Evolving RHS Gardens

The RHS Garden curators discuss 2015 and their future horticultural plans. For visitor information, see www.rhs.org.uk/gardens

Colin Crosbie
RHS Garden Wisley

With more than 80ha (200 acres) and in excess of 25,000 different plants, Wisley is always changing and evolving. From January to March our new Winter Walk, planted last year, will be in its peak season of interest. Come and admire the wonderful stem colour and plants chosen for their amazing, sweetly scented flowers at this time of year.

We have replanted a large part of the Mediterranean Garden and Terraces in order to create a themed Mediterranean Walk. As this planting settles in during 2015 it will give our visitors the chance to see the diversity of plants that enjoy hot, dry, free-draining conditions. We will also be planting a Chilean Glade on Battleston Hill. Look out for the stand of Luma apiculata which, as it matures, develops the most amazing bark.

Plant displays to inspire you

Alongside the permanent plantings in The Glasshouse you can enjoy our ever-changing theatrical displays from a range of plant groups, including orchids and fuchsias; our popular chrysanthemum display will return in autumn.

The Top Terrace will provide interesting and amusing carpet bedding, linked to the Alice in Wonderland summer theme across all four RHS Gardens this year.

Looking beyond 2015, there will be some exciting changes at Wisley as part of the Society’s £20m investment in horticulture over the next 10 years (see News, Aug 2014, p9), including a new centre in the Hilltop area for science, learning and events.

Jonathan Webster
RHS Garden Rosemoor

We are continually expanding the seasonal displays at Rosemoor, and to this end we planted 30,000 English bluebells last autumn under a beech woodland that overlooks Lady Anne’s garden. In time, visitors can enjoy the sea of blue they create. We aim to repeat this planting this autumn to create an even more spectacular display in years to come.

The Queen Mother Rose Garden contains a fantastic collection of Hybrid Tea and Floribunda roses. We will refresh this part of the garden with the creation of four corner seating areas, allowing visitors to sit and look into the garden, taking in the colour and perfume. These will feel secluded and will be backed by scented shrubs to enhance the garden’s atmosphere.

Our long borders through the centre of the Formal Garden are among Rosemoor’s highlights, giving a vibrant display throughout the spring and summer months. Several of these beds will be refreshed, by both improving the soil and the planting. In particular, more Award of Garden Merit (agm) winners will be added to highlight exceptional plants that are worth growing.

Still in its infancy, the Bicentenary Arboretum will be one of our main focuses as it matures into a showcase of northern-hemisphere trees. This year we will start developing the underplanting to tie in with the establishing geographical tree collection. This will include shrubs, herbaceous plants and bulbs that will help to extend the seasonal display as well as softening the look of the area.

Exciting times ahead

We are developing concept plans for the Harrogate Arms landscape, since acquiring this old spa hotel last year (see The Garden, Dec 2014, p72). Our aim is to open up the landscape and give the building breathing space, as well as ensuring we highlight the tranquil ravine that surrounds the building, offering a new experience for garden visitors. The building itself will be used for an exciting mix of visitor facilities, including an exhibition space that will enable visitors to learn more about the building’s historic links to the Bath House within the garden, and possibly some quality holiday accommodation.

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