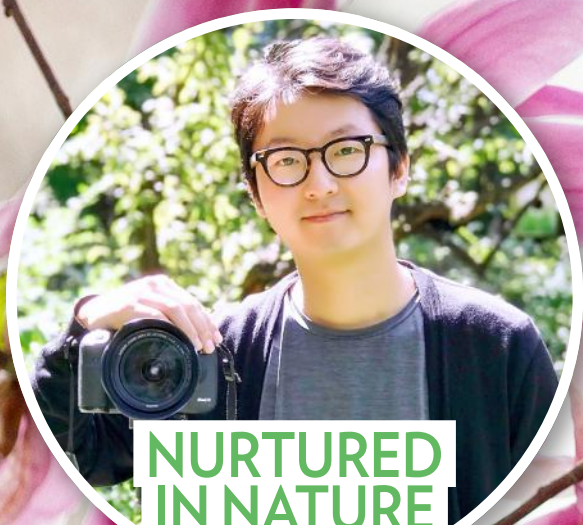


GARDEN MEDIA GUILD NEWS

SPRING 2026 | The quarterly magazine of the Garden Media Guild



**NURTURED
IN NATURE**

**SEUNGMIN WOO ON
BECOMING SOUTH KOREA'S
FIRST PROFESSIONAL GARDEN
PHOTOGRAPHER**

INSIDE: THE *GMG NEWS* PHOTOGRAPHY SPECIAL EDITION

Welcome!



Welcome to the spring *GMG News*, with special features on photography and the International Garden Photographer of the Year

competition. It was a particularly strong year for Guild members, and congratulations go to Claudia Gaupp, who was recognised no fewer than ten times. Read on to find the other GMG/PGPA members who won or were placed, too.

Upskilling—making what you do

quicker, easier and more effective—whatever you'd like to call it... this edition's 'Craft' features are packed with useful insider advice: Megan Green of Hayloft Plants, winner of the GMG Brand Social Media Influencer of the Year 2025, shares what it's like to manage social media for a company.

I've worked as a journalist across several subject areas for more than 35 years and have collaborated with PRs throughout that time. Yet I still suspect I'm not making the most of how they can help. So, Vikki Rimmer's feature on working with PRs is a must-read, full of practical tips.

(For more upskilling, check the GMG

events website for webinars, such as Earning from Social Media on 21 April).

'Meet the Member' introduces South Korea-based photographer Seungmin Woo, whose striking images frequently appear in Image of the Month. Conducted with the help of Google Translate, the interview reveals a beautiful story of the origins of a distinctive photographic eye.

And in 'My Garden', we visit probationary GMG member Danica Walpole, who shares the reality of combining homesteading with a full-time job.

Alexandra Campbell
Guild co-chair

About Spring's cover image...

Our stunning spring cover image was captured by South Korea-based photographer, Seungmin Woo—who happens to be the subject of our 'Meet the Member' profile in this edition.

The photograph was taken in the flower bed of the apartment complex where Seungmin's parents live.

'One spring day, I had gone to visit my parents and happened to come across this beautiful pink magnolia (*Magnolia denudata* var. *purpurascens* (Maxim.) Rehder & E.H.Wilson) blooming in the flower bed of their apartment complex,' he said.

'What made the moment even more special was that such a beautiful scene appeared in the most ordinary place. It reminded me that happiness is often closer than we realise.

'The tree was quite old and large, so from the ground I had to keep looking up, which made it difficult to find the composition I wanted. After looking around for a while, I climbed the apartment staircase and found a position along



the second- or third-floor corridor where I could look down towards the tree. From there, I was finally able to find the light and composition I had been hoping for.'

Seungmin said a magnolia was a flower that is 'just as beautiful from behind as it is from the front'. 'I especially loved the harmony between the soft pink petals and the fresh light-green leaves just beginning to emerge,' he said. 'Looking at it, it felt almost like a magical spring curtain that I would love to hang by the window in my home.'

Equipment: Canon EOS 5D Mark III + EF 70-200mm F2.8L IS II USM.



Amazing member discounts!

Check out the Members' Area of the GMG website for full details of how to take advantage of these discounts.

■ ROAMWILD

Members get exclusive access to a 10 per cent discount on all Roamwild products for 90 days, starting 1 April 2026. Roamwild designs innovative gardening tools to make life easier for passionate gardeners.

■ COPPER & GREEN

Members can enjoy a 15 per cent discount on any bee drinkers or plant rings (including bundles) purchased from the Copper & Green website.

■ LEARNING WITH EXPERTS

Learning with Experts offers GMG members a 10 per cent discount on any course, including photography, floristry and gardening.

GARDENERS FACE RECYCLING POSTCODE LOTTERY AS PLANT POT RULES CHANGE THIS MONTH

BY DAN HATCH

Millions of gardeners across England face confusion over how to recycle their plant pots at the end of this month, as new rules take effect that councils have been slow to communicate.

From 31 March, local authorities will be required to accept non-black plastic plant pots as part of household kerbside recycling collections, under the Government's Simpler Recycling reforms. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) confirmed the change last year as part of the Separation of Waste (England) Regulations 2024, which bring plant pots under the same rules as plastic bottles, pots, tubs and trays.

Yet Horticultural Trades Association's

(HTA) Policy and Public Affairs Manager Samantha Smith is warning that some councils are still advising residents not to place plant pots in their recycling bins—potentially sending recyclable materials unnecessarily to landfill or incineration.

'Our sector has spent years transitioning away from black plastic pots specifically so they can be recycled through household systems,' she said. 'Gardeners should now be able to place these pots in their recycling with confidence.'

'We are calling on councils across England to ensure their guidance and communications reflect the new regulations so that recyclable plant pots are collected consistently and don't end up being unnecessarily thrown away.'

The horticulture industry has reformulated its packaging to make

recycling possible. Traditional black plastic pots are invisible to the near-infrared sorting technology used in recycling facilities, meaning they pass through the system undetected. Manufacturers have increasingly switched to taupe and other non-black polypropylene alternatives that the scanners can identify and sort.

The UK horticulture sector supplies hundreds of millions of plant pots each year to gardeners and landscapers. Most are designed to be reused multiple times and are increasingly made from recyclable materials—but only if they actually reach the right recycling stream.

The HTA said it will monitor how councils implement the regulations and may publish analysis highlighting authorities that have not yet updated their guidance—in effect, naming those responsible for the postcode lottery.

The art of healing

This spring, floral designer Joanne Truby unveiled two thought-provoking installations at Turnips in Borough Market, as part of the grocer's new artist-in-residence programme.



Joanne Truby
with 'The Cocoon'

The works explored themes of healing, resilience and the profound connection between people and the natural world.

The first, called *Beauty in Imperfection*, celebrated the idea that growth often emerges from life's most unexpected places. Flowers appear to grow from cracks and crevices in wood, symbolising how perceived flaws can become sources of strength.

Mushrooms from Turnips' extensive fungi range were carefully arranged to look as though they were naturally sprouting from the timber, echoing patterns found in woodland environments. Among the flowers, primroses were chosen for their powerful symbolism: early bloomers that push through harsh conditions, they represent resilience, renewal and compassion.

The second installation, *The Cocoon*, reflected Joanne's own journey of personal transformation. Inspired by the metamorphosis of a caterpillar into a butterfly, the piece represents the



process of inner change. The structure was layered with honesty leaves, whose rough outer shells conceal delicate, pearlescent interiors—a natural metaphor for vulnerability and self-discovery. Hellebores, known for flowering through winter frost, symbolise rebirth and perseverance, while Turnips' edible pansies added colour and delicacy to the design.

'Through these installations, my hope was to highlight the powerful connection we share with Mother Nature and how it can help us express our thoughts and emotions,' Joanne said. 'Nature not only inspires us creatively, but also supports our overall wellbeing, especially during life's most challenging moments.'

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PROMOTING ROSE BREEDERS
AND BRITISH GROWERS

SCOTLAND GROWS HITS PRESSES, SELLS OUT!

BY DAN HATCH

Scotland Grows, the magazine dedicated to gardening north of the border, has completed a milestone moment: its first-ever print edition. What's more, it sold out soon after it hit shelves.

The title launched as a digital publication five years ago, building a loyal readership with content tailored to Scotland's distinct climate, soils and growing seasons—topics that gardening magazines based elsewhere have long neglected. The



sold-out print debut suggests that appetite runs deeper than even its publishers anticipated. Publisher

M.T. O'Donnell

said the move into print was a natural extension of what *Scotland Grows* had already built online.

'Scottish gardeners want advice that reflects their own climate, soils, and seasons, and they also want to feel part of a growing community,' she said. 'Moving into print allows us to reach new readers while still keeping

the strong connection we have built online and through the podcast.'

That podcast – the *Scotland Grows Show* – was itself nominated for a Professional Publisher's Association award and has helped establish the brand well beyond the written page. The print magazine now sits alongside both the podcast and the existing digital edition, forming a trio of platforms for what has quietly become one of Scottish horticulture's most distinctive media voices.

The magazine covers community growing projects, expert seasonal



advice and events from across Scotland, with an emphasis on the country's varied and sometimes challenging growing conditions—from the windswept coasts to the sheltered gardens of the central belt.

Scotland Grows is now a quarterly print title, with the next issue due out 1 May.

It's a reminder that, in this digital age, many people still love print.

Sheila's sanctuary makes the shortlist

Sheila Averbuch's Mercat Cottage in the East Lothian village of Pencaitland has been named a finalist in the *BBC Gardeners' World Garden of the Year*—making it the only Scottish garden on the shortlist.

While she didn't win, Sheila said she was thrilled to be a finalist.

'The whole Garden of the Year process has been a joy, and I'd urge any keen gardener to enter,' she said.

When Sheila and her husband bought the house in 2003, the garden presented an immediate puzzle. An extension had turned it into an awkward U-shape: a raised lawn at the top, then a sharp drop down to a gravel path wrapping around the house. Her first thought, as a mother-to-be, was purely practical. Plant a hedge before someone falls. What she planted, after a long conversation with Richard Stubbs at David Austin Roses, was a row of *Rose de Rescht*—and that, in a sense, set the tone for everything that followed.

Today, the garden at Mercat Cottage is a testament to what two decades of patient, curious, wildlife-friendly growing can produce. Every surface is covered: espaliered fruit, wall shrubs, climbers and—Sheila's abiding obsession—roses. An eight-foot arch is now so thickly festooned with the rambler *Princesse Louise* that it looks, she says, like a special effect. An ancient rowan that came with the cottage hosts a fountain of blooms from *Lykkefund*, a fragrant, thornless rambler Sheila found in an old Graham Thomas book. When she became

pregnant with her second child, she developed a craving for the scent of roses that has, by her own account, never left her.

Sheila has built shallow ladders between the garden's levels so frogs can move freely between them, installed three small ponds, and watches with interest rather than alarm when a caterpillar sets about her hesperis.

'Who am I to eradicate parts of the food chain?' she asks. 'I can just picture the birds and frogs watching me, thinking, "I was going to eat that".'

Sheila's garden is featured in the April 2026 issue of *BBC Gardeners' World Magazine*, photographed by Jason Ingram.

