

PUTTING DOWN ROOTS



In the garden with Wendy Matheson

Trying to decide what to write in a gardening column at this time of year is a similar experience to walking into a well-stocked delicatessen – what to choose with all the mouthwatering items on offer.

For passionate and obsessive gardeners who spend most of the summer bent over a fork weeding, propagating and trying to entice mother nature to bend to their will, it is important to take time not only to enjoy their own garden space, but also to visit others.

For those of us unable to go through the summer without being able to resist the temptation of looking at other people's shrubbery, Scotland's Garden Scheme organises gardens open to the public to raise funds for worthy charities.

An annual publication *Gardens in Scotland* is available to purchase, or

visit the website www.gardensofscotland.org to view opening times on specific days during the season.

These gardens offer what is often a rare opportunity to find inspiration for planting combinations, regional variations and of course garden design. These visits will also trigger the occasional "why can't I get that to grow in my garden?" moment.

The scheme showcases gardens large and small from grand castles and country houses to small urban treasures – all sharing the one common factor of a passion for horticulture. Several properties also run a small plant sale

If travelling further afield another good source of information is www.gardenvisit.com

I was recently fortunate enough to visit the late Christopher Lloyd's iconic

This month's must-have book

Scotland for Gardeners – The Guide to Scottish Gardens, Nurseries and Garden Centres

By Kenneth Cox of Glendoick Garden and nursery fame, this is a must for those interested in Scotland's garden heritage.

garden at Great Dixter in Kent and brought back a plant which I shall treasure for as long as it will stand the climate in the north east.

Which brings me to the importance of growing suitable plants for both the geographic location of the garden, aspect, exposure and soil type. I may be a little foolhardy in expecting my sub-tropical Aeonium (centre plant in the large floral pic) to flourish in Nairn, but I will steadfastly persevere. Apart from the odd departure I am a firm believer in the provenance of plants and keeping them in the correct context – in the Inverness area we have some excellent nurseries worth a visit who mostly sell their own plants from propagation.

Locally propagated plants should stand a much better chance of flourishing than plants imported from the continent which may be slightly cheaper in the short-term, but not necessarily so in the long-term.

Nurseries producing their own plants

Poyntzfield Herb Nursery, nr Balblair, Black Isle – www.poyntzfieldherbs.co.uk
Ardfean Nursery, Bunchrew, Inverness
Abriachan, Loch Ness-side – www.lochnessgarden.com

'No two gardens are the same. No two days are the same in one garden'

— Hugh Johnson



NEXT TIME...

Planning a bevy of beautiful bulbs, ideas for bulb planting for next season.

CONTACT WENDY

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