

NATIONAL



Your guide to news and events across the UK



by Events Editor Heather Greig assisted by Heidi Corcoran

TIM SANDALL

Discover the best of autumn

The longest running of all RHS shows, the London Flower Shows epitomise horticultural excellence, reflect the changing seasons and bring specialist nurseries together from around the country. Among the most popular is the Great Autumn Show, which provides a wealth of autumnal interest to delight the senses.

This year's show (16–17

September) will feature exhibits from Broadleigh Gardens with displays of *Colchicum*, *Crocasmia* and late-flowering *Agapanthus*, and Avon Bulbs with plants of South African origin including *Amaryllis*, *Eucomis* and *Gladiolus*. Among those showing late-flowering herbaceous plants are regular exhibitors Hardy's Cottage Garden Plants and Long Acre Plants, as well as

Heatherbank Nurseries from Wiltshire, Steven Bailey from Hampshire and Mary Green from Lancashire. Burncoose Nurseries and Bluebell Nursery and Arboretum will be exhibiting unusual trees and shrubs in a range of autumn hues. Conservatories can be livened up with plants from the African Violet Centre, Toobees Exotics, Dibleys and Oakland Nurseries. Hardy

geranium specialists Coombland Gardens and Nursery will be exhibiting at the show for the first time.

The Great Autumn Show takes place in the Lindley and Lawrence Halls, Westminster. For opening times and admission, see p10 of *Gardens & Events September 2003*.

•The following London Flower Show will be held on Tues 7 and Wed 8 October.

Awards for Britain's bloomers

On 30 September, the 2003 Britain in Bloom Awards Presentation will be held at the prestigious London Guildhall, hosted by the City of London. The ceremony will begin with a speech by the Lord Mayor of the City

of London, Alderman Gavyn Arthur. This will be followed by celebrity gardener Monty Don and RHS Director General Andrew Colquhoun presenting achievement awards (gold, silver, silver-gilt or bronze)

to representatives of the 61 UK finalist entries. Winners of the 12 categories and 10 discretionary awards will also be presented.

The awards, made possible by B&Q in partnership with the RHS, recognise the long-

term improvements that participating entries make to their local areas and provide a benchmark of quality to improve upon year on year. Results can be found at: (www.rhs.org.uk/britaininbloom) after 30 September.

Sowing seeds for the future

October is often the best time of year to gather seeds from many of the country's common trees, making it an apt time for the Tree Council to hold its annual Seed Gathering Sunday. Taking place on 12 Oct this year, the event encourages people to gather seeds from local parks and woods or join in special activities being organised around the country.

The Tree Council is a charity working throughout the UK to promote the importance of trees. 'The event aims to give hands-on experience of seed gathering to young and old alike,' says Kevin Hand, Campaigns Director for the Tree Council.

One of the key initiatives for this year's event,

supported by the Alliance for Beverage Cartons and the Environment (ACE), is the use of free seed-collecting paper bags, made from last year's recycled drinks cartons, marked with tips about collecting and growing seeds.

This year is also the 30th anniversary of 'Plant a Tree in '73' – the slogan of the first National Tree Planting Year, which established National Tree Week (26 Nov–7 Dec), a project which has led to almost one million trees being planted each year.

For a list of events in your area and details of how to take part, visit the website (www.treecouncil.org.uk) or call the Seed Gathering Sunday info line. Tel: 020 7828 9928.

A harvest of plenty at the Malvern show

The Malvern Autumn Garden and Country Show (27–28 September) celebrates food, flowers and rural pursuits, making it a great end to the show season. Held in the Three Counties Showground at the foot of the Malvern Hills in Worcestershire, the show features a variety of attractions from classic cars to country crafts. As September is an ideal month to plan and plant a successful garden display for next year, gardening enthusiasts will find plenty of ideas and inspiration in the RHS Floral Marquee,

with spectacular floral and fruit displays from leading nurseries.

The show is also the venue for the Midlands Vegetable Society Championships housed in the Harvest Pavilion, which will be filled with mouth-watering produce and giant vegetable exhibits. The food theme continues in the Cookery Theatre, where you can watch cookery demonstrations and pick up culinary tips from top chefs. The Festival of Food and Wine is a chance to sample and purchase from a range of quality produce.

Animal lovers will have the chance to see ferrets, owls and heavy horses among many others. There is also the Activity Arena with entertainment for the whole family including a mountain-bike stunt show and a vintage-car display.

RHS members can purchase up to four tickets at the privileged rate of £6.75, but these must be booked in advance by 12 Sept. Members' tickets bought on the day cost £8. Tel: 01684 584924 to book, or online at (www.threecounties.co.uk).

Harrogate highlights

A visit to a late-season horticultural show can be an excellent source of new plants and ideas, whether to extend the current season or to start planning for next year. The Harrogate Autumn Flower Show (12–14 September) offers just such an opportunity. Taking place at the Great Yorkshire Showground, it is hosted by the North of England Horticultural Society. One of the many highlights of this show is the Specialist Societies Marquee, which will feature displays by horticultural societies including the National Dahlia Society, North of England Bonsai Association, Northern Fruit

Group and the Royal National Rose Society. This year the 'heaviest onion' competition will also be held at the National Vegetable Society Show. Around 90 of the UK's leading nurseries will display a range of plants including dahlias, chrysanthemums and fuchsias.