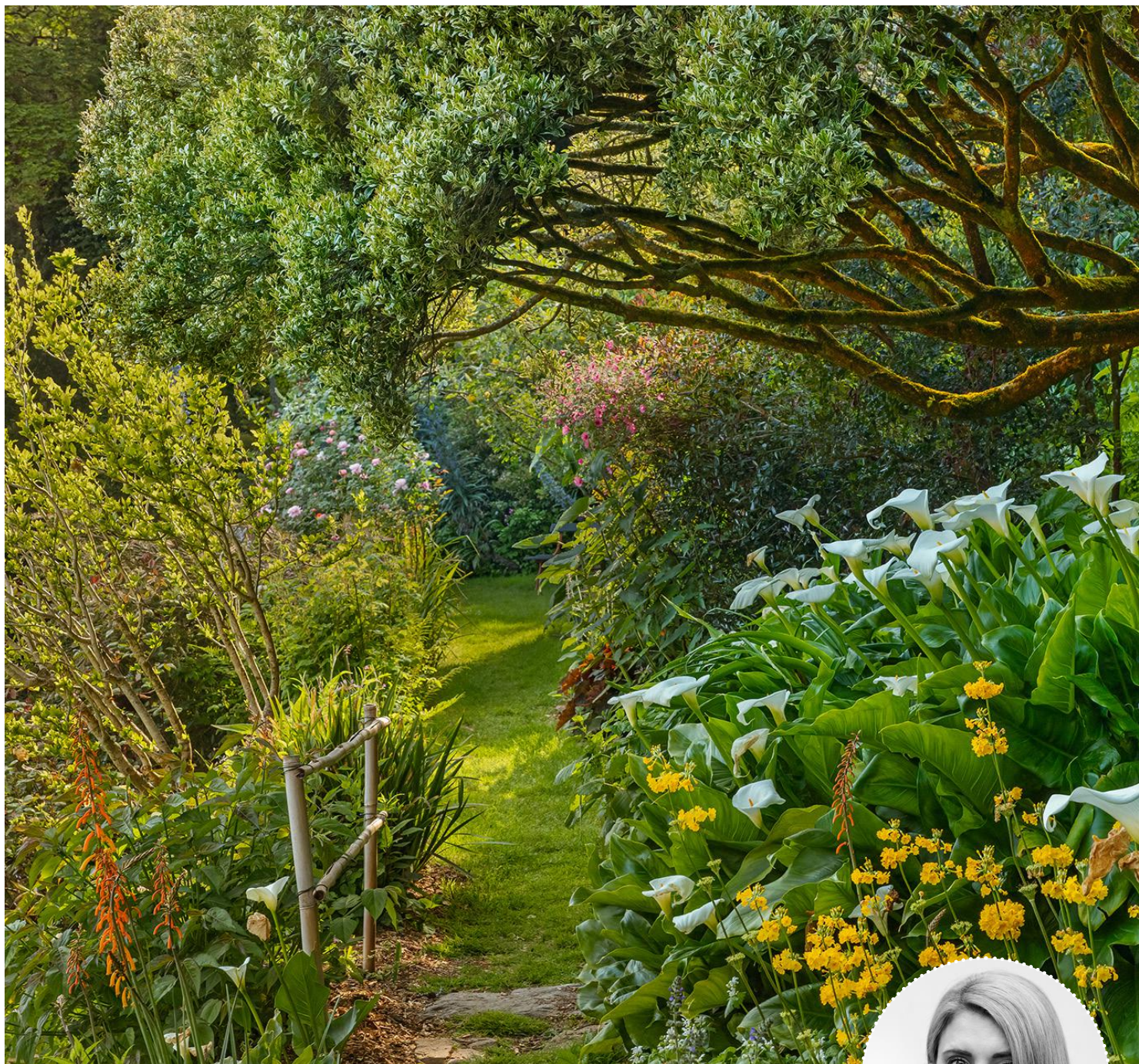
The garden also opens on 24 and 25 April as part of Scotland's Gardens Scheme.



Sheila Averbuch's garden was shortlisted in the BBC Gardeners' World Garden of the Year.

IT'S CLAUDIA'S YEAR

Though eight PGPA members were recognised in this year's International Garden Photographer of the Year Awards, it was undoubtedly Claudia Gaupp's year. Of the 20 images taken by PGPA members recognised in the awards, half were Claudia's



EUROPEAN GARDEN PHOTOGRAPHY AWARD - WINNER

Claudia Gaupp 'Lush Serenity in Bloom'

Claudia took this picture at Les Jardins du Kestellie near Plouguil in northern Brittany, France.

'Nestled on a slope above the Jaudy River, not far from the coast, Guirec

Maréchal has created a subtropical paradise on many different levels, which can be explored via small, enchanted paths,' Claudia said. 'The mild climate ensures that a lush collection of plants

from all over the world thrives there, and in many parts of the garden you feel as if you are in a small jungle.

'In mid-May, white calla lilies and yellow





Japanese primroses bordered the winding path, their vivid hues contrasting with countless shades of green. As the sun dipped low, the shrub's entwined branches caught the fading light, casting a serene, contemplative mood over the lush borders.' Claudia said she was in the area because



EUROPEAN GARDEN PHOTOGRAPHY AWARD
FINALIST
Claudia Gaupp
Where Fairies Dance



EUROPEAN GARDEN PHOTOGRAPHY AWARD
FINALIST
Claudia Gaupp
Amber Glow at the Pond



EUROPEAN GARDEN PHOTOGRAPHY AWARD
HIGHLY COMMENDED
Claudia Gaupp
Veil of White Wisteria

she is married to 'an enthusiastic surfer', and they both love holidaying in France.

'As a garden photographer, I am naturally on the lookout for interesting gardens and motifs, so it goes without saying that I am always hunting for special green moments and plants with my camera, even on holiday,' she said.

Claudia visited Kestellic during normal opening hours, which provided a couple of particular challenges: finding a good motif without too many other visitors and dealing with the unfavourable, strong afternoon light. Her persistence paid off.

'What I particularly love about this picture is that it is very calm and shows a serene intimacy,' she said. 'There is no dramatic lighting—which I admit I also love in garden photography—just the filtered light of the afternoon sun, which makes the various shades of green

shine in very different ways and gives the overhanging, sculptural branches of the tree an almost luminous quality.

'The lushly blooming calla lilies in the foreground touched me personally, as my bridal bouquet many years ago consisted of a very simple bunch of seven white calla lilies tied together, and I have always dreamed of seeing them growing so abundantly and naturally in a garden. In my own garden here in Germany, I have not yet succeeded in doing so due to the climate.

'It is always something special to receive an award from IGPOTY. I am particularly pleased when the award is for pictures of gardens where I felt especially comfortable during my visit and which mean something to me personally.'

Equipment: Canon EOS 6D Mark II with a Canon 24-105mm zoom lens.



BEAUTIFUL GARDENS - SECOND PLACE

Bennet Smith 'Morning Glow: Mist Rising Over the Moat'

Bennet captured this striking image in Anne Boleyn's orchard at Hever Castle, Kent.

'I'd visited the garden a week earlier for a Plant Fair Roadshow event and noticed the daffodils were about to peak,' he said.

'My first early morning visit was shrouded in fog and by the time it lifted there was nothing magical about the

light, so I returned to try again a few days later. The recce proved useful as it gave me a sense of how the early light would be catching different areas of daffodils across the site.'

Bennet said he loves the warmth of the light being diffused by the mist as it rises from the moat and the way the edges of the daffodil leaves are glowing.

'The backlit daffodils offer a real sense of hope in springtime,' he said.

On placing second in a popular category, he said, 'I'm absolutely delighted and equally pleased to be able to share the beautiful grounds of Hever Castle to a wide audience.'

Equipment: Nikon D610 with Nikon 24-70mm lens, 1/60 sec at f/11.



BEAUTIFUL GARDENS - THIRD

Claudia Gaupp 'Glowing Season's Farewell'



**BEAUTIFUL
GARDENS
FINALIST**
Marianne Majerus
Sunset Over
Perennial Meadow



**BEAUTIFUL
GARDENS
HIGHLY
COMMENDED**
Ray Cox
Folly Triumph



**BEAUTIFUL
GARDENS
COMMENDED**
Phao Hewitson
Through the Gate



BEAUTIFUL GARDENS - COMMENDED
Claudia Gaupp First Light at the Pond



BEAUTIFUL GARDENS - COMMENDED
Claudia Gaupp Whispers of Wilderness



MY GARDEN SPACE - THIRD PLACE
Annette Lepple 'In Rose Heaven'

Annette was both third place getter and a finalist in this category. She said she was very pleased to be recognised 'especially as I only entered this particular category and both winning images show my own garden.'

'It's always great to be part of this

prestigious competition,' Annette said.

Why does she think the judges recognised her image? 'As with all good garden photography, it's all about the light,' she said. 'It's so important to be in the right place at the right time. In this

case it was a little easier as it's my home.

'I love the magical light (in the image) and the fact that it shows off this particular planting in front of the house at its best.'

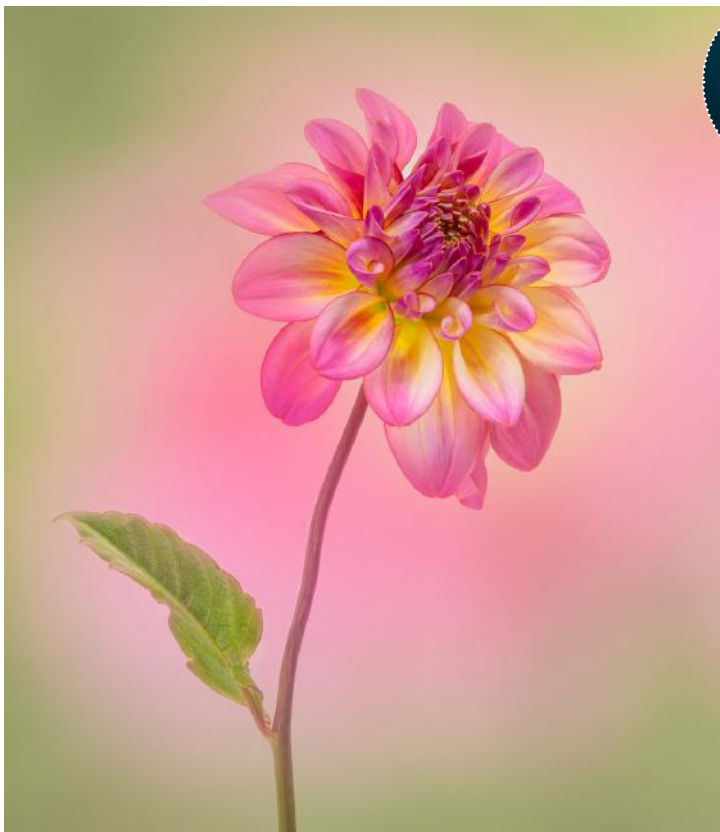
Equipment: Canon EOS 5D Mark III and a tripod.



MY GARDEN SPACE - FINALIST
Annette Lepple Autumn Mist



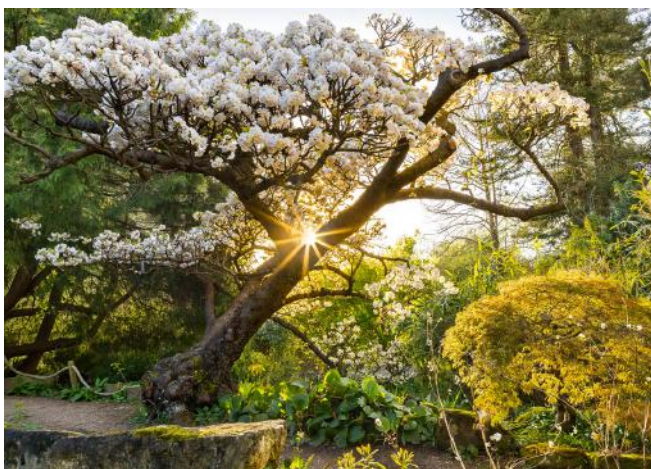
MY GARDEN SPACE - HIGHLY COMMENDED
Bennet Smith Crazy Cornucopia



**BEAUTY
OF PLANTS**
FINALIST
Molly Hollman
Dahlia Dance



**BLACK
& WHITE**
COMMENDED
Fiona Lea
A Dusting of Pollen



AROUND THE WORLD AT CAMBRIDGE BG - FIRST
Claudia Gaupp Japanese Serenity in Bloom



AROUND THE WORLD AT CAMBRIDGE BG - FINALIST
Claudia Gaupp A World Woven for Bees

MACRO ART
HIGHLY
COMMENDED
Molly Hollman
In the Pink



**CAPTURED
AT KEW**
COMMENDED
Claudia Gaupp
Winter's Palate
at Kew

NURTURED IN NATURE

His photographs stop you in your tracks, and they regularly win the PGPA's Image of the Month. Yet few members know much about the man behind them. Seungmin Woo is South Korea's foremost garden photographer. He told Dan Hatch about his life, photography and inspiration

There is a photograph that South Korean garden photographer Seungmin Woo returns to again and again. He took it at the Mirror Pond Garden of Baekdudaegan National Arboretum on a morning so rare that the staff told him they had almost never seen anything like it. Mist had risen into the air, the emerging sun was reflecting off the pond, and the plants shimmered in the soft, diffused light. The mountains resonated quietly around him.

