity Commission’s general guidance on public benefit, Charities and Public Benefit.
RHS Garden Wisley

RHS Garden Wisley experienced its second busiest year ever with over 900,000 visitors and members coming to the garden. The year certainly started well with one of the finest spring displays on record which clearly inspired visitors to return time after time.

Membership recruitment at the garden reached record numbers with nearly 16,000 new members joining at Wisley. This growth in visitors and membership was helped by the opening of the Bowes Lyon Rose Garden, a large contemporary design by Chelsea Gold Medal winning designer Robert Myers with over 5,000 different roses and almost as much complementary planting of perennials and grasses, including Miscanthus sinensis ‘Morning Light’, Stipa gigantean, Hakonechloa macra ‘Aureola’ and, Pennisetum ‘Fairy Tails’

2011 also saw an increased number of events for members and visitors of all ages. These included exclusive free member evenings in the garden during the summer, early morning access to the garden for photographers, and a Spring Craft fair. Additional days were added to both the Wisley Flower Show and The Taste of Autumn event. The Fruit Department launched a range of delicious jams and jellies made with 100% Wisley grown fruit. Using the extensive fruit collection we also produced a very popular selection of cider.

We ensured that Wisley was at the heart of the learning experience for our visitors, with nearly 19,000 school pupils on formal school visits, providing free drop-in workshops for more than 49,000 children and adults throughout the year. The opening of the new two storey Bird Hide in the Pinetum also proved an attraction for school groups and individuals alike. In addition we worked with a number of RHS Affiliated Societies, such as the Alpine Society to offer visitor and member access to their expertise though talks and demonstrations in the garden.

At Christmas we launched a new range of courses aimed at adults wanting to improve their skills. These included Practical and Theoretical Horticulture, Floral Art and Photography to name a few.

RHS Garden Harlow Carr

2011 was a record year for Harlow Carr, with total visitor numbers at almost 290,000 (including children aged under six,) and membership recruitment also at an all-time high.

A significant number of garden and site projects were completed during the year, ensuring that visitors and members were offered numerous new experiences and reasons to return.

One of the most exciting changes within the garden was the expansion of the Queen Mother’s Lake, which has not only created a wonderful visual impact, bringing a larger expanse of water and reflection to the garden experience, but also enabling us to manage more effectively the flow of water through the gardens during wet periods.

We also continued to increase the provision of planting across the garden, improving seasonal impact with the introduction of over a quarter of a million bulbs, including the autumn flowering Crocus speciosus ‘Albus’ AGM, creating a beautiful swathe of colour near our Catalpa tree in October. We also completed the renovation of our Scented Garden with a combination of roses, perennials and grasses; doubled the size of our Productive Area to include apple archways, cut flowers, rhubarb and asparagus beds; created a White Border scheme using grasses and dark foliage shrubs as a foil; and commissioned a stone sculpture which now rests in the Alpine Zone amongst the newly planted raised beds. New stone bridges have been built to open previously closed off areas and improve the journey for the visitor around the garden.

We are looking forward to an equally successful 2012 and do hope that our members and visitors will continue to enjoy our ever expanding range of new and exciting developments within the garden.
RHS Garden Rosemoor Devon

2011 saw an impressive 79% increase in new members recruited at Rosemoor, and 145,322 visitors (including children aged under six). The diverse and exciting events programme encourages new membership and introduces new audiences to the garden.

The rose season was spectacular, resulting in high visitor numbers to the site in June. This area of the garden has been enhanced by the removal of the tall hedge to the north side of the rose garden. A large pergola with additional rose planting has ensured the rose garden has a more open aspect.

A new addition to the programme was our first Vintage Weekend which proved very popular, and the Winter Sculpture Exhibition from November to February grew in popularity and sales. This is a popular event as the exhibits highlight the form of the garden during the winter months.

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The in-house catering at Rosemoor continues to go from strength to strength. Locally sourced produce and ingredients from the garden ensure the popularity of the restaurant in addition to catering for Rosemoor events and weddings. Rosemoor was featured in the ITV series Countrywise airing in May which helped raise the profile of the garden at the beginning of the season.

The highlight of the year was the opening of the Peter Buckley Teaching Centre on April 15th by Alan Titchmarsh. The centre has 2 large classroom facilities and an exhibition room.