The show also provides a chance to buy gardening sundries and crafts, and to sample some local produce from the Fine Country Food and Yorkshire Pantry. Tickets can be bought on the gate at £10 each, or can be pre-booked (by 12 noon on 5 Sept) at the price of £8 each. Tel: 0870 758 3333.

THREE COUNTIES

Solutions to make gardening easier

Experts from Thrive, the national gardening charity that uses gardening to help disabled, disadvantaged and older people, will join gardening staff at RHS Garden Wisley, Surrey, on 30 September for a special event entitled

Making Gardening Easier (10.15am–4.30pm). The day will be devoted to exploring ways in which gardening activities can be made less demanding. A number of design solutions will be discussed that can be used to turn the garden into a

more accessible and user-friendly environment.

The cost of the day is £45 for RHS and Thrive members or £51 for non-members (includes coffee, buffet lunch and tea). Tel: 020 7821 3408 to book a place.

SCOTLAND

DUNDEE BOTANIC GARDEN

Guide to a colourful autumn

15 October: Autumn can be an unpredictable season and is a time of great change in the garden. Although many annuals and perennials continue their summer display into early autumn, it is the colours of leaves and fruits that most capture the imagination.

For a guide to some more unusual plants for autumn interest, join Curator Alasdair Hood at Dundee University Botanic Garden. Located in 9.5 ha (23 acres) of south-facing, gently sloping land near the banks of the River Tay, the garden features many species of

native British plants as well as representative collections of important species from all the continents of the world. The garden's trees and shrubs provide spectacular autumn displays, with colour and interest from *Euonymus planipes*, *Cornus mas*, *Acer griseum*, *Rhus typhina* and *Cercidiphyllum japonicum*.

Alasdair will lead a guided walk to look at autumn colour and associated seasonal interest. He will point out the more unusual plants and give advice on maintaining interest throughout the season.

Coffee and cake will be provided at the end of the walk. See the enclosed booklet *Gardens & Events September 2003*, p7, for cost and booking details.

RBGE events

The Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE) and its three other sites – Benmore Botanic Garden, Argyll, Dawyck Botanic Garden, Peeblesshire, and Logan Botanic Garden, Wigtonshire – are holding events during September that will be of interest to RHS members. Highlights at RBGE include guided walks (daily, 11am and 2pm until 30 Sept) and basket-making workshops on 13 and 14 Sept. At Logan Botanic Garden, a sculpture exhibition inspired by the garden's exotic plants takes place until 30 Sept. See the website (www.rbge.org.uk) for the full event listing. Tel: 0131 552 7171.

Evening talks

16 September and 1 October:

Members are invited to book tickets for two forthcoming RHS Regional Lectures taking place in Scotland.

On 16 Sept in Culloden, the Inverness Horticultural Society will welcome Bob Mitchell, Honorary Curator of St Andrews University Botanic Garden. Bob will present a lecture documenting the influences that led to the development of Branklyn Garden in 1922 by Dorothy and John Renton. Since its acquisition by the National Trust for Scotland in 1968, it has been restored and maintained in the Renton style as a plantsman's garden. Bob and his wife Felicity were property managers at Branklyn for eight years, helping to restore and maintain it.

Formerly the proprietor of Edrom Nurseries in Berwickshire, Jim Jermyn is now a horticultural consultant and gardening writer. His knowledge of alpine plants is illustrated in his book *Cultivation of European Alpine Plants*. There is an opportunity to hear him speak on the topic of alpine plants at an RHS Regional Lecture hosted by the Scottish Rock Garden Club in Bridge of Allan, Stirling, on 1 Oct.

• Both lectures take place in the evening, and tickets cost £3 for members, £4 for non-members. See p64 of the *Members' Handbook 2003* for ticket booking details.

PROFILE

CHRISTOPHER JAMES

Restoring the past, conserving for the future

In 1987, Christopher James was called back to Britain from Indonesia, where he was working in rural development. His father had died and he was to take over the family estate. He was 30 at the time: 'I was thrown in at the deep end,' he says. Torosay Castle and Gardens on the Isle of Mull have been owned by his family since 1865. The gardens are particularly close to his heart. 'My grandmother lived at Torosay and I used to visit regularly. My maternal grandfather was chairman of the RHS Rhododendron Committee and Minterne,



TOROSAY CASTLE

his garden in Dorset, was always an inspiration for me.' Chris gained a degree in agricultural economics and spent several years in rural development in Uganda and Indonesia before coming back to Torosay. Since then he has been carrying out a restoration programme on the whole estate. A major turning point was the arrival of Head Gardener Mike Swift. 'He's very much a plantsman,' says Chris. 'He has vastly increased the horticultural

interest here over the past 10 years.'

Today there are 5ha (12 acres) of spectacular gardens including formal terraces, attributed to Sir Robert Lorimer, and an impressive statue walk that consists of 19 life-size limestone figures. In contrast is a less formal pool surrounded by moisture-loving plants. Other features include a eucalyptus walk, an old walled garden and a Japanese garden. Much work is being done in the woodland beyond, including a Chilean area planted with material from the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh. 'This area is important both as a setting for the gardens and from a conservation point of view. I love seeing the results of what we're putting into the gardens, especially the rarer material such as the Chilean plants that are endangered in the wild. I feel we are contributing to conservation.'