'In that pond garden, it felt as though a small "garden concert" were unfolding just for me,' he said. 'I simply stood there, steadying my breath, and pressed the shutter carefully in that gift-like moment nature had offered.'

The image, titled 'Dreamy Morning', went on to win an award in the Gardens category of the RHS Photographic Competition in 2020—Woo's first international recognition—but it captures



something essential about who he is as a photographer: a man who does not impose himself on nature so much as wait for it to speak.

ROOTS AND REED FIELDS

Seungmin was born in Seoul in 1987, but thanks to his father's work, he moved around a lot as a child. Of all the places his family lived, it was Wonju in Gangwon Province that left the deepest impression. A wide reed field stretching out in front of their home meant the little boy had insects to collect and nature to enjoy as both playground and companion. His parents, he remembers, made a point of taking him into the mountains and fields. On weekends, his father would load a pot of his mother's chicken soup onto the bicycle and the family would head to the hills and valleys together.

'Those hours we shared, surrounded by the sound of clear water and the scent of the forest, are still warmly lodged deep in my heart,' he said.

'Those memories are still the deepest roots of my photography today.'

Before discovering photography, Seungmin dreamed of becoming a painter. For nearly a decade, he studied art—his mother had recommended lessons to help him focus, observing that while he couldn't sit still for a moment, once he began drawing, he would stay absorbed

for hours. He won prizes each year. He loved watercolour painting outdoors most of all: sitting with a landscape, reading its light and colour, composing a scene within a frame. Looking back, he recognises something in that process that would later become entirely familiar.

'Perhaps I was already creating "frames" even then,' he said.

Later, a teacher would guide him towards a career in landscape architecture. In 2005, he entered university to study it. There, visiting rivers, wetlands and natural landscapes with professors, he developed a way of reading spaces—understanding design intent, circulation, sightlines, places to pause. He also discovered photography through a university club, learning to develop and print film in a darkroom. By the time he graduated, Seungmin had entered his first competition, photographing the tidal landscape of Suncheonman Wetland, and won first prize along with a Minister's Award. With the prize money, he bought his first DSLR camera.

He worked for a while at a landscape design firm—late nights, CAD drawings, Photoshop work that didn't suit his temperament—but the experience gave him something he still draws on.

'I learned to think first from the perspective of the people using the space,' he said. 'I realised that a space is not simply about looking beautiful; what matters more is how people experience it within.'

One evening, trapped in the office, he stepped briefly onto the terrace and photographed the sunset seeping through the city's buildings. It was, he said, the most breathable moment of his entire day. 'Suddenly I realised: I'm getting through each day for moments like this.' He handed in his resignation.



'Dreamy Morning'
(2020)



Piet Oudolf's naturalistic
garden created at
Taehwagang National
Garden in Ulsan



FINDING THE GARDEN

The turn toward gardens as a specialism came gradually, crystallising after getting married in 2015, when he worked in planning and PR for a wildflower and mountain-herb park run by his wife's family. It was remote, so promoting the park was difficult. At the time there were few examples in Korea of



'Twinkling Allium'
(2021)

photography specialising in gardens and plants, so Seungmin researched cases from the UK and other countries with more established garden cultures.

'Previously, I had preferred images on a broad scale—landscape architecture and wide scenery—but from that period my interest in plants deepened, and I began striving to photograph on a more delicate, intimate and profound scale.'

As visitor numbers grew in response to the photographs, he felt something click into place: the power of photography, and the particular rewards of this genre.

Since 2018, he has called himself a 'garden photographer'—a title he notes was barely known in Korea when he adopted it—documenting the four seasons at Jade Garden Arboretum in Chuncheon. He has collaborated with public institutions including Baekdudaegan and Sejong National Arboreta and with garden designers including Jihae Hwang, winner of three gold medals at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show.

His photographs were recognised at the RHS Photographic Competition in 2020, 2021 and 2022. The third winning image, 'Calm Calanthe', taken during the COVID pandemic at Sejong National Arboretum, holds particular meaning for him. He photographed a quiet orchid bloom and felt, in it, 'a small light of hope'. When it was recognised internationally, he experienced something beyond the pleasure of winning: 'A deep emotion that the comfort and hope nature had given me had become a point of shared empathy with the wider world.'

Seungmin now lives in Yangju in Gyeonggi Province with his wife and children—drawn to its calmer atmosphere and proximity to beautiful nature. His wife, he said, is 'the person I am most grateful for—always beside me, sharing, communicating, and filling in what I lack'.

She used to join him on location, handling drone filming. These days, childcare means that happens less often, but their time together is woven through his life and, he believes, through his photographs.

On weekends, a good day looks much like the ones he had as a child: time in the forest, watching the seasons shift, children running freely outdoors. He tends a small garden at home. He watches his children grow alongside the plants.

PRESENCE AND PATIENCE

His philosophy fits on a business card: To resemble nature, and to capture nature. Asked to expand on that idea, he speaks of patience and humility—qualities he learned not from any

teacher or institution, but from long hours of watching the world outside.

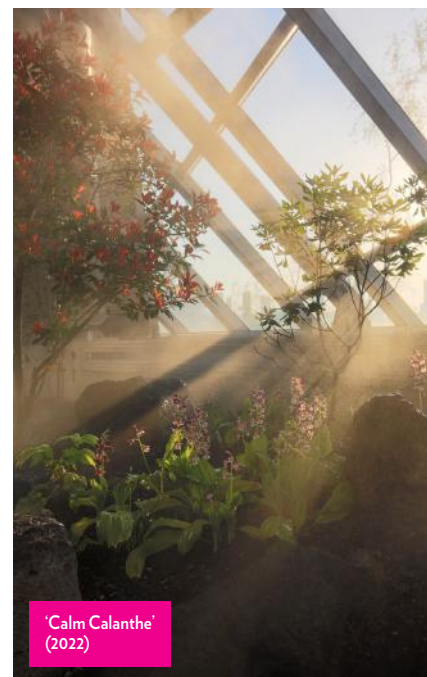
'The moments that draw me in and excite me most are the changes and phenomena created by nature,' he said. 'I believe these are special times that humans cannot stage—moments that nature briefly allows us.'

Seungmin is not a man driven by grand ambitions or sweeping plans. He speaks instead of continuing steadily and sincerely in the same direction he has always walked. But there is one dream he holds quietly: to photograph the work of Piet Oudolf—the great Dutch master of naturalistic planting—in person, experiencing the air and light of those gardens firsthand. Oudolf recently created a work at Taehwagang National Garden in Ulsan, South Korea, which Seungmin has been able to visit. But it is the gardens further afield that call to him. Through the PGPA, he encounters the beautiful gardens of the UK and the wider world, and feels, he said, genuinely excited by them.

'I hope that one day, I will stand within those spaces, meeting their air and light fully, and photograph them first-hand.'

For a photographer whose entire practice is built on presence—on being in exactly the right place at exactly the right moment—it feels like the natural next chapter. And when that day comes, you sense he will do exactly what he did at the Mirror Pond on that rare misty morning: simply stand there, steady his breath, and wait for nature to offer what it will.

■ Seungmin Woo's work can be found on Instagram @about_gardens. He is a member of the Professional Garden Photographers Association.



'Calm Calanthe'
(2022)



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MELISSA GERBALDI

Melissa is the Media Relations Manager at the Horticultural Trades Association

Tea or coffee and how do you have it?

Always coffee. I started drinking coffee quite young, so I'm a bit unusual in that I can drink it before bed and still fall asleep! Flat white is my go-to in coffee shops, with the tiniest amount of sugar (haven't quite kicked it completely yet).

What's the story behind your favourite mug?

I have a few mugs that are special because of the memories they hold, mainly relating to jobs. From a tiny Mad Hatter mug given by theatre colleagues, who joked I never manage to finish my drink (I talk too much, and it gets cold); to my Pinewood travel mug from when I worked at the studios, which came in very handy. The one I've chosen is a lovely Cath Kidston mug, complete with a horticultural theme. Gifted by a producer at BBC South, who became a friend whilst we worked on the British Services Antarctic Expedition in 2012.



What is your role at the HTA?

I'm the Media Relations Manager. Having trained as a journalist before moving into PR and communications, the role and the difference I can make for our members, alongside my policy and public affairs colleagues, appeals to my newsy, nosey nature as well as my storytelling skills. I'm lucky to work across all parts of the HTA, sharing stories from lobbying wins and government recognition to the resilience and positivity of our members doing amazing things. Our sector is not only at the heart of communities but also vital for the environment, economy, green infrastructure, and health and wellbeing—and I'm constantly inspired by how generously people share their knowledge and passion.

What's the one thing you wish GMG members knew about the HTA?

The HTA exists for our members. We are their voice, championing the industry at every level and helping people recognise just how important this sector is. Practically, that also means we're a great media resource, whether it's providing content, sharing data and insights, or connecting journalists and content creators to our members who are the experts on the ground across the UK.

Do you have a garden of your own?

Sadly, not my own



as much as I would like, as I rent, but I am proud of what I have created, given that I just had one flower bed and a completely gravelled plot. It is now full of pots and planters with a whole variety of plants from daffodils through to acers, an ornamental cherry, clematis, roses and pansies. Climbers now line my back fence. And that one flower bed? Well, it's now full of year-round colour with snowdrops, bluebells, hyacinths, peonies, dahlias, salvias and delphiniums.

What's the one plant that always makes you smile?

It's a Dicentra I bought after visiting The Garden House near Tavistock on a little solo adventure holiday. It's vivid fuchsia-pink hearts with bright lime-coloured leaves were so striking I couldn't leave it behind. I took it all the way back to my parents in Cambridgeshire as a present for mum, and

when I finally had my own garden, she gave me a cutting, so we both got to enjoy it.

What issues or topics do you want GMG Members to contact you about?

I'm always up for a chat about story ideas, but where we can really add value is with data and facts to ensure accurate reporting. If you've been to the Garden Press Event, you'll have seen our handy pocket-sized facts booklet. And I'm happy to explain the issues facing our members and the campaigns we're running on their behalf. My mission is to always get onto the news pages as well as the features, and to get our sector seen as the necessity it is, not just a nice-to-have.

What's the best way to get in touch?

media.office@hta.org.uk, but please say hello to me at events too and let's grab a cuppa.

FLOOD, DROUGHT, REPEAT?

Angela Youngman, winner of the GMG Beth Chatto Environmental Award 2025, argues water efficiency is no longer a seasonal story but a year-round issue garden writers need to address

Water efficiency is crucial for every garden but not enough attention is paid to it. All too frequently, people only start thinking about water problems during summer periods, when talk of droughts and hose pipe bans start appearing. Attention is focused on keeping plants alive when in hot temperatures—but as soon as rain comes, attitudes change. Being water-efficient is no longer a major concern.

In reality, the need to be water-efficient is much greater than coping with summer dryness. It is easy to forget about water problems when we have snowy landscapes and wet winters, like the one that has just passed, turning gardens into soggy soil.



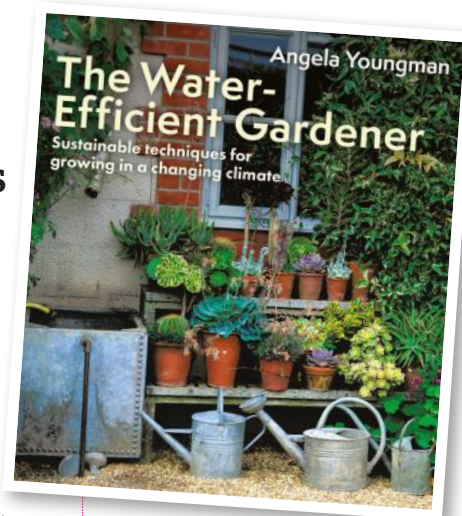
Climate change has meant that sea levels are higher and rainstorms can be much more extreme. There is a constant risk that dry summer soils do not soak up the rainfall and it simply washes away into drainage systems and swollen rivers, causing flooding. Over the winter, soils become steadily more and more saturated, leading to yet more

flooding because there is nowhere for the excess water to go.