Rosemoor received an excellent report when it was accredited with the Visit Britain’s Visitor Attraction Quality Award which highlighted the facilities, services and garden standards.

RHS Garden Hyde Hall Essex

We ended 2011 on a high note with record-breaking visitor numbers, which for the first time ever broke the 150,000 visitor barrier (including children aged under six) and we now sit comfortably within the top 20 visitor attractions in the East of England. It was also an extremely busy year in the garden with lots of new projects and improvements being made.

The Hyde Hall Biodiversity Team was reformed and they successfully implemented a number of wildlife projects which included the addition of 100 bird boxes, two bug hotels and a number of information boards covering topics such as wildflowers, birds and butterflies. In late summer wildlife happily feasted on a new 2-hectare sunflower meadow which provided a stunning sight for visitors as you entered the garden.

In the Hilltop Garden around 4,000 bulbs were added to boost spring colour. The purple bay of the Herbaceous Border was redeveloped to enable soil improvement and a refreshed planting scheme.

Work on the extension to the Dry Garden continued apace with soil preparation, hard landscaping and planting plans being drawn up. Approximately 2,000 plants were sourced for this area and included a mix of species that have been successful on the original Dry Garden along with some new additions.

Excavations for a new lake measuring around 3,000sqm also began just along from the Road Field Bulb Meadow and totally transforms the view from the main garden as it sits nestled at the bottom of the hill, with the rolling Essex countryside beyond.

On the wider estate, around 9,000 whips were planted, and despite it being a challenging spring with very dry conditions there were minimal fatalities, and the young trees are now flourishing. We are also reclaiming an area of farming land totalling around 23 hectares, some of which will be used for further tree planting.

Hyde Hall was one of a few select locations chosen by BBC Essex when they celebrated their 25th anniversary. Catering staff presented them a cake to mark the occasion.
The RHS Flower Shows bring together talent, established and new, from across the world to create sensational displays and gardens. The excitement surrounding our shows creates a powerful platform for us to share our knowledge and skills and communicate key messages about gardening with a very large and broad audience, including our members and the world’s media.

Each show has its own distinct character, which is captured in the plants and gardens on display and in the programme of events taking place throughout the show. Every show has something for everyone, whatever their level of gardening expertise.

Whilst the shows only last between three to five days, they leave an important legacy for local communities across the UK. Throughout the year, we liaise with local Councils, prisons and community groups and other charities to both develop new content and ensure exhibits are sustainable and find a good home after the shows have finished.

Hundreds of thousands of people visit our shows each year and we reach millions more through television, online, radio and print media coverage.

**RHS Show Cardiff, April**

Set against the stunning backdrop of Cardiff Castle, the RHS Show Cardiff is the first showcase of the year for all that’s best in gardening. The show, run in partnership with Cardiff Council, is well known for being a friendly, intimate event with a real community feel. With fabulous floral displays, show gardens and plenty of plants and other enticing products on sale, there is plenty to see for everyone.

The 2011 show was blessed with sunshine and witnessed record ticket sales, attracting 22,305 visitors to the show.

**Malvern Spring Gardening Show, May**

With the beautiful Malvern Hills as a backdrop the show is filled with inspirational ideas for real gardeners. Whether you are an avid gardener, or simply enjoy the great outdoors, visitors can experience 50 acres of gardening heaven in a stunning setting at Malvern. Staged in partnership with the Three Counties Agricultural Society, the 2011 show featured unrivalled displays from nurseries throughout the UK.

**RHS Chelsea Flower Show, May**

The RHS Chelsea Flower Show, sponsored by M&G investments, is the glamorous icon of horticulture, supreme in quality and style. It’s always a star-studded occasion, where visitors can enjoy a glittering array of gardens from renowned designers and cutting edge planting. 2011 highlights included a definitive selection of traditional and avant-garde design including show gardens by James Wong, Bunny Guinness, Luciano Giubbilei and many more. Nearly 160,000 people visit the show each year and coverage is watched by millions.
BBC Gardeners’ World Live, June
Staged in association with the RHS, this show brings the BBC TV programme to life, with inspiring Show Gardens, top-quality plants and non-stop shopping on tap. 2011 highlights included appearances from gardening personalities, the RHS Floral Marquee as well as fantastic shopping opportunities.

RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show, July
The world’s largest annual flower show is set against the spectacular backdrop of Hampton Court Palace and is the ultimate experience for passionate gardeners and those looking to start their own home-grown garden. The show is brimming with inspiration and idea, plants and other products for visitors to take home. Highlights in 2011 included the ‘RHS Edible Garden’, stunning show gardens, famous English Poets themed gardens, an Artisan food theatre and the Country Living Pavilion.

RHS Flower Show Tatton Park, July
Set in one of Cheshire’s Gardens of Distinction, the RHS Flower Show Tatton Park has a fresh and vibrant feel bursting with sizzling colour and summer perfumes. In 2011, visitors were able to discover the inspirational show gardens designed by up and coming talent and established designers, the The Young Garden Designer of the Year’s winning garden and the 180m-long Floral Marquee which was filled with the UK’s best nurseries and plant suppliers, exhibiting plants and floral displays.

Malvern Autumn Show, September
The Malvern Autumn Show, the second of the two shows, hosts a range of cookery demonstrations, gardening talks, vegetable displays, vintage tractors, crafts and more. Highlights in 2011 included the National Horseboarding Championships and appearances from celebrity gardeners and chefs.

RHS London Flower Shows February, March & October
The RHS London Shows offer visitors the perfect way to spend the day celebrating the seasons, with beautiful plants to see and buy, show gardens by top designers, seasonal ideas and expert advice and unique artwork. 2011 highlights included the RHS London Orchid & Botanical Art Show and the RHS Great London Plant Fair.
This year saw some significant developments for RHS Science. The work of the science team, which keeps the RHS at the forefront of horticulture, is divided into two main activities – research and advice. The findings from the research we carry out not only influence the charity’s own practice but also, through sharing our knowledge, help gardeners make the best decisions for their gardens and the environment.

**Research**

The year 2011/12 was the third year of implementation of the Society’s Science Strategy. Three key areas of particular focus in this year were:

- Research into the role of plants and gardens in our towns and cities
- Improving our facilities for undertaking world class science
- Delivering high quality advice

Gardens form a major part of the landscape in our towns and cities and gardeners therefore play an important role in shaping our environment. Through our scientific research, we seek to improve our understanding of gardening practices that enhance and protect our environment for now and the future.

**Urban Greening**

In 2011 we undertook a major review of all the available, published literature regarding the contribution that domestic gardens make to the environment of our towns and cities. This project, carried out in partnership with the universities of Reading and Sheffield and with input from the Horticultural Trades Association, highlighted just how important the nation’s gardens are in terms of moderating temperature, preventing flooding, providing habitats for wildlife, and supporting human health and well-being.

A summary of the research findings, Gardening matters: Urban gardens (available at www.rhs.org.uk/urban greening), was launched at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show in May 2011. The Secretary of State for the Environment, Caroline Spelman, welcomed the information provided in the report.

The RHS has subsequently become a partner in the government’s Green Infrastructure Partnership, which aims to bring together organisations with an interest in improving our towns and cities through thoughtful use of plants and green space.

The first annual John MacLeod Lecture, established in memory of the former Chairman of the Science & Horticultural Advice Committee (SHAC) and member of RHS Council, was held in November. This lecture provides an opportunity for a leading UK or international scientist to address a topic of relevance to horticulture and the Society’s interests.

The lecturer this year was Professor Diane Pataki, Director of the Center for Environmental Biology at the University of California. She has also acted as an environmental advisor to the US Government. Her lecture, entitled “How green are our gardens? Monitoring the environmental costs and benefits of urban green space”, provided a fascinating update into the latest research findings that underline the importance of sound science to inform urban planning in relation to provision of green infrastructure.
Field Research Facility

Autumn 2011 saw the start of construction of the Society’s new controlled-environment scientific glasshouse facility at RHS Garden Wisley. The new building will provide the RHS with a dedicated centre in which to carry out experimental work and represents a major step forward in upgrading our research facilities.

Funded largely through the generosity of RHS members and individual donors, this new facility will enable RHS Scientists to do more of their important work to support the nation’s gardeners.

Advice

No other charity invests as much time as the RHS does into the scientific study of horticulture. This is essential to our team of horticultural advisors who can call on our expert horticultural scientists as the need arises. Each year our advisors answer over 80,000 gardening queries and offer practical solutions to practical problems such as the pruning of wisteria to queries on pests and diseases such as the Fuchsia Gall Mite and downy mildew.