• Torosay Castle offers free garden admission to RHS members during September and October; see p61 of the *Members' Handbook 2003* for further details.

NORTH WEST

RHS lectures in the North West

10, 17 September and 9 October: There are three forthcoming RHS Regional Lectures in the North West region that will interest many members. On 10 Sept in Longtown, Carlisle, Ken Burras, former Superintendent of the University of Oxford Botanic Garden, will talk about hardy plants for the autumn and winter garden, such as *Crocus speciosus* (above). Ken will show how to enjoy your garden during the bleaker months by highlighting the

role that plant attributes such as form, fruit, foliage and scent can play in keeping the garden full of interest from autumn to early spring.

Timothy Walker is currently Director at the University of Oxford Botanic Garden, and he has travelled extensively overseas to visit gardens and search for plants in the wild. In an RHS Regional Lecture hosted by Ness Botanic Garden, Cheshire, on 17 Sept, Timothy will

discuss the construction of rock gardens and the range of plants suitable for growing in them, using examples of plants from around the world.

The final regional lecture to be held this year in the North West, entitled *A Plantsman's Approach to Garden Design*, will be given by Nigel Colborn on 9 Oct at Bridgemere Garden World in Cheshire. Nigel is a regular contributor to the gardening press and a broadcaster on radio and television. He will take a fresh look at how plants can be used to develop structure, outline, textures, moods and colours in the garden.

All three regional lectures take place in the evening. See p76 of the *Members' Handbook 2003* for cost and ticket booking details.

HIGHLIGHTS

Sunday opening for autumn splendour

Cholmondeley Castle, Cheshire, is set in exquisite ornamental gardens featuring a beautiful temple water garden, rose garden and many superb mixed borders. The gardens will be open for two special Autumn Tints days on Sun 12 and 26 October, when they are normally closed to the public. Visitors will be able to see the vivid autumn colours of *Acer*, *Liquidambar*, *Berberis*, *Euonymus* and large-leaved *Darmera peltata* around the temple garden lake, and many other trees and shrubs. Normal garden admission applies. Tel: 01829 720383 or see p69 of the *Members' Handbook 2003*.

Get arty and wild

On 6 and 16 September, two workshops entitled Autumnal Art will take place in the grounds of the National Wildflower Centre, Court Hey Park, Liverpool. Led by local artists, the sessions are suitable for all ages and abilities, and students will be encouraged to focus on nature. Each session costs £10 per person. Tel: 0151 737 1819 or visit (www.nwc.org.uk) for further details.

Charitable garden opening

Adjacent to Bents Garden Centre in Cheshire is Weeping Ash, a breathtaking garden featuring curving lawns framed with classical pillars and a mix of rich foliage and flowers combined with rare and exotic plants. It will be open as part of the National Gardens Scheme on 21 Sept. Visitors will be asked to pay a £2 donation for local charities. Bents Garden Centre (Warrington Road, Glazebury, near Leigh) holds a series of gardening workshops throughout the year, hosted by gardening experts Jenny Hendy and Stephen Green. Tel: 01942 266300 or see (www.bents.co.uk) for details.

NORTH EAST

Guidance on garden design

The programme of workshops and courses at RHS Garden Harlow Carr, North Yorkshire, offers an opportunity to learn about many different aspects of gardening and horticulture. Garden design is now a popular topic and a Foundation Studies in Garden Design course starts on 15 Sept and runs until 12 Jul 2004. This comprehensive course, held in conjunction with Leeds Metropolitan University, offers both the amateur

and aspiring professional a foundation in all aspects of the art and science of garden design. For a shorter introduction to garden design, Marilyn Elm will offer guidance on basic design principles to help you make the most of your garden – from the creation of a workable layout to the choice of appropriate planting – at a workshop on 19 Sept. See the enclosed booklet *Gardens & Events September 2003*, p8, for cost and booking details.

Autumn show in Newcastle

The Newcastle Show, organised by the Alpine Garden Society (AGS) and the Scottish Rock Garden Society, will be held at the Memorial Hall, Darras Road, Ponteland, Newcastle, on 11 October (12noon–4pm). This is one of many fine shows co-ordinated every year by the AGS

throughout the British Isles. Each show offers an amazing range of plants on display, the opportunity to talk to knowledgeable plantmen and buy plants from specialist nurseries. Admission costs £1.50. Further details are available from Mike Dale on 01670 787714.

A feast of foliage and fungi

Thorp Perrow Arboretum, North Yorkshire, has 34ha (85 acres) of woodland walks and is one of the largest collections of trees and shrubs in the North of England. In autumn the foliage provides dramatic effects and spectacular colours from species such as *Cladrastis kentukea* (Kentucky yellow wood), *Parrotia persica* (Persian ironwood) and *Acer griseum* (Chinese paper-bark maple). Visit the arboretum on 21 Sept, 5 Oct or 19 Oct

and join a Fungus Foray (10am–12.30pm), where the whole family can discover the world of fungi. The 19 Oct Fungus Foray will be followed by a guided tour to see the arboretum's autumn colours. Tel: 01677 425323 or see (www.thorpperrow.com) for further information. • RHS members can visit Thorp Perrow Arboretum free of charge (with a valid membership card) from Mon–Fri (excluding Bank Holidays) during the arboretum's open season.