BEYOND THE HOSE PIPE BAN

The problems of too much water have become just as serious as too little water, and increasingly common no matter where you live within the UK. I live in rural Norfolk, one of the driest areas of the country. Even here the soil can be extremely sodden in winter. On one memorable occasion, I looked out of the window after heavy rain and to my shock, saw a couple of swans swimming serenely up my flooded drive!

It is essential for gardeners to be prepared to cope with



both floods and droughts.

No one knows just what the weather will bring. Building houses on floodplains together with the necessary transport infrastructure has meant that drainage systems have been overloaded. Human attempts to contain rivers, along with the pleasure of living beside a river, mean that during periods of high water, especially in winter, the river simply follows its normal practice and spreads beyond its banks, flooding gardens and properties. In many areas near rivers and coasts, flooding has become almost endemic. How often do we see images of parts of York under water every year?

WHAT GARDENERS CAN ACTUALLY CHANGE

Researching my book, *The Water-Efficient Gardener*, revealed just how much can be done to mitigate the effects of droughts and floods by gardeners. All it takes is greater awareness of the issues, plus a little thought and preparation. As an added bonus, being water-efficient also ticks every box relating to sustainability, biodiversity and being environmentally friendly.

New developments now have to take into account the demands of SuDS requirements (the national standard for Sustainable



Regular heavy rain can leave poorly drained areas very wet

PHOTOS: GAPPHOTOS/NICOLA STOCHE/GETTY, JACKY PARKER/PHOTOGRAPHY, SHUTTERSTOCK, KOKHAN/ISTOCK, SCHULZE



Water butts can be beautiful as well as practical

"Being water-efficient is just as important as preserving peat bogs, reducing waste and being sustainable within a garden."

Angela Youngman

Drainage Systems) and these are just as important when undertaking any major garden changes. If there are ditches running through a garden, they are there for a reason and should be kept clear. Being water-efficient needs to become an essential part of all aspects of garden activity. Some solutions are very simple but easily overlooked or simply forgotten.

It is not just a matter of providing enough water butts, installing automatic watering systems, choosing plants to match the soil, adding extra soakaways or considering the creation of bog gardens. The range of options available is much wider, and these deserve consideration, tailoring gardens and landscapes to suit a location. Many public sites are now incorporating

Hydrorock natural aquifer blocks to make rain gardens and planters, thus reducing levels of surface water. Forest gardens can provide

shade and food. How about keyhole gardens, bioswales, green roofs and underground tanks for water storage — and those are just a handful of the options now available.

The effects of droughts and floods can also be minimised by taking adequate preparations. Simple flood barriers can be installed to reduce the impact of flooding, while having a quick checklist of what should and should not be done will make it easier to deal safely with surface water in a garden.

SMALL CHANGES, REAL SAVINGS

Even small changes can make a difference, especially during the summer. Basic preparations early in the year can help, such as mulching thoroughly and ensuring soil does not become compacted.

It is a matter of adjusting perceptions of what is essential. Watering a lawn is a waste of water, since it will quickly turn green again when rain falls. Not all plants will need watering, and watering requirements should be prioritised along with choosing the best time of day to actually undertake watering. Reduce compacted soil by hoeing, and leave cut weeds on the ground to provide extra moisture and nutrients. Move containers to cooler spots or provide

some form of shade such as a parasol, ensure greenhouses have appropriate ventilation.

The use of grey water is one of the least known emergency options in drought. Whenever I give talks on water efficiency to local garden groups, I find that most people have little clue as to exactly what it is. The fact that it can provide valuable nutrition as well as water comes as a surprise. Well-chosen grey water can be a lifesaver to many plants, especially when used in early morning or late in the evening.

There is always a tendency for people to regard problems of water during droughts or flooding as being just one of supply and a lack of suitable infrastructure. Much is being done to improve matters. For example, road construction now requires extensive flood-mitigation systems. Water authorities are facing greater criticism and demand for action to deal with leaking pipes. But ultimately, it is down to gardeners to take what measures they can whether it is using grey water, adding flood barriers or having procedures in place to reduce the impact on their immediate surroundings. Being water-efficient is just as important as preserving peat bogs, reducing waste and being sustainable within a garden.

■ **The Water-Efficient Gardener is out now.**



A water butt captures rain to use later, when it's needed

DECEMBER WINNER

James Osmond
'Circles and Curves'

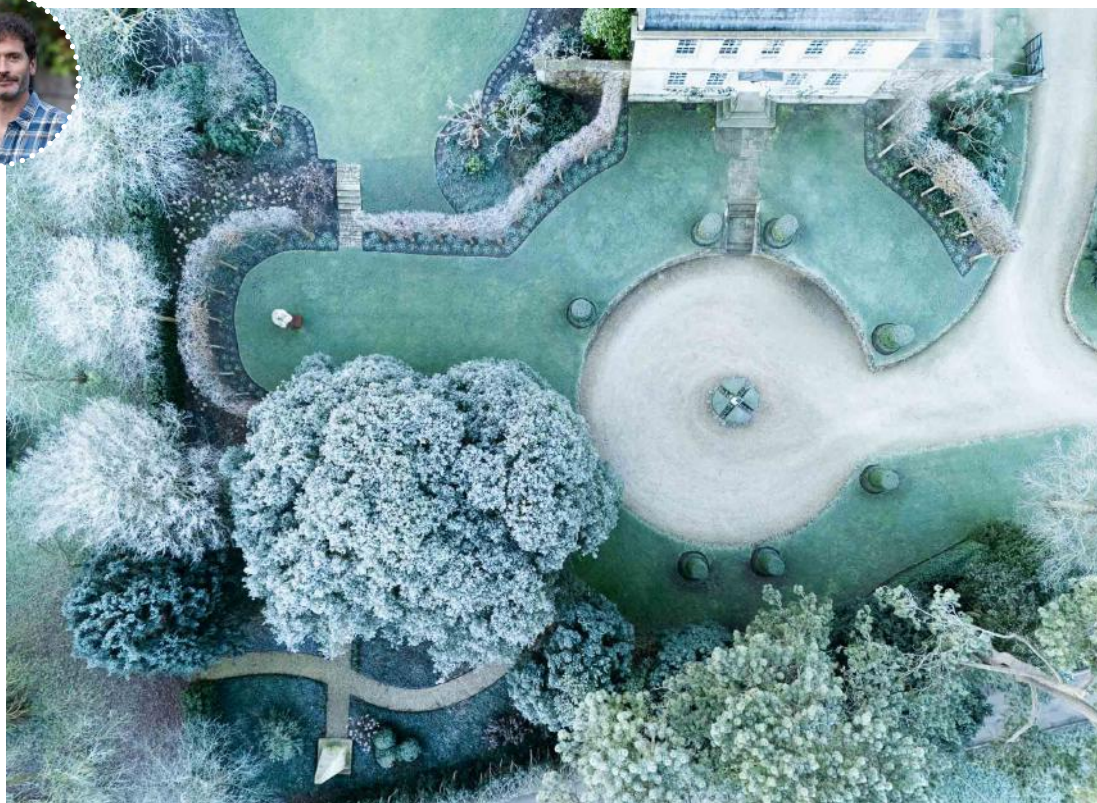


James said this image was taken in the garden of The Old Rectory in Doynton, Gloucestershire.

'I have been photographing this garden at different times of the year for a couple of years now,' he said. 'It has a really strong, elegant structure designed by Iain MacDonald, and I knew it would photograph well on a frosty winter morning. As part of the shoot, I wanted to explore sections of the shapely layout in plain view, so I needed to use the drone.'

'I really liked this section of the front garden, all sinuous curves and circles, and particularly the way the pleached hedges unravel like ribbons from the facade of the house. I also like how the organic shape of the holm oak balances the geometric shape of the turning circle.'

James had to position the drone very



precisely to hide the cars parked just out of shot, and work quickly to get the whole shoot done before the frost melted.

If the image looks familiar, you may

have seen it in the December issue of The English Garden magazine.

Equipment: DJI Mini 4 Pro with 24mm lens, ISO 100, 1/30s at f1.7.

JANUARY WINNER

Bennet Smith
'Winter Shapes'



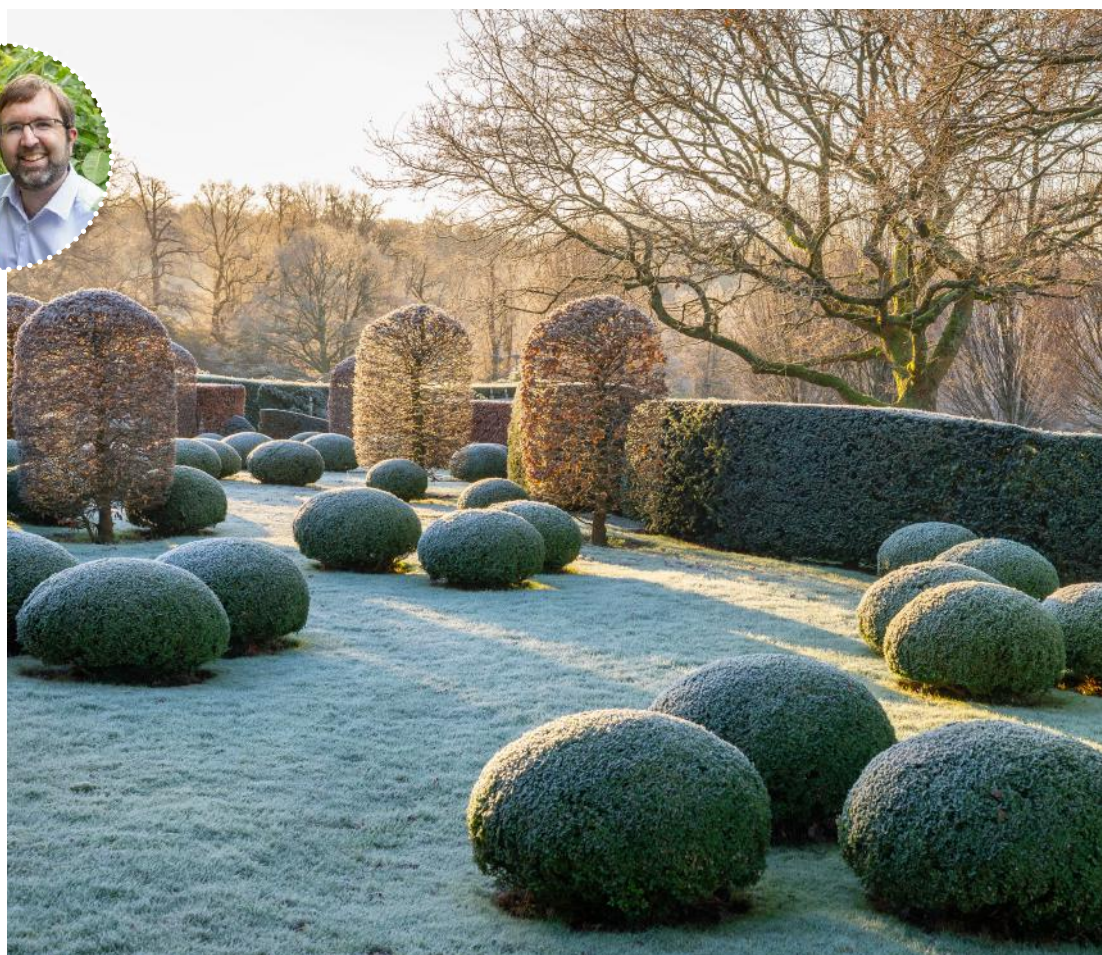
Bennet captured this gorgeous image in a private garden in East Sussex.

'I'd photographed the garden full of roses in the summer, and again in the autumn, and I realised it had such strong bones that, with the right light, it could be wonderful in winter if there was a good frost,' he said.

'The hardest thing was getting to the garden. It's very remote and the roads were sheet ice in places. I had to divert my route twice to avoid roads that looked impassable. I also needed to be careful to avoid walking too much on the frozen lawn.'

'I love the playful use of topiary and how the raking light highlights the structure of the hornbeam columns as well as the oak arbour.'

Equipment: Nikon D850 with a 24-70mm lens, 1/80 sec at f/10.