We are often the first organisation to detect new pests and diseases to the UK because our scientists find them on plants sent to us by members for analysis. This has major importance for plant biosecurity in the UK and the charity’s scientists are involved with national forums covering this area of plant protection.

The RHS also produces a number of popular publications such as RHS Plant Finder which helps gardeners find suppliers of over 70,000 plants. Our online service Plant Selector has helped thousands of gardeners select plants suitable to their gardens’ particular needs. During 2011 the number of plants in the database topped 5,000 plants.

As well as investigating the major issues facing gardeners today, RHS Science is an internationally recognised centre of excellence for the nomenclature of cultivated plants. This very important area informs all the work that we carry out for without knowing the actual plant that may be affected by a disease or that may be invading parts of the countryside we cannot suggest solutions to the problem.

As part of our efforts to ensure the Society provides convenient access to advice for gardeners we ran an advice service on the ‘RHS Experience’ stand at selected flower shows during 2011. This new service featured a much more hands-on approach to answering questions and engaging visitors in our science work. In addition, RHS advisors ran a pilot project offering face to face advice to members at the charity’s Harlow Carr garden, which will be repeated in 2012, to establish demand for the service.

The Future

Looking ahead to 2012, the future of RHS Science relies on deepening existing links with science partners and building new collaborations through shared projects, secondments and co-location of our staff. Effective communication and interpretation of our research will remain essential to engage members and the gardening public in what we do.
Plant trials & relations

2011 was a very successful year with the launch of RHS Perfect for Pollinators, a database of plants that are excellent at attracting and supporting pollinating insects to the garden, at RHS Chelsea Flower Show. The new logo has been strongly supported by the UK trade and across our plant society and community groups.

Over three days in July 2011 the RHS hosted the very successful inaugural International Trials Conference at RHS Wisley. The event was supported by key sponsors and attracted over 100 delegates. The location of the conference, within the RHS Wisley Garden added to the success and prestige of the event. Given the success and the support of the international audience the second International Trials Conference is to be hosted by Longwood Gardens, US in 2013.

The Award of Garden Merit continues to be strongly supported across the horticultural trade helping us to expand our investment in plant trialling. The RHS Award of Garden Merit is a great service to our members as well as the broader gardening public to help them make informed choice about the plants they buy.

During 2011 trials which concluded included; Alstromeria, Celeriac, Iris ensata, Argyranthemum, Labelia in Containers, Sweet Peas, Roscoea, to name a few.

During 2011 we extended our invitation to get more people involved on RHS plant assessment forums and received interest across our membership including keen and amateur gardeners, designers, botanists and specialist growers in the trade.

2011 was a transition year for RHS qualifications, with new style qualifications under the Qualifications and Credit Framework being awarded for the first time in addition to the previous qualifications. RHS Level 2 Certificates in Horticulture were awarded to 708 successful candidates, with 155 Level 3 Advanced Certificates being awarded and 49 Level 3 Diplomas. With the new style qualifications, 80 Awards were made at level 1, with 1184 certificates being awarded at level 2, and 137 certificates at level 3.

Bursaries

The RHS Bursaries scheme provided financial support for a wide range of horticultural projects including overseas expeditions, study tours, conference attendance, and work placements at botanic and historic gardens around the world. A total of 53 bursary awards were made amounting to £64,703 enabling professional and student horticulturists, and other related professionals, to broaden their skills, knowledge, and experience.

RHS/The Garden Club of America Interchange Fellowship

The Interchange Fellowship exchange programme sponsored jointly by the RHS in the UK and by the GCA in the USA, in association with Longwood Gardens, Pennsylvania is aimed at fastening British-American relations, promoting horticultural studies and developing the horticultural and educational leaders of the future.

The financial aid offered by the programme allowed 2011/12 Fellows Alex Summers, a Kew Diploma in Horticulture graduate, to undertake a 12-month internship at Longwood Gardens, and Ellen Woods a B.S. Plant Sciences graduate from Cornell University to undergo work placements at leading botanic and historic gardens in the UK.