EAST ANGLIA

Discover more about old-fashioned roses

3 October: Mills Farm Plants in Suffolk are specialists in old-fashioned roses with nearly 100 cultivars, from neat Victorian China roses to giant Himalayan ramblers. Nursery owner Susan Russell will host an RHS event that will look at how to get the best out of old-fashioned cultivars.

'As a general rule, roses like rich, fertile soil that is moist but not waterlogged, and they prefer at least half a day of sun,' advises Sue. She will talk about selecting the right rose for you and will provide tips on pruning, training and planting.

There will also be advice on how to avoid pests and diseases, the most common of which is blackspot.

Cultivars such as *Rosa* Mary Rose ('Ausmary') (below), *R.* 'Buff Beauty', *R.* 'Perle d'Or' and others will be highlighted during a guided tour of the rose display beds around the nursery.

Tea and home-made cakes will be provided and visitors will have a chance to ask questions. See the enclosed booklet *Gardens & Events September 2003*, p10, for cost and booking details.

MILLS FARM PLANTS

Autumnal advice from Hyde Hall

There are two events taking place at RHS Garden Hyde Hall, Essex, offering advice on autumn gardening.

30 September: Hyde Hall's Dry Garden continues to inspire and delight visitors (see *The Garden*, August, pp612-9). It is well known that this area of Hyde Hall looks spectacular in summer, but many of its 5,500 plants are also ideal for autumn colour and interest. Curator Matthew Wilson will give a guided tour around the Dry Garden on 30 Sept (11.30am-1pm), when he will pinpoint key plants for autumn colour and give tips on planting, cultivation and maintenance.

7 October: Another informative event on 7 Oct (11.30am-1pm) focuses on autumn lawn care (below). Chris Rose, Supervisor of Turf and Horticultural Maintenance, will demonstrate how to prepare turf to withstand the ravages of winter and encourage growth into a

healthy sward the following summer. There are no quick-fixes for lawn care, but Chris will show how good preparation is the key.

See the enclosed booklet *Gardens & Events September 2003*, p9, for cost and booking details for these and other events at Hyde Hall.

GPH / JOHN GLOVER

SOUTH EAST

Fairhaven goes green

7 September: Fairhaven Woodland and Water Garden in Norfolk will hold its fourth annual Green Festival on 7 Sept (11am-5pm). Discover the delights of Fairhaven on a woodland trail or visit the Gardening at Fairhaven display. The day will offer entertainment for all the family with a juggling workshop, storytelling, face painting, woodland games and birdwatching. There will also be boat trips along Fairhaven's private inner broad. Normal garden admission applies. Tel: 01603 270449 or see p107 of the *Members' Handbook 2003* for more details.

Amazing plants

9 October: Horticultural writer and broadcaster Matthew Biggs, who has been a professional gardener for more than 18 years, will give an RHS Regional Lecture in Colney, Norwich, hosted by the Norfolk & Norwich Horticultural Society. His topic, *The Wonder of Plants*, will cover aesthetics and the roles of pollination and protective mechanisms, leaf shapes and climbing tendrils. He will discuss plant responses, and how we all rely on plants for our very existence.

•Note this is a change of venue from that on p116 of the *Members' Handbook 2003*, but cost and booking details remain the same.

HIGHLIGHTS

Kent art exhibition

The launch of a new annual art exhibition will take place in September. Called *Florum*, it will feature more than 400 floral and botanical paintings by 44 artists, including members of The Society of Botanical Artists and holders of RHS medals. The exhibition will be held at The Jeffery Harrison Reserve, Bradbourne Vale Road, Sevenoaks, Kent, and will run from 6-13 September (10am-4pm). Admission is free of charge. For further information contact: Paul Oliver Smith, Puxted House, Brencley, Kent TN12 7PB. Tel: 01892 722057.

Clive Boursnall photography course

Garden photographer Clive Boursnall will lead a two-day garden photography course in Oxfordshire during October. The first day will be based at the University of Oxford Botanic Garden (4 Oct) and the second at the Harcourt Arboretum (11 Oct). The course will look at the use of the camera, lens, depth of field, film, light and framing, and everyone attending will receive individual practical tuition. The course costs £120 for both days (including lunch). Tel: 01865 286690 for further details.

PHOTOS: HORTICULTURAL

Make friends with fungi

24 September: Bedgebury, the National Pinetum in Kent, has more than 900 different species of fungi. RHS members are invited to join a guided tour around the pinetum to discover more about the different types of fungi and mushroom. As Curator Colin Morgan says, 'Mushrooms do not need much light to grow and are fond of the rotting leaves at the base of conifer trees, so Bedgebury is an ideal habitat to look for them.'