FEBRUARY WINNER

Claudia Gaupp

'The Two of Us – It's OK to be different'



Germany-based Claudia took this photo in the Schau- und Sichtungsgarten Hermannshof in Weinheim/Baden-Württemberg. The garden is known for its collection of rare trees, shrubs and climate resilient naturalistic plantings and is located in one of the warmest regions in Germany.

'The blooming of the early crocuses (*Crocus tommasinianus*) marks the beginning of spring in my region, and millions of them can be admired in the Hermannshof Garden,' she said. 'Where lush perennials and grasses dominate the planting in autumn, the crocuses have spread over decades to form a sea of purple flowers on the ground, which I always like to immerse myself in for close-up shots at this time of year.'

'For close-ups with a beautiful, airy bokeh, I like to work with a shallow depth of field.'

In addition to my macro lenses, I also enjoy taking this type of shots—as in this case—with a telephoto zoom lens at its maximum focal length of 300mm and the aperture wide open.

'To achieve this effect in the mist of flowers on the ground, the camera

must be placed directly on the floor, for which a bean bag is essential for stability. As I don't like using the camera's rotating display, which is often unhelpful due to reflection from the sun, I use an angle finder for this type of ground-level photography, which allows me to look through the camera's optics at a 90-degree angle.'

Claudia said the magic of close-up photography 'lies in the stories it reveals'.

'While searching for a single crocus to capture, I found myself drawn instead to two solitary snowdrops. Just as I'm always fascinated by the striking or unusual details in individual flowers, these two immediately caught my eye. The rest is history: in a sea of thousands of purple crocuses, I suddenly found myself in quiet dialogue with a touching couple of delicate white snowdrops standing apart from the crowd—an inspiring reminder of strength and confidence from two modest heralds of early spring.'

Equipment: Canon EOS 6D Mark II, Tamron 70–300mm lens, 1/250sec at f/5.6 ISO 320, bean bag, Canon angle finder.



HOW TO GET WHAT YOU WANT FROM A PR A GUIDE FOR GARDEN MEDIA

PR Vikki Rimmer sat down with fellow PRs Emma Mason and Jane Southcott to discuss how members can get the most out of working with a public relations professional

The garden media is a wonderfully friendly niche. It's a sector that values demonstrable horticultural knowledge, a genuine passion for the outdoors, and a flair for creativity. It is also a place that we are proud to call our working home.

While we work independently, our mutual trust and admiration mean we frequently share ideas and, if we are too busy to take something on, we recommend one another to potential clients. Why? Because we share a common goal: doing what's best for the garden media world at large.

If you are a journalist, photographer, or influencer, you might sometimes just view PRs as gatekeepers to the clients you want to feature. But if you look a little closer, you'll find we are so much more. Here is our friendly insider guide on how to get the absolute best out of your PR contacts.

WE ARE MORE THAN 'THE DARK SIDE'

There is a running joke in media circles about journalists crossing over to PR and joining 'the Dark Side'

I have friends who have moved from journalism to PR who jokingly apologise for being a little short with me when they were on 'the other side'. I rarely encounter rudeness these days, but 20 years ago when I first made the move to PR, there was a lot less respect for what we do. I've had to earn my stripes—showing that I've had TV ideas commissioned by Discovery, photography published in *Vogue*, and can write under my own name. In the early days, I often just had to absorb the mansplaining!

The truth is many garden PRs are former writers, TV producers, creatives, and photographers. We aren't just salespeople; we are a creative hub.



Emma Mason

Jane Southcott

Emma: 'If you've been a writer, a photographer, or a filmmaker, you bring those skills to PR. As a former journalist, I see fellow journalists as my customers and I want them to have exactly what they need. By understanding both what my clients want and what journalists need, I can hopefully become the bridge between the two.'

Jane: 'That bridge between the two should feel seamless. I hope journalists know that if they call me, I will respond. If a client is too busy to speak, I can usually provide the answers and if I can't, I can get hold of my client quickly and respond. After many years of specialising in this sector and having training in journalism, I understand the needs and pressures on journalists—and I'm here to help.'

HOW TO MAXIMISE THE PR-JOURNALIST RELATIONSHIP

To make that bridge seamless, it helps to move beyond transactional requests and build a long-term partnership. Here is how:

Ask the magic question: We can be a one-stop shop for a quick contact or a single photograph. But if you call us and ask 'What else are you working on?' you might just leave the conversation with two extra, ready-to-go features in the bag.

Be upfront about exclusivity: If you need an exclusive, tell us at the start of the conversation. We want to work with you on this, but we need to understand your timelines and how the material will be used. For example, a column might not trump a national full-page feature, and sometimes high-demand stories can't be held back forever.

Transparency ensures we can manage



Emma Mason
at RHS Chelsea
Flower Show



Jane Southcott with Cleve West at RHS Chelsea Flower Show

expectations for both you and our clients.

Introduce us to the wider team: It's not all about the words. Because of our creative backgrounds, we often know exactly how a story can be shown as well as told. Introduce us early to your picture editor, producer, or director. The odds are, we already know the exact shot, angle, or image that will best tell the story.

Give feedback: If you receive a pitch from us and it's not what you wanted, if you have time, maybe reply with a single line back 'this isn't for me—I'm looking more for



Vikki Rimmer (left) with The Bridgerton Garden designer Holly Johnston and comms expert Chris Young

X or Y and it needs to be fully formed with at least two perspectives', and we will think harder and come back with something you want.

Pick up the phone: We genuinely love it when journalists and creatives call us. We want to provide you with unique content and connect you with our clients because we know it produces a better end result for the reader or viewer. A conversation is always better than 20 emails!

A NOTE FOR GARDEN INFLUENCERS

We view PR as long-term brand building, not just a pursuit of instant followers. When pitching to us for a collaboration, here is what helps us advocate for you to our clients:

Pitch the metrics that matter:

Tell us who you are, but focus on your engagement metrics, as well as your sector specialism, rather than just your follower count.

Define your audience: We need to evaluate your reach to understand exactly who you are talking to and how you engage with them.

Provide clear guidelines: Let us know exactly how you work, what your deliverables are, and what you expect from us.

Emma: 'I really enjoy working in this sector because the garden media is such a friendly place. You do need basic horticultural knowledge to work in this field, but I always try to avoid anything overly complex or long names in Latin as that can put people off, and we want to make gardening as accessible as possible. It really helps when journalists know we have a genuine passion for gardening, and it's incredibly rewarding when they meet us on that level.'

Jane: 'I've been working in PR for more than 30 years, and my aim is for journalists to feel they can trust me to provide a strong story and a good angle, and for me to be able to trust them in return to do the best for my clients. It takes time to get to this place and I've learned a lot along the way, but honest and open communication is always the key to a strong partnership between PR and journalist.'

'For me, collaboration has been key. I'm lucky to call Emma and Jane my friends. Alongside communications and messaging expert Chris Young and photographer Oliver Dixon, all four



Vikki, Emma and Jane



Vikki Rimmer in The Bridgerton Garden

provide a fantastic sounding board, and all four have the perspective from 'both sides' of the coin, even if they work with me on the "Dark Side" these days.'

About Vikki: Writer and PR, Vikki started her career as a photojournalist before working with Tom Hart Dyke on two series for the BBC (2004–06), managing the publicity for *Walking The Amazon* with Ed Stafford (Discovery), and has specialised in garden and environmental PR for the last 20 years. Vikki is supporting the Bat Conservation Trust with The Nocturnal Garden at Chelsea this year. www.presscontact.co.uk

About Emma: A former news journalist and corporate PR, Emma now specialises in garden, home and horticulture, working with visitor gardens, publishers, designers, charities and gardening brands. Emma is helping to spread the word about Sarah Eberle's The Campaign To Protect Rural England Garden. 'On the Edge' and The Plant Heritage Missing Collector Garden at this May's RHS Chelsea. www.emmasonpr.co.uk

About Jane: Trained as a journalist, then working in senior PR for more than 35 years in agency and in-house, Jane has specialised in the gardening sector for 20 years. At RHS Chelsea this year Jane is supporting Parkinson's UK with 'A Garden for Every Parkinson's Journey.' janesouthcottpr.co.uk

SOCIAL BUTTERFLY

Award-winning social media influencer Megan Green explains what it's like being the horticultural content and creative manager for Hayloft Plants

Since winning the GMG Award for 'Brand Social Media Influencer of the Year' last year for my work with Hayloft Plants, I've found myself reflecting not only on the content I produce for the brand, but on what the role of a horticultural content and creative manager really entails.

It's wonderfully varied. Every day, I oversee all the elements of the Hayloft Plants' visual and creative output, ensuring that everything we publish, from digital platforms to print, feels cohesive, considered and true to who we are as a brand. That might mean helping to curate our catalogues, checking imagery and layout on the homepage of our website, or making sure new visual aligns with our evolving brand guidelines. Every touchpoint matters.

Then, of course, there's social media: the space where many gardeners and plant lovers first find us. This is where I develop and research good hooks, create film, edit, and write the content you see across Hayloft's channels. It's uplifting, educational, and (hopefully) entertaining, but above all, it's honest. Social media is an



Megan with the Hayloft brochure



Megan with Hydrangea 'Groundbreaker Greeny'

extension of the brand, the tone of voice and the visuals, all of it shapes how people perceive us at Hayloft Plants. While social media is a big part of my role, it's not the whole picture. Good content doesn't exist in isolation. It's formed by the plants we promote to our customers, the challenges that the different seasons bring and the people behind the business. It's my job to bring those threads together and tell a story that gardeners will genuinely want to engage with.

CONTENT AND CONNECTION

It's amazing to think, when I first joined Hayloft Plants, the brand had little social media presence and fewer than 4,000 followers on Instagram. Whizz forward just over two years and we have award-winning content and a following that's tripled to 11,500.

But a larger following alone doesn't make good content.

For me, what makes good content, particularly in horticulture, comes down to the storytelling and the value the post brings to the consumer. For example, there's a big difference between saying 'Buy ten primroses for £20' and saying 'This is the primrose your garden needs for winter and spring—here's why'.

Education, inspiration, and usefulness will always outperform pure selling. People follow accounts because they are curious, because they want to learn, or maybe it's something that simply just makes them smile. If content doesn't do this, and grab someone in the first two seconds, you've lost them. That's why honesty and clarity matter so much to me. Gardening isn't always perfect; neither are plants. Social media provides us with an opportunity



Megan accepting her award at the GMG Awards 2025



to be upfront, show behind the scenes, share knowledge and genuinely want to help people succeed in their gardens.

A recent reel I created titled 'I don't have space for a climber in my garden' dispelled myths about how all climbers are fast-growing and unsuitable for smaller gardens. The video guided the viewer through the climbers that are perfect for small spaces or containers. It had supporting captions for our top five choices. Why did it work? It was relatable content for customers with smaller gardens, it tackled a pinch point, there was a strong hook that told people what they were watching and, finally, it was only 25 seconds long. It was fast paced and created enough curiosity for viewers to want to find out more. It clocked up 50,000 views in a couple of weeks and had a brilliantly engaged audience! (You can view it here.)

Buzz words and statistics aside, at the heart of everything I have a simple goal: to share my love of horticulture with as many people possible! I feel this

'Education, inspiration, and usefulness will always outperform pure selling.'



Megan with roses



The Hayloft greenhouse

really comes across in the posts I create for Hayloft Plants. I think there's an authenticity you can't fake when there's someone who really loves and enjoys what they're doing.

ROAD LESS TRAVELLED

My route into this role wasn't linear, but it was rooted firmly in plants. Before joining Hayloft Plants, I worked at Iron Acton Garden Centre in Bristol for more than five years. I started as a plant assistant, before moving into supervision, visual merchandising, and plant buying.

Those years gave me a deep, practical understanding of plants and it's knowledge I draw on every single day. The turning point in this role came when I suggested we could do more with the social media. I was trusted to give it a go. That trust, being allowed to experiment, learn and refine was pivotal for me.

The same is true at Hayloft Plants today. I'm trusted with the content I produce, and that trust allows that authenticity to shine through. While brand guidelines are important, you just simply can't fake enthusiasm for plants. If you love them, people will feel it.

I'm always learning though. A couple of years ago, I had a real craving to understand the world of Instagram more. As if by magic, the right course came into my inbox at work, and I attended an online programme called Reels Rockstars with Kirsty Raper and Andie McDowell. I still bring lessons from that course to the content I create today, just honed to match the tone and feel of the Hayloft Plants brand.