The National Gardens Scheme, Elspeth Thompson Bursary

The NGS, Elspeth Thompson Bursary Fund created by the NGS in 2011 and administered by the RHS, awarded bursaries totalling £6,612 to five inaugural winners who will undertake a wide range of community urban gardening based projects throughout the UK in 2012.
Five years on from the launch of the Campaign for School Gardening in 2007, the RHS has already helped more than 15,000 of the UK’s schools to get growing. The Campaign provides inspirational online resources and practical gardening workshops for teachers, as well as supporting schools throughout the regions with training and advice from a team of Schools’ Advisors.

We work with leading partners in the field of Education to develop initiatives that will change life outcomes for children in areas of disadvantage. Two notable projects this year have been the Open Futures initiative for Primary Schools and the Moving Up, Growing On Project for Young People with Special Educational Needs. By getting children back into contact with nature and giving them practical growing skills, we are helping them to value their environment and, even more importantly, to value their own achievements and abilities. 2011 saw our first cohort of students aged 14-16 start to study for an RHS qualification.

Community involvement

Gardening not only enhances learning and personal development for children, but strengthens ties with the local community too. Our Get Your Grown-ups Growing initiative continues to be seen by schools as an inspirational tool to get parents involved. Over 1,300 schools applied for our activities pack last year and one school in Welling, Kent was awarded a beautiful new greenhouse for telling us in 100 words why the day was so special to them.

The RHS community horticulture programmes – Britain in Bloom, It’s Your Neighbourhood and Affiliated Societies – have gone from strength to strength. In 2011 2,300 communities, neighbourhoods, parks and schools participated in RHS Britain in Bloom across 17 Bloom regions and nations. 76 counties competed in the 2011 RHS Britain in Bloom finals.

2011 also saw a record number of horticultural societies and gardening clubs registered to our Affiliated Societies scheme – 2,957 around the UK and abroad. Many of these groups took up the RHS supplementary insurance scheme for community groups with 2,384 policies sold to Affiliated Societies and 319 to Bloom and It’s Your Neighbourhood groups, generating additional income for the RHS.

RHS Britain in Bloom and RHS It’s Your Neighbourhood had successful launch events, with 320 groups signing up to our UK-wide tree planting activity and then planting 84,000 native trees. This project was helped by a partnership with the Woodland Trust which enabled RHS groups to get free trees through the Woodland Trust’s community tree packs programme.

Dig Together Day, the annual event to celebrate the work of horticultural societies and gardening clubs, saw 65 Affiliated Societies organising special events around the UK. These Dig Together Day events generated a significant amount of press coverage where the RHS was able to promote the role that horticultural societies and gardening clubs play in sharing gardening knowledge and expertise.

Windlesham Trophy Award

The RHS continued its support of the Windlesham Trophy, awarded by HM Prison Service, by providing the judging panel. The 2011 award, aimed at developing prisoners’ sense of worth and to encourage garden excellence among the prison community, went to HM Prison Young Offender Institution Thorne Cross.
Our Libraries welcomed 60,000 visitors in 2011 (up 22% on 2010). Lindley Library Wisley received 36,000 visits and Harlow Carr received 21,000. The enquiry service answered 17,568 enquiries from all over the world and 14,927 loans were made to members. Amongst new acquisitions were award-winning botanical artworks, a fine collection of antique floral greetings cards, and an album of Edwardian photographs of pre-RHS Wisley.

Unfortunately, in July a faulty electrical fitting caused a fire in the Lindley Library London. All the collections were safe but, because of extensive smoke and soot deposit, they required specialist conservation cleaning. This, together with damage to the library facilities, meant that the Library closed for a significant period. This unavoidable disruption to services was used to improve the way the collections are stored – creating a new Special Collections Room and a Viewing Room – and improve facilities for staff. The Library will reopen fully to the public in 2012. Improved front of house facilities for readers and display facilities for collections are planned for the future. Lindley Library Wisley supported extra researchers and enquiries during the period of closure.

The Library staff curated an exhibit on Women in Horticulture, shown first at the London Botanical Art Show, and later at Lindley Library Wisley. A sale of duplicate books from a collection bequeathed to the Library by Joyce Stewart, took place at Wisley from October. The £6,000 raised went towards the conservation of the Library’s unique orchid award paintings, which are expected to be relocated and displayed at Wisley.
Membership remains the single biggest driver of income for the RHS, with growth in our membership base being central to our five year strategic plan. 2011/12 was a record year for membership as we finished the year with more members than ever before – 383,046.