There will be guidance on which species are edible and which are poisonous. Those which may be seen

during the tour include *Sparassis crispa* (cauliflower fungus), *Suillus luteus* (slippery Jack), *Lactarius deliciosus* (saffron milk-cap), *Fistulina hepatica* (beefsteak fungus; above) and *Boletus edulis* (cep mushroom). The walk will also take in the autumn colour of the conifers and other trees and there may be a chance to see a crossbill or hawfinch enjoying the fruit, berries, fir cones and pine cones that are in evidence at Bedgebury at this time of year. See the enclosed booklet *Gardens & Events September 2003*, p11, for cost and booking details.

Seed-saving solutions

13 September: A workshop on the practical aspects of home seed saving will take place at Yalding Organic Gardens in Maidstone, Kent. This hands-on event aims to provide a good introduction to which plants can be used for seed collecting as well as basic techniques for isolation, harvest, processing and storage. Home-collected seeds will be better adapted

to the local climate, and gardening organically will ensure the seeds are free from chemicals that are sometimes used to coat conventional seeds. The workshop will also look at the work of the Heritage Seed Library, a collection of rare vegetable cultivars. There will be two sessions (11am and 3pm) and admission is free to RHS members (non-members £3). Tel: 01622 814650.

JOHN GLOVER

Autumnal array at Borde Hill

16 October: Marvel at the spectacular autumn colours of Borde Hill in Sussex during a guided tour of the gardens and woodland collections in the company of Head Gardener Harvey Stephens.

The garden contains one of the best private collections of 'champion trees' (the largest individual of a species or cultivar in the UK) and one of the most comprehensive collections of trees and shrubs in the world. The walk will focus on some of the more unusual of these including the history of the *Acer*, *Cornus* and *Liquidambar* species at Borde Hill. Harvey will advise on choosing the best planting locations,

suitable cultivars, planting preparation and aftercare. The tour will highlight the Azalea Ring, the Garden of Allah, which features Chinese tulip trees, *Magnolia obovata* Thunb. and a group of *Sorbus*

PETER BAISTON / BORDEHILL

Geranium expertise

19 September: Geranium lovers will be interested in an RHS event at Coombland Gardens Nursery, near Billingshurst, West Sussex, where David Browne holds a National Plant Collection of hardy geraniums. David will give a comprehensive talk on propagation techniques, followed by a question-and-answer session and a guided tour of the garden. There will be advice on different species and cultivars, highlighting

Geranium x oxonianum, *G. himalayense*, *G. psilostemon* and the larger, clump-forming *G. sanguineum* var. *striatum* 'Splendens' (below). David will also discuss suitable conditions and the best time of year for planting, as well as demonstrating propagation methods such as seed sowing and dividing. See the enclosed booklet *Gardens & Events September 2003*, p12, for cost and booking details.

hupehensis, and the richly-planted autumn borders.

Afterwards, there will be a chance to buy some of the plants highlighted at the nearby Millbrook Garden Centre. See the enclosed booklet *Gardens & Events September 2003*, p12, for cost and booking details.

Winchester flower festival

24-28 September: A festival of flowers at Winchester Cathedral, Hampshire, will be a fusion of ancient architecture and floral artistry in celebration of music and musicians. Inspired by composers as diverse as Handel, Gershwin and McCartney, about 50 displays will be staged by more than 200 people for the event, all with musical themes. The displays will be raised above floor level to encourage visitors to see the magnificent architecture of the cathedral. Admission costs £7.50 (children £3) from Wed 24-Sat 27 Sept; free of charge on Sun 28 Sept. Tel: 01962 877977.

SOUTH WEST

Countdown to the Rosemoor Festival

The annual Rosemoor Festival gets under way on 6 September and runs until 28 September, with a varied programme of activities ranging from floral art and country crafts to jazz and opera (see *Compass*, August, p645). A new addition to the festival programme this year is a tea- and coffee-tasting afternoon (16 Sept). It will be led by two Barnstaple specialists, Liz Budd from her shop Kamelia Budd, and Simon Speed-Andrews from Café Culture, who are passionate about tea and coffee. At this special event they will be talking about the different types available, where they come from and ways of preparing them. There will be samples to try and a chance to buy your favourites. Tickets cost £7 and should be booked in advance.

One of the highlights of the Rosemoor Festival for many people is the Garden Craft Fair (19–21 Sept) which offers a variety of gardening and craft products. There will also be many choice plants for sale in the Plant Centre and Shop as well as a special offer on bulbs. Anyone interested in exhibiting at the craft fair should contact Sally Packer. Tel: 01934 813407.

See the enclosed booklet *Gardens & Events September 2003*, p13, for the full Rosemoor listing.

GPL/VYNN KEDDIE

Techniques for cutting it fine

29 September: Propagation from cuttings is the most common vegetative method, whether you use stem, leaf or root. To find out more about propagating garden plants from late cuttings, join Terry Baker at The Botanic Nursery in Wiltshire. Terry will demonstrate techniques with a range of plants including *Phlomis purpurea*

alba, *Lonicera standishii* and *L. setifera* (below) as well as *Philadelphus* species.

Participants are invited to bring their own cuttings to be shown propagation techniques for specific plants. There will also be a guided tour of the nursery and plant collections.

See the enclosed booklet *Gardens & Events September 2003*, p14, for cost and booking details.