Everything I do now also ties back to earlier creative experiences. I studied illustration and photography and I've always enjoyed visual storytelling in



An example of a Hayloft social media post

whatever form. Combine that with being outdoors, visiting amazing show gardens and creating digital content, and suddenly, all these seemingly separate skills align.

CONTENT AND COHESION

For all the above, nothing I do happens in isolation. Hayloft Plants is a team effort and the content reflects that. Without Sharron and George from the stock team sourcing exceptional plants, for example, there would be no story to tell. Without the senior manager James Edmonds planning what plants we feature on QVC and David bringing them to life on-screen, we wouldn't reach new audiences. Without Matt and the sales team creating thoughtful marketing campaigns (including our emails) the wider picture just wouldn't come together.

Without Carys, our graphic designer, and Jemma, who crafts our web copy, the brand wouldn't feel cohesive. Without the packing and customer care teams, who ensure plants arrive safely and speaking directly to our customers, the whole operation simply wouldn't function.

We won't always get everything right. Much like gardening, creative content is a constant learning process. What matters is being open to improving and doing better each season.

While winning an award was an honour, it felt to me like recognition for a way of working and for the values we have at Hayloft Plants. Horticulture has given me a niche and a career I genuinely love. I feel incredibly lucky to be part of the business and the industry that continues to inspire me every day.

■ You can find Hayloft Plants' content on Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, Pinterest and YouTube.

A GARDEN FOR MOTHS

Author and columnist Susie White shares her love of moths—and how to attract them to your garden—in *The Gardener and the Moth: Planting for Moths and Butterflies*

An Angle Shades plays visual tricks. Its brown and peach-coloured triangles and its scalloped wing edges are designed to confuse and protect. A moth with cryptic markings, it blends into a background of withered autumn leaves.

It was the chance sighting of an Angle Shades moth, resting by day on a fence post, that triggered my fascination with this remarkable group of insects. I was in Chesters Walled Garden, the Northumberland garden I ran for 23 years, and was completely blown away by it. At that time, I was too busy with the nursery and garden to learn more, but when I began making a new garden I included plants specifically for moths.

The making of this current garden is told in *Second Nature: The Story of a Naturalist's Garden* and it was from that my publisher, Saraband, asked if I would write about moths for the 'In



The Moment' series.

These compact, portable books focus on wildlife, environment and nature as well as green verse and mindfulness. It was a delight to write and illustrate a book about something so close to my heart. Entitled *The Gardener and the Moth*, the book is dedicated to my grandchildren and starts on a June morning as we open the moth trap that was set the night before. It's that moment of excitement and discovery, never knowing what we might find.

THE JOY OF DISCOVERY

By mixing experiences like these with science I wanted to draw readers in, in the same way as in my 'Country Diary' for the *Guardian*. The book is about butterflies, too, so there's plenty of detailed information: the difference between moths and butterflies, their life cycles and anatomy, naming, camouflage and toxicity for protection. But it's also very



The elaborate markings of Feathered Gothic moth



Poplar Hawk-moths will sit quietly on a child's hands

descriptive, rooted in place and feeling, so I was delighted when someone told me that they were 'hooked' by the story.

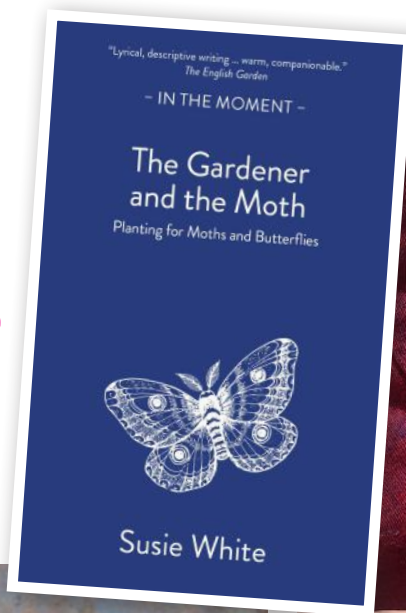
There are 57 resident species of butterflies in the UK but around 2,500 species of moths, of which 900 are macro-moths. That makes them complex and fascinating to study, their range of markings, patterns, shapes and colours endlessly variable. Buff-tip is the perfect imitation of a broken birch twig. Elephant Hawk-moth is a wonderful confection of lime green and pink. Feathered Gothic is elaborately striped; White Ermine wears royal robes. Discovering what has been flying in the night while we were asleep reveals the wonder of these extraordinary insects.

MAKING A GARDEN

Once we had laid out our garden—the subject of a two-year series for the *English Garden* on making a garden from scratch—it settled and matured, developing a dynamic ecology that has made it a wildlife hub in this North Pennine valley.

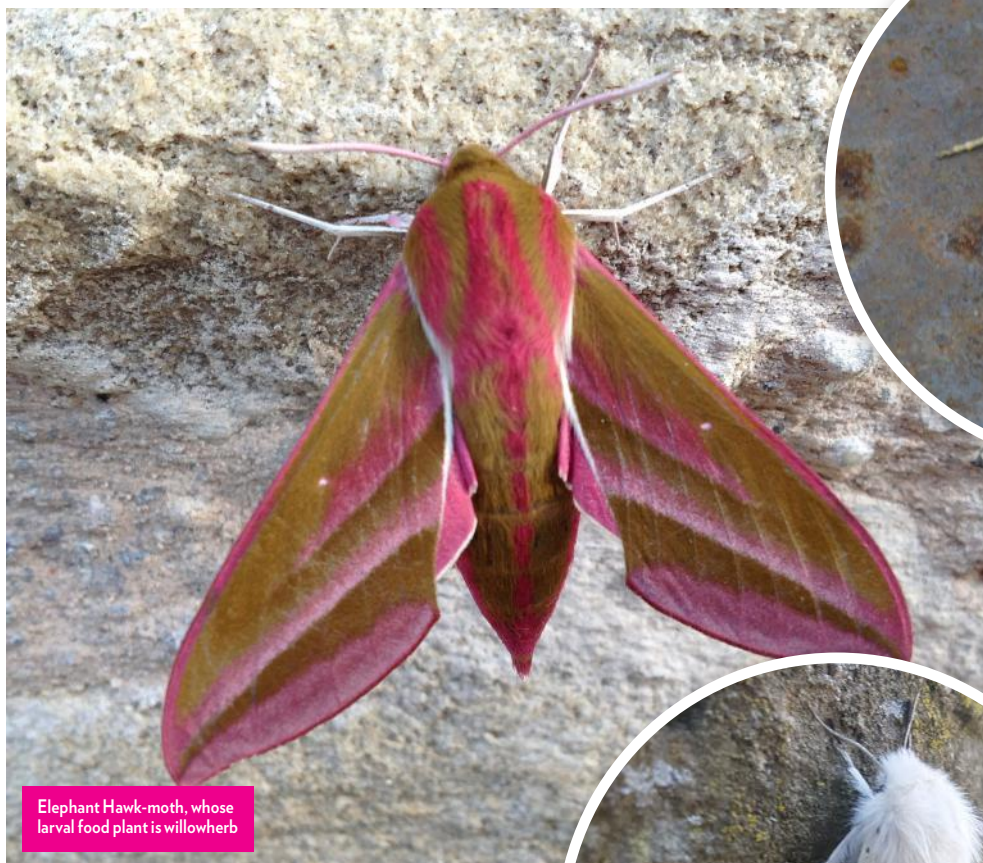


Angle Shades, the moth that got Susie hooked



From slow worms to toads, tawny owls to hover-flies, redwings and lizards, there is something to notice every day. That the shyest of all birds, a woodcock, chose to nest close to the house felt like the ultimate acceptance. The garden is designed to look beautiful to us with its formal layout and topiary around which huge borders flow and ebb but also to maximise the layers and niches for wildlife. Moths are just a part of that but something that I'm especially interested in.

It was thanks to a course led by Dave Grundy, who was instrumental in setting up the Garden Moth Scheme, that I myself became 'hooked'. For ten years I've put out a moth trap once a week, submitting the data quarterly to the Scheme. It's that building up of information about a particular site over time, one of many moth trappers from Caithness to Cornwall, that shows how different species are faring. I've now been advising Swedish gardeners on gardening for moths, helping horticulture students on a two-year course



Elephant Hawk-moth, whose larval food plant is willowherb



The honey colours of Frosted Orange moth



Whiter Ermine moth with eggs

at Gunnebo Castle to design a moth garden at Gothenburg Botanic Garden as well as speaking at the conference of Trädgårdsresan, the West Swedish version of the National Garden Scheme.

THE VISITORS' BOOK

For people new to recording moths, the book describes the various methods of attracting them, from wine roping and fermenting fruit to the different types of light traps. Commercial pheromone lures are available for those moths

that don't readily come to light, such as clearwings or the spectacular Emperor Moth that I have to travel to the moors to have a chance of seeing.

Gardening books often concentrate on the flowers that provide nectar and pollen for insects. There is less written about the plants, in particular native wildflowers, needed for their larval stages. To have moths living their entire cycle in our gardens we need to grow plants for their caterpillars. A section of my book is an illustrated guide to host plants for moths and butterflies—the drawings mostly from plants in my own garden. The leaves of golden hop are eaten by Pale Tussock, Buttoned Snout and Buff Ermine moths. Ragged robin is food for the larvae of Marbled Coronet and The Rivulet. And for those exotic-looking Elephant Hawk-moths I grow the white rosebay willow-herb, *Chamaenerion angustifolium* 'Album'. Then I have a chance not only of seeing the adult moths but

also the curious chunky caterpillars, wrinkled and grey-brown like an elephant's trunk. Large eyespots just behind the head are to deter predators; when alarmed, the caterpillar can retract its head, causing the spots to swell and making it look snake-like.

Some moths and butterflies

will only lay their eggs on particular plants. My garden is a mix of the wild and the cultivated with 70 species of wildflowers blending into the borders. Many of these are host plants for native insects but, despite having such a range of moths and butterflies in my garden, it's not often that I see much evidence of their eating. The exception is mullein, *Verbascum thapsus*. Its felted grey leaves get chomped on by white, yellow and black caterpillars. These are large and dramatic and I'm very happy that they shred the mulleins; it's all part of that tolerance and joy to be found in wildlife gardening.

■ **The Gardener and the Moth: Planting for Moths and Butterflies is available now. It's £8.99 from Saraband. Press and publicity queries to Rebecca Mortimer: rebecca@saraband.net.**



The attractive markings of Lempke's Gold Spot



A duo of hawk-moths, Elephant and Poplar

AN OPEN GATE

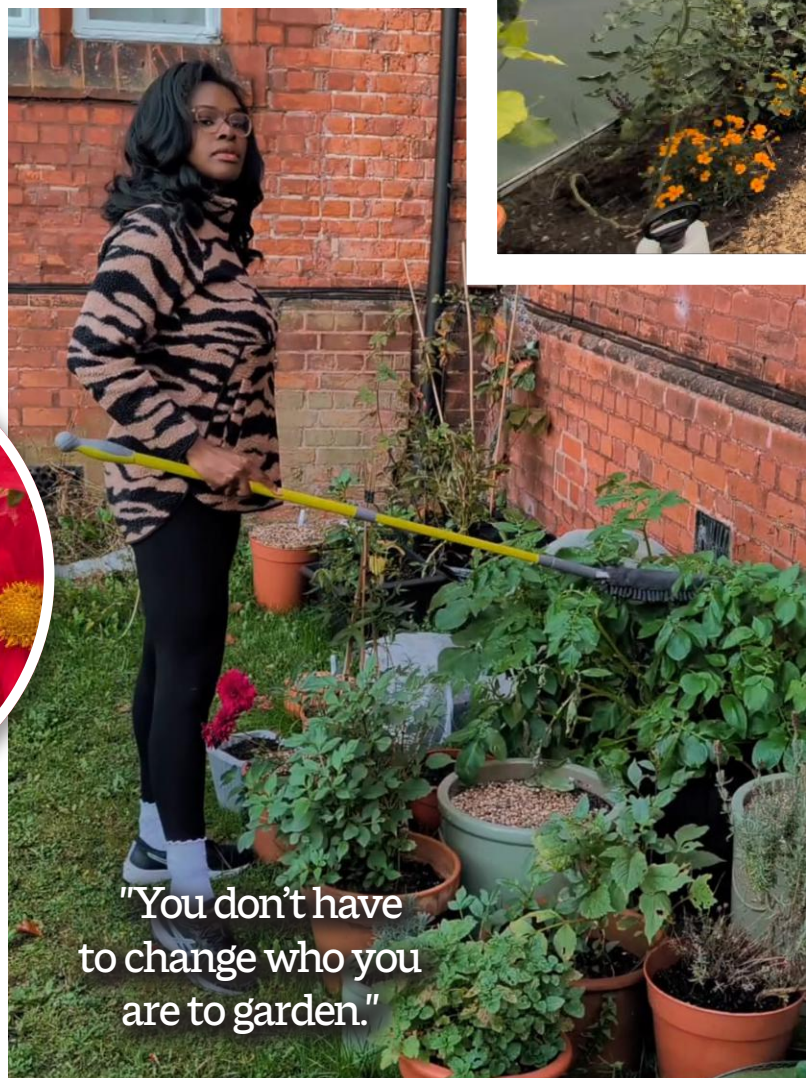
Gardening and cottage garden storyteller Danica Walpole shows us around her semirural garden

When I moved into my 1890s Cambridgeshire cottage in 2025, I was greeted by half an acre of manicured lawn, a couple of buddleia bushes, a pond, and a centuries-old Bramley apple tree.