Net growth across the year exceeded 20,000 members, which was achieved not only by recruiting more new members than ever before in a single calendar year – 70,197, but also as a result of improvements to the retention rate. The loyalty of our members has contributed significantly to the growth of the RHS community, whose financial contribution underpins our drive to secure a future for gardens and gardening.

The continued challenges presented by the economic climate informed our decision to focus on enhancing the value for money received by RHS members. In February we introduced a new offer of 12 months for the price of 9 for new members, in return for their commitment to pay by direct debit, whilst for existing members we committed to freezing renewal prices.

Armed with a compelling join offer, the Visitor Services teams across the four RHS Gardens converted an impressive 11.6% of paying adults compared with 7.3% the previous year. This is testament to the effort these teams have invested in welcoming every visitor stepping through our doors. The Retail teams at our RHS Shops and Plant Centres have equally played their part in helping extol the benefits of membership to everyone they speak to.

In a bid to engage more effectively with our Garden and Shows visitors, we also made some subtle changes to the way we promote membership, focusing more on the emotional benefits and more clearly positioning the various options at specific audiences – in particular promoting joint membership to families.

We have also increased the emphasis placed on promoting our network of RHS Partner Gardens alongside the four RHS Gardens to reinforce our nationwide presence. Meanwhile, we’ve created more tailored communication at our own gardens which more clearly conveys the benefits of membership on a local scale.

2011/12 also saw the introduction of our annual member satisfaction measure – Membership Growth Score (MGS) – which tracks satisfaction amongst our members based on their likelihood to renew, likelihood to recommend, and general satisfaction with membership benefits. The aim of this study is to inform the development of our communications strategy and to ensure this score increases year on year. In 2011/12 we measured a healthy 8.47 out of 10.

Using insights gleaned from the study, we have been working to build on the success of our ‘Making members feel valued’ campaign by working to deliver the following more exclusive members-only events at our gardens, launching our member offers programme, the creation of the dedicated RHS Life section in the freshly redesigned The Garden magazine, as well as developing a more personalised conversation with our members, based on their circumstances and length of membership.
You will have read earlier in the Review about the exciting and diverse ways the RHS shares the best in gardening with so many, and this would not be possible without the amazing dedication of our staff. During the year we successfully retained the Investors in People accreditation and through the interviews with the assessor, and via our Employee Satisfaction Survey, our staff told us more about how we can continue to be a great place to work where everyone makes a difference – one of our 10 Strategic Objectives.

We already knew we had passionate, engaged employees who want to deliver exceptional customer service and we were delighted that 94% of survey responders confirmed this; 80% told us they enjoy their work and 79% said they were proud to work for the RHS. Through listening to our staff we developed our People Plan which focuses on providing more learning and development opportunities to support our staff to grow.

At our Flower Shows we launched the ‘RHS Experience’, a place to showcase the range of the RHS’ charity work, retail shop and membership benefits, such as free access to our gardens, recommended gardens and advisory service. This provides plenty of opportunities for staff from all areas of the Society to ‘volunteer’ on the stand and enthuse about our work by promoting RHS membership, helping with merchandising or sharing their horticultural knowledge with members.

We believe engaging new staff in their first few days at the RHS is critical to future success and we developed a new induction welcome pack for new joiners, with an inspirational DVD by our Director General on all aspects of the work of the RHS. We were also able to share this with all current staff due to the generous sponsorship by external partners.

To share the experience of ‘RHS’ with everyone we launched a new monthly employee newsletter called ‘Clippings’, where we share our knowledge and celebrate our successes and achievements. And to further improve, we have recruited a new Learning & Development Manager who has launched a new training programme to support and develop our staff, as we continue to hone our customer service skills and ensure all our members, visitors and supporters have a truly brilliant experience at the RHS.
### Financial Review by the Treasurer

The financial results are set out below showing how money was raised and how money was spent. The figures come from the Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities on page 29, which is presented in accordance with the latest accounting standards. (For ease of reference, 2010/11 figures are shown in brackets below.)