Become an expert propagator

16 October: October is a good time of year for the propagation of many evergreen plants, such as *Ilex* or *Illicium*. Mallet Court Nursery in Somerset has a large collection of trees and shrubs, and more than 1,300 woody plants. Nursery owner James Harris will give a talk about propagating trees for the garden in an RHS event to be held at the nursery. Various propagation methods will be discussed in depth, such as layering root cuttings and seed collecting. 'Seed is a living organism and must be collected and handled carefully,' says James. 'Some seeds such as *Acer* species are albuminous, and other species, for

example *Quercus* and *Aesculus*, are exalbuminous. These terms and others will be explained in the talk.'

James will also discuss how humidity, light and other factors can affect cuttings.

See the enclosed booklet *Gardens & Events September 2003*, p13, for cost and booking details.

DUNCAN COOMBS

PROFILE

NIGEL DAVIS

Gardening in a peaceful Dorset valley

There was never any doubt about Nigel Davis's choice of career. From an early age he wanted to go into horticulture and regular visits to Chatsworth with his father, a keen gardener, only confirmed it. After taking a degree in horticultural science at Reading University, he worked for local-authority parks departments in Cardiff and Monmouth, then spent 15 years as Head Gardener in three different National Trust properties, latterly at Sheffield Park. In 2001, he came to Mapperton Gardens in Dorset.

'It's an idyllic garden that sits in a wonderful setting – that's what strikes you first,' says Nigel. 'It has different areas and views throughout and there's a nice feel of moving through the garden as it follows the contours of the valley.'

The terraced gardens lead down from a formal Italianate garden complete with fountains, topiary,



MAPPERTON GARDENS

grottoes and planted urns, to a more informal area with a summerhouse and two ponds. They then descend further into the valley, opening out into the wider countryside. 'It's very peaceful,' he says. 'We're away from the traffic and towns so all you hear are the sounds of the countryside. People come here to unwind.' A key part of Nigel's work is maintenance and presentation – 'ensuring that everything looks good and responding to whatever each area needs'. He enjoys working with the soil as well as the plants, giving them the best chance to grow well.

'I've always worked in public gardens and I like meeting visitors. We learn from them and they learn from us.'

•Members of the RHS can enjoy free entry to Mapperton Gardens (with a valid membership card) during the garden's open season. See p172 of the *Members' Handbook 2003* for more details.

CENTRAL

Making sense of seeds

1 October: As the late-summer garden starts to fade, this is an ideal time of year to collect and store seed from many species. For some advice on how to do this successfully, join Sue and Nick Hamilton at Barnsdale Gardens, Rutland, for a demonstration on collecting your own seed. The event will look at various seed types and provide advice about the different ways to collect and prepare for storage, as well as a discussion of those seeds that require immediate sowing. The particular species

to be highlighted will be those that have seed ready for collecting in the gardens on the day. See the enclosed booklet *Gardens & Events September 2003*, p14, for cost and booking details.

•There will be a garden party held at Barnsdale Gardens on 20 Sept (5.30–10pm) in aid of Geoff Hamilton's New Gardeners' Foundation, with gardening personalities attending. Tickets cost £50 each (including a glass of wine and buffet) and must be booked in advance. Tel: 01572 813200.

DAVID AUSTIN ROSES

Creating and planting a successful rose garden

16 October: A well-designed rose garden or border can be a spectacular sight but with such a variety of roses available, it is easy to make the wrong choices. Michael Marriott of David Austin Roses in Wolverhampton will share his expert advice during an RHS event on choosing suitable rose cultivars and drawing up a successful planting scheme.

A rose border can be anything from a low, formal

border that would be best planted with bush roses to a more informal affair using English roses, old-fashioned roses and shrub roses. Participants will learn how to achieve the best effects from roses and gain knowledge of the most reliable cultivars for garden use.

The afternoon event includes a tour of the rose garden, which has more than 700 cultivars including *Rosa* John Clare ('Auscent'), *R. Trevor Griffiths* ('Ausold')

and *R. 'Buff Beauty'*. There will also be a chance to see the working nursery, growing field and breeding glasshouses. See the enclosed booklet *Gardens & Events September 2003*, pp14–15, for cost and booking details.

•There will also be a more in-depth, one-day workshop on 23 Oct covering planting, designing and choosing roses. Cost: members £45, non-members £50.

PHOTOS: HORTICULTURAL

Organic advice at Pershore

13 September: For advice on how to become an organic gardener or how to improve your success with organic techniques, join the Organic Day at Pershore College, Worcestershire. Hosted by Maggie Brown from HDRA at Rytton Organic Gardens, this event will look at all aspects of organic gardening, including successful composting, soil care and

fertility building, pest and disease control and vegetable growing. Plenty of practical tips and advice will be provided.

The day costs £35 for RHS members, £40 for non-members (includes lunch).

See the enclosed booklet *Gardens & Events September 2003*, p15, for booking details and dates of other workshops and talks taking place at Pershore College.

HIGHLIGHTS

Cotswold flower festival

There will be a Festival of Flowers and Gardens held at St George's Church, Kings Stanley, near Stroud, Gloucestershire from 13–14 Sept, in aid of St George's Church and local cancer hospice, Cotswold Care. The festival will run from 10.30am–5pm (13 Sept) and 2–5.30pm (14 Sept). A garden trail through the villages of Kings Stanley and Leonard Stanley will be held on 14 Sept (2–5.30pm). Tel: 01453 823224 for details.