It was beautiful in its simplicity, but I saw something else: potential. I started gardening in 2019 in a Norwich city centre shared garden, working entirely with containers. I successfully grew blackberries, potatoes, and tomatoes in pots, proving to myself that you don't need acres to grow

food. But I'd always wondered what I could do with more space. Now I'm finding out.

Within months, I'd transformed one entire side of the lawn into no-dig beds. I put up a polytunnel—an experience I never wish to repeat, but worth it for the extended growing season



"You don't have to change who you are to garden."

it's given me. The heavy clay soil has been a challenge I'm learning to work with rather than against.

That ancient Bramley is now the anchor of my cottage

garden, and I'm slowly filling the space around it with dahlias, cutting flowers, and rows of vegetables that actually feed me.

My approach hasn't





changed from my container days. The theory is the same whether you're working with a windowsill or an acre. I still prioritise seasonal growing, companion planting, and choosing varieties that actually perform rather than just look good in a catalogue. The difference now is scale—and the addition of my very opinionated rescue cat, Pudding, and a small

flock of ducks who believe they're head gardeners.

I work full-time as a software engineer, which means my gardening happens in early mornings and weekends. There's no Pinterest perfection here—just honest progress, the occasional

failure, and a lot of learning as I go. I document it all online as @dwwgrows, often in full glam, with the occasional

Vogue-inspired edit, because I want to show people that you don't have to change who you are to garden. You don't have to dress down, give up your personality, or overhaul your entire life.

There's room for you exactly as you are—pop culture references, red lipstick in the polytunnel, and all.

Growing up in Essex backing onto Epping Forest, I never felt like the outdoors was truly for me. The gardening world felt intimidating, like you needed generations of knowledge to even begin.

Now, from my cottage garden in Cambridgeshire, I'm trying to change that narrative for a newer audience who didn't see themselves represented. I'm proving that you can show up exactly as you are, learn as you grow, and create something beautiful in the process.

The gate is open. And I'm finally walking through it.

■ Danica Walpole is a probationary member who has collaborated with gardening brands and is growing a community across TikTok, Instagram and YouTube.

A GREAT LINE-UP OF GARDEN VISITS FOR 2026

BY JULIANNE ROBERTSON

Garden Media Guild members have a packed programme of garden visits to look forward to in 2026, with opportunities to explore inspiring gardens, meet the people behind them and spend time catching up with fellow members.

Our first visit of the year has already taken place—to Teasses Estate in Fife, where we enjoyed Scotland's brand-new hellebore festival, a celebration of these wonderful spring flowers. More details and photos will follow in the next issue of *GMG News*. There are plenty more great visits on the calendar for the rest of spring and into the summer:

RHS Garden Wisley, Surrey

16 April 2026

In April, we're heading to RHS Garden Wisley, the Royal Horticultural



Society's flagship garden. With its extensive plant collections, world-class horticulture and constantly evolving displays, Wisley always provides plenty of inspiration.

Birmingham Botanical Gardens & Winterbourne House

12 May 2026

It's a two for one in May as we combine two of Brum's best gardens, followed by a chance to relax and chat over a curry in the city's famous Balti Triangle. It's going to be a sociable day designed to give members time to explore interesting green spaces in the city while also catching up with colleagues.

Borde Hill Garden, West Sussex

24 June 2026

Later in the season, members will have the chance to visit Borde Hill Garden, a follow-up to last year's successful trip, to find out how its development is progressing. Created by the Stephenson

Clarke family and now in its fifth generation of stewardship, the garden is known for its rich plant collections gathered by historic plant hunters and arranged across a series of distinctive garden rooms. Keep an eye on email, WhatsApp and the website as we confirm more events this year: we're planning visits in Wales, Cornwall and Norfolk, all to be confirmed very soon. Guild garden visits are always a brilliant way to connect with fellow writers, photographers and communicators, while also building relationships with gardens and their teams, and they often lead to future stories and collaborations.

■ **Full details and booking information for all events can be found on the Guild website.**

And if you know of a garden that would make a great Guild visit, the events team would love to hear from you—just email the GMG admin team with your suggestion.

Webinars: Catch up, or join the conversation

Our online programme has already delivered a lively mix of webinars and 'Ask Me Anything' sessions this year. These informal Zoom events are a great way to pick up practical tips, hear from experienced voices in the industry and catch up with fellow members—all without leaving the comfort of your home.

If you missed some of the early sessions, you can find an archive of

recordings of all our online events on the website. It's a treasure trove of advice and information that's well worth exploring.

The programme kicked off in January with 'Seasonal Storytelling Made Easy', offering an early look at the HTA's Your Garden Year campaign and how media can tap into seasonal gardening themes when planning content.

Later in the month, members joined a webinar exploring the annual Garden

Press Event and February continued with one of the Guild's regular AMA sessions, featuring garden writer and editor Petra Hoyer Millar, who shared insights into journalism, editing and running her horticultural news website, *The Dirt*.

Members also had the opportunity to take part in a 'Garden Talks' webinar, focusing on giving presentations to



ASKING QUESTIONS MAKES US BETTER WRITERS

GMG co-chair Alexandra Campbell extols the virtues of the Guild's 'Ask Me Anything' webinar series



A GMG 'Ask Me Anything' (AMA) webinar is usually a warm, lively session.

It's a chance to discuss the real sticking points members have with their work, producing practical takeaways you can use.

These are sessions where you can ask questions and get answers from people who are succeeding now.

Our recent AMA with garden designer and author Marian Boswall was an enjoyable example. Her book, *The Kindest Garden*, won GMG Gardening Book of the Year in 2025. It is a forward-looking book about the next step on from sustainable gardening—regenerative gardening. The aim is to make an active contribution to the health of the planet, linking it to your own wellbeing as well as improving and replenishing biodiversity.

Here are some key takeaways from the AMA webinar with Marian, on writing *The Kindest Garden*:

- Start from 'where you are'; publish what you're thinking. Marian started her career as a writer by writing longer-

form posts on Instagram, which led to a series for *Gardens Illustrated*—and that visibility opened doors.

- Don't be put off by initial editorial hesitation. Her first article on a regenerative approach to gardening was initially considered too complex, but once published, it resonated with readers and the editor asked for more. Sometimes you don't need to 'dumb down', you need to frame it clearly.
- It helps to talk to an editor if you find the right one. Marian described how momentum and clarity came from a strong early conversation with an editor who really understood what *The Kindest Garden* could be.

- Be prepared for changes at your publisher. Staff changes, maternity leave and other factors can mean that you're suddenly writing for someone who doesn't necessarily share your vision.
- You may have to explain or defend your approach.
- You can negotiate for the book you're trying to write. With her editor's support Marian successfully made the case for expanding the book's

length by an extra 32 pages to fit the material properly.

- Get help with research. For complex technical areas (such

as environmental product declarations and sustainability data), Marian brought in specialist support—a reminder that rigorous research doesn't have to be a solo effort.

- Audiobooks are a genuine opportunity for garden publishing. Marian persuaded her publisher to produce an audio edition—and even offered to pay for it herself to make it happen—because gardeners often listen while gardening or driving. She read *The Kindest Garden* herself for the recording (it took three days in the studio). She also noted that audiobooks can include an accompanying PDF for diagrams and tables.

- A top plant research tip for writers and designers: Marian recommended the International Dendrology Society's free resource Trees & Shrubs Online (treesandshrubsonline.org) for deeper plant information and synonyms (particularly useful when RHS-level summaries aren't enough).

- Around the launch period, she employed someone to help promote the book. Some initiatives worked better



Marian Boswall with her book, *The Kindest Garden*

than others. For example, cold pitching literary festivals makes them think you're not in demand, but once she'd had a few speaking 'gigs', word of mouth led to further invitations.

AMA webinars also work really well for members. They reveal the behind-the-scenes realities of pitching, editing, deadlines, and audience needs—the bits you rarely get in a formal talk.

They spark member-to-member learning (designers, writers, photographers, new members) because the questions come from different angles.

Above all, they generate actionable ideas and advice. Look for AMAs on the GMG website, including 1 April with Stephanie Hafferty, award-winning garden writer, organic gardener, designer, food writer and educator, and author of several books including the newly published *The Productive Garden*.

■ **Previous AMAs are available to watch on YouTube in the Members' Area of the GMG website.**

clubs and groups, followed by a session on 'Speaking, Hosting and Holding the Mic at Garden Events', sharing advice for anyone who finds themselves moderating panels or presenting at garden shows and live events.

In March, members heard from award-winning author and landscape architect Marian Boswall, and the popular 'Ask Me Anything' series continues into the spring. On 1 April,



Stephanie Hafferty

organic grower and author Stephanie Hafferty answers questions about writing, gardening and building a career in the industry.

Later in April, a webinar on 'Earning from Social Media' will explore the different ways garden communicators can generate income through platforms such as Instagram and other channels—from partnerships and collaborations to content creation and audience building.

As always, these sessions are free to members and designed to be informal, practical and interactive, so do come along if you can.

Full details and booking information for all upcoming events can be found on the Guild website.

And if there's a topic you'd love to see covered in a future webinar, or someone you think would make a great speaker, the Guild team would love to hear from you, so get in touch via admin@gardenmediaguild.co.uk.



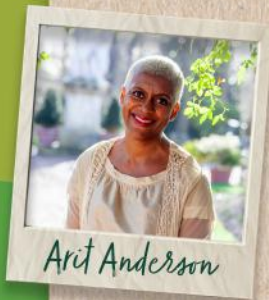
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Industry media gathered at this year's Garden Press Event in London in February

Inspired by the Garden Press Event, *HortWeek* editor Matthew Appleby reflects on the 20-year shift from journalists to influencers



The Garden Press Event (GPE) just hit the two-decade mark, and the transformation is startling. What began 20 years ago as a modest gathering of 130 written media journalists at the RHS Halls, (born from Guy Burtenshaw and Richard Jackson's trepidation) has swelled into a 500-strong more-the-merrier powerhouse at Islington's Business Design Centre.

Founding figures such as the late Peter Seabrook initially championed GPE as a sanctuary where media could actually reach suppliers without being elbowed out by trade buyers. Today, the 'same old faces' have been joined by a new guard: the influencers. While stalwarts like Mr. Fothergill's and Westland have exhibited every year since Jackson was begging for exhibitors, the current crop floor is now chasing a different kind of currency from the media: sell-through over sentiment.

The rise of the influencer brings a prickly debate regarding professional standards. Michael Perry (Mr. Plant Geek) is among those who note that the 'holy grail' remains the younger, often gardenless consumer, reachable through 'TikTok-friendly' products like family apple trees.