**How we raised and spent our funds**

#### How we raised our charitable Funds – £65.8m (£63m)

- Membership, Arts and Media: 26% (26%)
- Shows and Special Events: 24% (25%)
- RHS Gardens: 8% (6%)
- Legacies, Donations and Grants: 6% (5%)
- Net trading and sponsorship: 34% (36%)
- Other income: 2% (2%)

#### How we spent our funds – £58.3m (£57.5m)

- Membership, Arts and Media: 14% (12%)
- Shows and Special Events: 25% (26%)
- RHS Gardens: 24% (23%)
- Horticulture and Science: 5% (6%)
- Net trading and sponsorship: 28% (29%)
- Other expenditure: 4% (4%)

*Other income* includes Investment income, Community, Horticulture and Science income, and Other Incoming Resources. *Other expenditure* includes expenditure in relation to Legacies, Donations, Grants, Investment Management, Community and Governance.

### Objectives, Achievements and Developments

Our Strategic Objectives for 2011/12 and beyond

Our key achievements against our Strategic Objectives are summarised on the following pages.

1. **To be known, loved and trusted as the charity for all gardeners** – we believe in the simple pleasures of gardening and all the benefits it brings, because gardening matters.
   - The RHS Experience exhibition was launched and displayed at RHS Chelsea Flower Show, RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show and RHS Tatton Park Flower Show. It set out to exhibit the work of the Society and 66 per cent of visitors to RHS Chelsea Flower Show commented that it was essential or very important to their enjoyment of the Show.
   - 11 per cent more people came to RHS Gardens in 2011/12, totalling 1.455 million visitors.

2. **To safeguard and advance the science, art and practice of horticulture for the benefit of future generations and the environment** – who will protect all of the nation’s individual gardens and plants if we don’t?
   - The development of the virtual herbarium project began. This ongoing project will convert all of the Society’s herbarium collection to an electronic file so that it will be available to any gardener anywhere in the world.
   - The building of the Field Research Facility began and it opened in May 2012. This new facility will enable the RHS to carry out enhanced scientific research into pests and diseases of concern to RHS members and indeed all gardeners.
   - The Society hosted the world’s first International Trials Conference in July 2011. The meeting was positively received and provided an international platform for key trials experts to explore and discuss ideas. A future international conference is being scheduled.

3. **To transform communities through gardening** – through our work, we want to make the UK a better, greener and more beautiful place.
   - The Society’s Campaign for School Gardening welcomed its 15,000th member school in January 2012. There are now over 3 million children involved with the Campaign and visits to RHS Gardens by schools have also increased.
   - RHS Britain in Bloom had one of its most successful years to date. Just over 1,000 communities were involved and 1,300 more local groups took on the It’s Your Neighbourhood challenge. Over 200,000 volunteers across the country invested some 4.4 million hours last year.
   - Research was conducted across the UK and we launched the report, “Britain in Bloom: transforming local communities”. This research found that the lives and
Richmond in Bloom

The Year Ahead

Our Strategic Objectives were launched in 2011 and will continue to guide our actions throughout this financial year. The Investment Projects have been carefully selected to deliver these Objectives over the next few years in order to change perceptions of the RHS and deliver improved results and more benefits for our members and the public. These Objectives will continue to lead us to a strong, sustainable and exciting future; one where we will treasure our rich heritage, but also embrace change, welcome positive new ideas and expand our reach and membership. In this way, we will increase our income to fund our charitable projects and deliver maximum public benefit.

There are, of course, many challenges ahead this year, with an ongoing recession, challenging retail conditions and erratic environmental and weather patterns with everything from drought and hosepipe bans, to floods and seemingly never-ending rain that could adversely affect our predominantly outdoor world. We firmly believe, however, that our Objectives and Investment Projects will deliver more benefits to an increasingly broad range of beneficiaries, and see a strong future ahead for the Royal Horticultural Society, its members, staff and supporters.

4. To create world-leading horticulture that inspires people to garden – we want to see more visitors with the wonder of gardening and inspire people to grow:
   • The Society’s successful and acclaimed flower shows continued to attract thousands of gardeners. Tickets to RHS Chelsea Flower Show sold out a record 18 days in advance, and the new RHS Chelsea Flower Show iPhone ‘App’ was a great success. RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show, the world’s largest flower show, attracted over 160,000 visitors.
   • We ran a very successful Grow Your Own campaign with over 14,000 gardeners registering their interest. Of these, 89 per cent were non-RHS members.
   • To date, over 300,000 people have downloaded the RHS Grow Your Own iPhone ‘App’.
   • We announced a combined investment fund of up to £27 million after the sale of the lease of Lawrence Hall in London for £18 million and the start of a major fundraising campaign to raise a further £9 million. In December 2011, we launched the Investment Projects, an exciting and substantial programme which will enable us to involve, educate and inspire millions more gardeners throughout the country.