Derbyshire plant fair

A Rare Plant Fair will be held in the grounds of Dame Catherine Harpur's School in Ticknall, Derbyshire, on 13 Sept (12 noon–4pm), featuring 14 specialist nurseries with unusual and hard-to-find plants. Admission costs £1.50 (children free) and proceeds will go to Dame Catherine Harpur's School, a small village school rescued by parents from closure in 1987, which has its own award-winning organic garden and environmental areas. For enquiries, contact Susan Smith. Tel: 0115 930 1219.

Celebrity talks on gardening

11 and 16 September:

Two popular gardening personalities will be presenting RHS Regional Lectures in the central region during September.

On 11 Sept, at the Bingham Hall, Cirencester, Joe Swift will talk about modern garden design. Joe is a familiar face on *BBC Gardeners' World* and has also had his first book published this year entitled *The Plant Room*. In his lecture, Joe will emphasise how the garden today has become much more than a place to grow plants – it has also increasingly become seen as an extra room to the house, somewhere to relax, entertain, cook, eat, play and work. To make the best use of space it needs to be designed to suit the garden owner and their individual lifestyle. Joe will explore topics such as layout, planting, colour, lighting and water, and the ways they can be used to achieve a new and exciting look.

Stephen Anderton is a gardening columnist for *The Times* and contributes to many other gardening publications. At the Larruperz Centre, Ross-on-Wye, on 16 Sept, Stephen will talk about Courageous Gardening. His lecture will look at gardens and gardening around the world, exploring how individuals have pursued their ideas to create striking gardens and garden features, such as at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art in Edinburgh (above). Stephen will focus on subjects including the uses of plant breeding, choosing the right plant for the right location, fighting fashion, placing of garden seating, turf patterning and innovative ways with hedge pruning.

Both lectures take place in the evening, and tickets cost £3 for members and £4 for non-members. See p208 of the *Members' Handbook 2003* for ticket booking details.

New venue for Pencoed

Pencoed College has announced a new venue to extend its RHS events programme. From autumn this year, Extra Mural Co-ordinator Ivor Mace will hold gardening lectures at St David's Catholic College, Ty Gwyn Road, Penylan, Cardiff (tel: 029 2049 8555). These are in addition to the workshops and lectures held at Pencoed College near Bridgend. The first lecture at St David's Catholic College on 9 Oct, hosted by Ivor, is about vegetable growing. Dilys Ayling will share her knowledge of shrubs for year-round colour on 20 Nov. Both lectures take place at 7pm and cost £5 for members, £6 for non-members (booking not necessary). For information, contact Ivor Mace. Tel: 01656 302680. See p15 of the enclosed booklet *Gardens & Events September 2003* for other events at Pencoed College.

Apple festival in Wrexham

Owned by the National Trust, Erddig in Wrexham is set in a formal early 18th-century garden around a restored canal, and includes a Victorian parterre, yew walk, as well as a National Plant Collection of *Hedera* (ivy). The extensive park contains woodland walks and an interesting cylindrical waterfall, known as the Cup and Saucer. This historic estate will be the venue for an apple festival from 4–5 Oct (11am–5pm), with cider tasting, a cider press, stalls and apple-themed demonstrations. Tel: 01978 355314 for details.

Unfolding of the Eden story

18 September: The Eden Project in St Austell, Cornwall, is home to more than 100,000 plants representing 5,000 species from many of the climatic zones of the world. Its aim is to promote the human relationship with and dependence upon plants. Sue Minter, Horticultural Director of the Eden Project, will speak at an RHS Regional Lecture at the Town Hall, Welshpool, in which she will describe the development of 'the dome that worked', detailing what the project aims to achieve, the regeneration effects for

Cornwall and most importantly, how horticulture is at the root of it all. The lecture will be hosted by Welshpool & District Horticultural Society, and tickets cost £3 for members, £4 for non-members. See p218 of the *Members' Handbook 2003* for booking details.

- The last Regional Lecture of the year in Wales will take place on 28 October at the Royal British Legion Club, Pencoed, hosted by Pencoed College. Frank Hardy, former principal of Pershore College, will speak about Cottage Gardens by Design.

Autumn at Courson

Les Journées des Plantes de Courson, the autumn plant fair at Domaine de Courson, France, will take place from 17–19 Oct. This annual event set in a beautifully landscaped park reflects 300 years of creative landscaping and horticulture at Courson. More than 200 exhibitors from around Europe will take part, with a range of unusual and rare plants on display as well as National Plant Collections and a selection of gardening accessories. At this time of year, the park itself is awash with gold and crimson from the oaks, maples and beeches. Admission: RHS members £8; non-members £13. Website: (www.courson.dom.com). Tel (from UK): 0033 1 64 58 90 12.

A crafty French fair

An autumn craft fair, Journées du Patrimoine, will be held at the gardens of Saint-Jean de Beauregard, France, from 21–22 Sept. More than 30 craftsmen will exhibit their work with paintings, jewellery, lace, clocks, glass and baskets on display. The gardens feature a delightful kitchen garden with rose- and clematis-covered walls, and an embroidery competition will take the kitchen garden as its theme. See the website (www.domsaintjeanbeauregard.com) for further details.