However, we are seeing a rise in 'rogue

influencers'—wannabes moving into gardening as a side hustle—who offer genuinely dangerous advice. From poor seed-sowing techniques to what landscape veteran Alan Sargent describes as unsafe landscaping construction, the lack of trade body oversight is a growing concern.

"... we are seeing a rise in 'rogue influencers'—wannabes moving into gardening as a side hustle—who offer genuinely dangerous advice."

Are we diluting a professional industry with relatable but wrong information? What's more, what makes an influential influencer? Follower numbers may not convert to sales, and event attendees may not be the top influencer names, just as top TV names don't tend to appear at GPE.

However, the right influencer drives sales.

To get them in, treat them like celebs. Freebies, food, photo ops, Ubers and the lure of endorsement deals help, as does an open mind: I sense some AI-style suspicion from old-schoolers who fear that they will take our jobs and whose mantra is I've never heard of them.

At IPM Essen in Germany this January, *HortWeek*'s panel on plant marketing featured Megan Green from Hayloft and Bruce Harnett from Kernock Park Plants. The panel welcomed the role of influencers, but noted they can highlight unattainable, overly polished, 'pretty' gardens.

The shift favours the imperfections championed by panel compere Perry and the light-hearted, ironic approach of creators like Jonny Hincks, who is successfully fronting campaigns for Jamieson bulbs and seed potatoes, finding a younger market for live products that have struggled to match the online sales growth of known value items such as garden furniture or books.

So, the conclusion is that sales, rather than just reach, determine the bottom line for the business, as has always been the case.



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FIFTY YEARS OF SEED SAFEKEEPING

Garden Organic's Alice Whitehead explains more about the charity and its Heritage Seed Library—and how GMG members can connect and support its work

Eco-anxiety is real. Up to 75 per cent of adults report being very worried about the impact of climate change, according to the Office of National Statistics.

Add to this concerns about pesticide and antibiotic use, food security and biodiversity loss and an increasing number of people are looking more closely at what goes into their food and where it comes from.

Demand for organic food in the UK is also rising sharply, with the market doubling in value over the past decade to reach £3.9 billion, according to the Organic Market Report—but despite this only three per cent of farmland is currently managed organically.

It's against this backdrop that Garden Organic is striving to help more people learn to grow their own organic food in a sustainable way that improves health, builds stronger communities, nurtures nature, and bolsters food security.

For 65 years, the charity's research work, citizen science, advice, community projects and campaigning for peat and pesticide-free gardening have aimed to get everyone growing 'the organic way'—taking practical action to conserve seeds, nurture soil and wildlife, and reduce waste.

From its base at Ryton Organic Gardens, in Coventry—set among its beautiful organic demonstration garden—the charity offers courses, webinars, talks and tours. And thanks to its members and supporters has shared the benefits of organic

growing with more than three million people globally.

SAVING PRECIOUS HERITAGE SEEDS

In 2026, it's also celebrating 50 years of seed conservation at its unique Heritage Seed Library (HSL)—the oldest community seed bank in Europe. For five decades, this unique living library has squirrelled away parcels of precious heritage and heirloom seeds to safeguard them for future generations.

Thanks to seed regulations, the industrialisation of agriculture, habitat loss, climate change and the redrawing of EU boundaries, many hundreds of rare varieties, grown for generations by small seed companies, families and communities, have been lost. What started as a race against time to save at-risk seeds in the 1970s has become an even more urgent need to safeguard food security and genetic diversity.

Unlike a traditional seed bank, HSL seeds are not kept on ice but shared with growers and gardeners to grow again. A group of dedicated Seed Guardians are among those helping to grow and send seed back to the library. Each year, the library also distributes more than 30,000 packets to 'everyday' growers via its membership scheme.

Since 2025, the library's 'Sowing Your Seeds' project, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, has been finding, conserving and sharing seeds and stories from communities in the Midlands.



COLLABORATE WITH GARDEN ORGANIC

Our charity relies on journalists and influencers to help spread the word about our work, to reach new audiences and communicate the importance of organic growing in a relatable way.

We're keen to build meaningful, long-term relationships—giving you the chance to collaborate on unique perspectives around sustainable gardening and seed conservation conversation with a respected charity making a real, positive environmental impact.

We can offer plenty of resources for press articles, blogs and social media posts. Having worked successfully with journalists for many decades, we know what you need, have a bank of feature ideas, access to 65 years of organic advice, and good-quality photographs.

We've just launched an online organic growing certificate for amateur and early-career gardeners and can offer journalists a free module to test drive the course. We're also happy to send small



PHOTOS: GARDEN ORGANIC



samples of our Heritage Seed Library seeds to accredited journalists with a strong pitch.

We welcome content queries about anything to do with organic gardening: from soil health and compost, to organic ways to tackle pests and diseases, to pesticide and peat use, to wildlife gardening.

Media contacts can also access expert spokespeople including research manager Dr Anton Rosenfeld, an expert on soil, composting, pests and diseases, and citizen science. Head gardener Emma O'Neill can provide a wide variety of everyday and beginner organic gardening advice, and head of the Heritage Seed Library, Catrina Fenton, is expert in heritage seeds and seed conservation.

The charity welcomes visits to its organic demonstration garden and Heritage Seed Library.

■ To talk about an article, get expert comment, collaborate on social media or arrange a visit, contact me at awhitehead@gardenorganic.org.uk, 01604 700 652 or 02476 217 702.

WELCOME THESE NEW MEMBERS!

FULL MEMBERSHIP

Sheila Averbuch

East Lothian-based Sheila is an author and gardener who is passionate about plants and the written word. Since 2009 she's maintained the gardening blog *The Stopwatch Gardener*. A career journalist who's switched from business to horticulture, she writes for national media about gardening.



Lauren Indvik

Londoner Lauren is the deputy editor of the *FT*'s 'House & Home' section, where she commissions and writes garden stories. She joined the *FT* in 2020 as fashion editor, where she led the 'Weekend Style' pages and the 'Business of Luxury' summit and launched the 'Fashion Matters' newsletter.



Miria Harris

London-based Miria Harris is an award-winning landscape designer who in 2024 presented her first show garden on main avenue at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show. She was included in *Gardens Illustrated*'s 2024 list of Horticultural Heroes, *House & Garden*'s top 50 landscape and garden designers in the UK in 2025 and *Country Life*'s Top 100 architects, interior designers, garden designers, landscape designers and country house specialists in Britain.



Laura McArthur

Laura McArthur is a horticultural professional and lecturer (Perschore College) based in the West Midlands. Her work includes talks, writing and consultancy, contributing insight on garden design practice, career progression and the horticultural industry.



Sally Flatman

Londoner Sally has now completed her probationary period and is a full member. Sally said she had found the Guild 'incredibly helpful as I transitioned from being an experienced radio producer/appeals advisor in the BBC to an audio producer making the podcast *Our Plant Stories*'.



Leonie Cornelius

Based on Ireland's wild Atlantic coast, Leonie Cornelius is an award-winning interior architect, garden designer, author and broadcaster. Her six acclaimed show gardens have earned multiple awards at Bord Bia Bloom.



freelanced for Art UK, fine art galleries, book publishers and dealers. Now she concentrates on portraits, lifestyle and gardens. She was commended in the 2019 International Garden Photographer of the Year Award.

Becky Spooner

Becky, from West Sussex, is a digital storyteller working across photography, videography, copywriting and social media strategy, with a focus on gardens and nature-led spaces. She oversees Borde Hill's social media and content, which has been shortlisted for the Brand Social Media Influencer of the Year at the GMG Awards three years running (winning in 2023).



Elizabeth Hilliard

Londoner Elizabeth is a veteran author, journalist and editor with a long history in magazines and newspapers. She has written for *Homes & Gardens*, *The Independent* and *The Evening Standard* and is Editor of and contributor to *TOPIARIUS*, journal of the European Boxwood and Topiary Society.



FULL MEMBERSHIP INCLUDING PGPA

Elizabeth Vickers

From Hampshire, Elizabeth spent many years working as Christie's head of photography. She has



PROBATIONARY MEMBERSHIP

Josh Taylor

Based in Kent, Josh is a horticulturist, garden consultant and garden-maker. He trained at Great Dixter and Merrist



NEWS IN BRIEF

Grown-up YouTube

Following reports that YouTube viewing figures had overtaken the BBC in the UK for the first time, *The Sunday Times* published 'A Guide to Grown-Up YouTube, from Harvard Reads to The History Guy' with its 'pick of the best' YouTube channels. The list included three gardening channels, all created by GMG members: *Gardening With Alan Titchmarsh*, *Charles Dowding* and Alexandra Campbell's *The Middlesized Garden*.

Tamsin joins *The Dirt*

Horticulturist, author, and garden writer Tamsin Westhorpe has joined *The Dirt News* as Contributing Editor.



Beautiful border



Julie Haylock of Sandhurst Garden Design, Yeovil, is returning to BBC Gardeners' World Live this year. 'Her Beautiful Border, Back to My Roots', is Julie's tenth show garden and reflects on her journey

so far, from serving with Avon and Somerset Constabulary for 30 years to taking a leap of faith and trading her ID badge for gardening boots.

Grace's first solo show

In December, USA-based PGPA member Grace Hensley exhibited a selection of prints from Heronswood Garden, developed by plantsman Dan Hinkley and run by the Port Gamble S'Klallum tribe in Kingston, Washington. The gallery can be viewed online.



Wood and has served as head gardener. He creates reflective, narrative-led horticultural content through writing, photography and video. He has contributed to *Blumenhaus* magazine and has appeared on BBC Radio.

Sonya Whaley

From London, Sonya is a planting designer and content creator. A graduate of the London College of Garden Design, she also trained in horticulture at Capel Manor College and spent several years as a self-employed gardener. She runs the planting-focused YouTube channel Plant Yo' Pitch Up and she is part of the National Garden Scheme in London social media team.



Mykal Hoare

Mykal Hoare is an Australian, London-based garden designer, horticulturist and horticultural journalist. He is the creator and host of *The Gardener's Lodge*, a long-form podcast featuring conversations with designers, horticulturists, scientists and media professionals.



Mattie O'Callaghan

Named as one of *Gardens Illustrated's* "Ones to Watch" for 2025, Mattie is an ecological designer, curator, and writer. From Devon, they are currently the trainee gardener at Beth Chatto and work as a freelance landscape architect. They were previously the horticultural trainee at the Garden Museum and were recently in residence at Derek Jarman's Prospect Cottage.



PROBATIONARY MEMBERSHIP INCLUDING PGPA

Maria Meco

London-based photographer and gardener Maria has more than five years' experience in fine art and documentary photography and more than two in garden photography. She said her passion for gardening came from her 'creative interest in environments and the mental health benefits of outdoor work'.



ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

Euros Wyn

Caernarfon-based Euros produces *Garddio a Mwy*, which was shortlisted for a GMG award in 2025.



Clare Lenaghan-Balmer

Wiltshire-based Clare manages PR for Henchman Ltd, a British company dedicated to keeping people safe working at height. Henchman designs and supplies tripod ladders and platform ladders which are safe alternatives to traditional stepladders.



Joy Baker

Joy is an award-winning PR and communications consultant in the interiors, landscaping, design and horticultural sectors. Hampshire-based, she has worked on several RHS Chelsea gardens, winning best collaboration at the 2024 Inspiring Communicator Awards.



About the back cover...

Member Joanna Kossak captured this lovely pair of *Fritillaria meleagris* at RHS Wisley.

'I visit often because I love seeing the incredible diversity of plants growing there throughout the seasons,' she said. 'I highly recommend visiting in spring to see the beautiful cherry blossom and tulip displays.'

'For me, spring is the season of bell-shaped flowers. I love them all, and you do not see as many in other seasons. I particularly like the mix of fritillaries and leucojum here, with their different colours and heights.'

Joanna said photographing low-growing plants was not always easy, especially when using a long, heavy lens (as she did here).

'I prefer to work with a tripod, as it allows me

to position the camera very precisely, refine the composition carefully, and avoid strain on my hands.

Equipment: 'This image was taken with a Hasselblad camera and a lens of around 200mm (full-frame equivalent). For those who would like to achieve a similar effect, I would encourage focusing on observation, patience and composition rather than the equipment itself. I would simply suggest using the longest lens you have and any camera you feel comfortable working with, and enjoying the process.'



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