5. To nurture and grow our membership throughout the UK – we want to see:
   • At the end of the financial year, we had 383,046 members, a record high and a net increase of 20,220 on the previous year. Pleasingly, this growth was built on improvements in both the recruitment of new members and the retention of existing members.
   • The new Fellows top tier of membership was launched as another important source of support for the work of the Society.
   • 2011 saw the launch of the first easy-to-use web page for people looking to get involved in community gardening activities, featuring a map displaying volunteering opportunities around the country. The site also enables individuals to email groups for volunteering information.

6. To provide a voice for all gardeners – our aim is to be:
   • held a number of meetings with affiliated societies and their specialist panels and plant committees with the aim of improving the service we give to those gardeners with special interest.
   • The Trials team worked closely with the horticulture trade to explore ways for the Award of Garden Merit (AGM) to appear more frequently at point of sales. We continue to work closely with organisations such as the Horticulture Trades Association (HTA) to help ensure that the AGM and Perfect for Pollinators logos are used to maximum benefit and also that a united front can be given to government, for example, when needed for the benefit of gardeners.

7. To share and build expert knowledge – anything anyone ever wanted to know about horticulture from beginners to experts:
   • RHS Plant Selector was completely overhauled and re-launched. The number of plants in the database exceeds 5,000 and visits to this part of our website increased by 438,500 or 146 per cent compared to the previous year.
   • Our Advisory Service handled a record 60,000 gardening enquiries, ranging from pest and disease identification to the best ways of growing specific plants.
   • The RHS website continued to be a very popular source of gardening information. Last year we had 9.7 million visits which represents an increase of 36 per cent on 2010. The most popular sections of the site were ‘Plants’ and ‘Shows’, however, ‘Gardening Advice’ and ‘RHS Plant Selector’ showed significant increases in visits.

8. To delight our customers with exceptional service and products – we will put our customers at the heart of everything we do, improving their experience at every point throughout our organisation:
   • Alan Titchmarsh opened the Society’s Peter Buckley Learning Centre at RHS Garden Rosemoor, which now provides local schools with an up-to-date educational facility. The Centre has two large classrooms, a teaching terrace garden, raised vegetable beds, a sensory garden and dipping ponds.
   • Catering at RHS Garden Hyde Hall was moved in-house this year and a new menu developed. RHS Gardens Rosemoor, Hyde Hall and Wisley all use produce from their Gardens in the restaurants.
   • The shop at RHS Garden Wisley introduced a range of food products from fruit and vegetables grown in the Garden.

9. To be a great place to work where everyone makes a difference – we want:
   • the RHS to be an enjoyable place to work where everyone knows they make a difference, and plays their part in creating an exciting future together.
   • RHS received Investors in People accreditation again this year. This national award is the UK’s leading people management standard and was designed to help organisations develop high performance through their people.
   • A new induction process and pack, including a DVD guide to the RHS, was introduced for all new staff. The Society also introduced a new programme of staff training and launched a new staff magazine, Clippings, to share important issues and celebrate success.
   • The Society began the process of clarifying pay and conditions of work for employees and launched a Rewards Policy early in 2012.

10. To have efficient business practices that deliver maximum income for our charitable purpose – we want to:
   • keep things simple, strip out bureaucracy, wage war on waste and have an effective, stable infrastructure.
   • We set up a new internal audit system to ensure that best practice is followed throughout the Society, that funds are spent wisely and that proper and efficient controls and risk management systems are in place.
   • The process of installing 300 new computers and upgrading all computers to Windows and MS2010 operating software commenced.
   • We introduced a system to invite visitors to Gift Aid their RHS Garden entry fee. This is proving very successful and has generated substantial additional income from reclaimed Gift Aid of £220,000 in 2011/12.

The Bramall Learning Centre and Library in Winter at RHS Garden Harlow Carr, Yorkshire.

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