Grass days at Oudolfs'

The private garden of celebrated Dutch garden designer Piet Oudolf and his wife Anja will be open for special Grass Days from 6–7 Sept and 4–5 Oct (10am–4pm). Located in Hummelo in the Netherlands, the garden features enticing borders where ornamental grasses are integrated with perennial plantings – Piet's trademark style. Other highlights of these special open days include advice from bulb expert Rita van der Zalm and gardening books for sale from famous Amsterdam bookshop *Architectura et Natura*. Admission costs £2.50. The garden is located at Broekstraat 17, 6999 De Hummelo, Netherlands. Tel (from UK): 0031 314 381 120 for further details. Website: (www.oudolf.com).

NCCPG autumn events

The Kent Group of the National Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens (NCCPG) is holding its autumn plant fair at Doddington Place, near Sittingbourne, Kent, on Sun 7 Sept (12 noon–5pm). Around 12 specialist nurseries will sell a variety of plants. Admission £3.50 (children 75p). Tel: 01474 872329.

On 8 Sept at 7.45pm the Surrey Group of the NCCPG will host a lecture by Anne Drummond entitled *Plants and Gardens of New Zealand*. It will take place at the Day Centre, Oakdene Road, Cobham, Surrey. Admission £2. Tel: 01483 505444 for further details.

Cyclamen show

The Cyclamen Society will hold its autumn show on 28 Sept at Birmingham Botanical Gardens and Glasshouses. The show begins at 11am, with afternoon lectures at 2pm. Admission is free to Cyclamen Society members; normal garden admission for non-members (adults £6, children £3). Any visitors that join the Cyclamen Society on the day will have their entrance fee refunded. Tel: 0121 454 1860.

Design lectures at Barnsdale

Following the success of last year's lectures, Richard Key and Adam Frost will once again run a series of garden design lectures at Barnsdale Gardens, Rutland. The lecture programme includes the following dates and topics: **18 Sept** Contemporary small gardens, by Jill Billington **2 Oct** Gardens around the world, by David Stevens **15 Oct** The gardens of Anthony Paul, by Anthony Paul

21 Oct Naturalistic planting, by Julie Toll

30 Oct Let's make money – how to achieve success in the garden design business, by Richard Key **13 Nov** Water features and water plants, by Martin Kelley **20 Nov** The work of Cleve West, by Cleve West **27 Nov** Gardens and the media, by Adam Pasco

The lectures cost £75 each (including morning coffee, lunch and afternoon tea, as well as entry to the gardens). Contact Adam Frost to

For a complete guide to events this month and ticket information, see *Gardens & Events September 2003* enclosed in the centre of this issue of *The Garden*

book a place or for further details. Tel: 01780 410926.

- Barnsdale Gardens is also the venue for a garden-design weekend from 4–5 October (9am–5pm), led by international garden designer David Stevens, assisted by Adam Frost. The course costs £180 (including coffee, lunch and tea). Contact David Stevens on 01280 821097 or Adam Frost on 01780 410926 for further details or to enrol.

Pippa Greenwood lecture in Sussex

Wisborough Green Horticultural Society will welcome writer and broadcaster Pippa Greenwood on 8 Sept, who will give a talk called *Something Nasty in the Garden*, at 8pm in the village hall, Wisborough Green, West Sussex. Tickets cost £10 each and include light refreshments. Contact Jane Lywood for details. Tel: 01403 820225.

John Brooke's garden design school

Based on his bestselling book *John Brookes Garden Design*, John Brookes will lead a garden-design school at East Lambrook Manor, Somerset, from October 2003 to April 2004 (Wednesdays, 10am–4.30pm). This is a rare opportunity to study with the renowned garden designer along with his associates Nigel Fuller and Leslie Rosser. The course costs £1,750 and is limited to 15 places. For more details or to book a place, contact Nigel Fuller. Tel: 01460 242797.

GARDENING WITH GRASSES

RHS GARDEN HARLOW CARR

The ornamental grasses border at RHS Garden Harlow Carr (above) features dominant plantings of *Stipa gigantea*, with its long arching stems of oat-coloured flowers during summer, followed in autumn by *Cortaderia* (pampas grass), with erect stems topped by creamy white plumes, and clump-forming *Miscanthus*. These, along with other grasses, are interplanted with herbaceous perennials such as *Aconitum*, *Aster ericoides*, *Salvia*, *Sedum*, *Schizostylis* and *Verbena bonariensis*. There are also underplantings of bulbs to extend the season including *Allium*, *Camassia*, *Tulipa* and dainty sulphur-white flowers of *Narcissus* 'W.P. Milner'. Using ornamental grasses in the late-summer border is the subject of a workshop at Harlow Carr (2 Oct) led by Angela Kilby from the Ornamental Grass and Plant Nursery, North Yorkshire. Angela will discuss grasses in both an historical and modern context and will provide advice on grass propagation and their specific care and cultivation needs. Angela will also talk about designing with grasses and selecting suitable species for different sites within the garden. See the enclosed booklet *Gardens & Events September 2003*, pp8–9, for cost and booking details.