

The Horticulturist



Young Horticulturist of the Year 2024

PLUS The James Bruce Memorial Lecture | Pollinating London Together | Cultivating hope | Future Gardeners

CONTENTS



Volume 33 No. 2 | Summer 2024

IN THIS ISSUE

4 The changing face of professional landscaping

For the 2024 James Bruce Lecture, Alan Sargent looked back on his own career and noted changes to professional landscaping along the way

8 Pollinating London Together

Heather Barrett-Mold explains how Pollinating London Together developed and what its aims are

11 The Future Gardeners

Shereen Chung-Blake on the world of Future Gardeners, where green thumbs and big dreams come together

14 Cultivating hope

Richard Storey reports on gardening in Sarajevo during the siege of the city in 1992

18 Institute news

Young Horticulturist of the Year 2024

AGM Charterships, Fellowships and Awards

25 Branch reports

28 Horticultural research

Fruit crops

Edible crops

30 Obituary

John D Main

30 Book review

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Change is in the air – we have a new government in the UK and there have been some announcements on skills and training. There is some optimism that there will be renewed impetus to address the skills shortages in many sectors including horticulture. We need to capture the enthusiasm for caring for the environment and keep making the case for our profession locally and also when asked to be part of government consultancy.

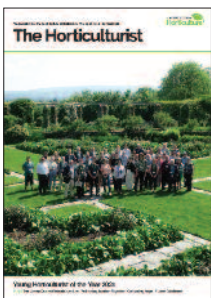
The challenges of the changing climate and the pressure on nature was brought home to me when I had the opportunity to visit Madagascar. It is the world's fourth largest island and a biodiversity hotspot. It is perhaps the largest producer of vanilla and of course is well known due to the Disney animated film *Madagascar*. The island has an enormous array of plants and animals found nowhere else in the world. It regrettably is also one of the poorest countries in the world with a growing young population striving for survival and the difficult consequence of this is that natural resources are being over-exploited. Illegal deforestation and 'slash and burn' activities are devastating the habitats of many species. It was really encouraging to see work on 'Sustainable Management for Future Generations' which is part of Defra's Biodiverse Landscapes Fund and the work which the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, and other partners, are undertaking.

Travel in Madagascar is challenging, and a four-wheel drive vehicle is essential and additionally a robust constitution to withstand the potholes. I was fortunate to visit a project to see baobab seed harvesting and planting. There are some tree species that conjure a vision and somehow are mystical and the baobab is one such tree. I saw mature specimens of two of the six endemic species, *Adansonia madagascariensis* and *A. suarezensis* and was also inspired by the work to replant these in some of the most challenging conditions.

This is very much a community-based project with the village elders taking care of the seed store where the wild collected seeds are kept before planting. The germination rates are good but the challenge of trampling by zebu cattle and the extended summer droughts provide different, but in many ways, similar challenges to tree establishment in the UK. We had a great discussion despite my imperfect French about bare-rooted stock, soil conditions and the use of mulches and tree guards. There was much to share and learn and somehow it put into context the relative simplicity of the challenges I face in encouraging biodiversity enhancements.



David Richardson CHort FCIHort, President
president@horticulture.org.uk



Cover Guests and participants at the Grand Final of the CIH Young Horticulturist of the Year Competition 2024 which took place at Hestercombe Gardens, Somerset. They are on the Great Plat designed by Gertrude Jekyll (Chris Bird).

The journal of the Chartered Institute of Horticulture promotes and disseminates best practice and achievement in the science, technology, education, business, and art of horticulture to all professional horticulturists. ISSN 0964 8992

Editor Barbara Segall CHort FCIHort

Proofreader Sue Minter VMM CHort FCIHort

Designer Made In Earnest

Printer The Manson Group

Publisher Hall-McCartney (on behalf of the CIH)

Chartered Institute of Horticulture

BGA House, Nottingham Road,

Louth, Lincolnshire LN11 0WB

03330 050181

cih@horticulture.org.uk

www.horticulture.org.uk

Facebook CIHort

Twitter @CIHort

Instagram @CIHort

Registered charity No. 1159140

Write for *The Horticulturist*

Much of the content of *The Horticulturist* arises from voluntary contributions from members in the shape of ideas, articles and photographs. If you are interested in writing an article for the journal or have a newsworthy item please contact the Editor, Barbara Segall, at barbara@bsegall.plus.com.

Issue copy dates

Autumn 2024 issue: 29 September

Spring 2025 issue: 26 January

Summer 2025 issue: 26 May

Copyright

The Chartered Institute of Horticulture (CIH) all rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form or by any means or stored in a retrieval system without the written permission of the CIH. Views expressed in *The Horticulturist* are not necessarily those of the Editor or of the CIH. The CIH does not endorse any products or services advertised within the pages of *The Horticulturist*.

Advertising enquiries

Hall-McCartney Limited, Heritage House,
PO Box 21, Baldock, Hertfordshire SG7 5SH
01462 896688
cih@hall-mccartney.co.uk

Subscriptions

£90 (UK & Ireland)

£118 / €146 / US\$162 (overseas addresses)

All prices include cost of postage by air, except in UK.

There is a 5% reduction for agency subscriptions.

Contact the CIH Secretariat for details.

Paper stock

You will notice that *The Horticulturist* is printed on 100% recycled paper. This is the second phase of our efforts to protect our environment and complements the recent introduction of the compostable sleeve.



THE JAMES BRUCE MEMORIAL LECTURE To start the 40th anniversary celebration of the founding of the Chartered Institute of Horticulture founder member **Alan Sargent** delivered the 2024 James Bruce Lecture. He looked back on his own career and noted changes to professional landscaping along the way.

The changing face of professional landscaping

I was fortunate enough to become a founder member of the Institute of Horticulture (now the Chartered Institute of Horticulture CIH) on 1 May 1984, as a landscape contractor and garden designer.

That date, 1 May, is doubly important for me as I started work as a self-employed gardener on that day in 1968. This year I am celebrating 56 years in the industry. Born and raised on a farm, I have always been close to horticulture. Thanks to my father's influence I have always been a keen grower of vegetables. I left school at 15, worked on the farm, then became a grave digger before joining the Police, first as a cadet, then a constable in Sussex.

Having transferred to the Metropolitan Police, I discovered I disliked living in London, and returned to the tranquility of rural Sussex, where I found myself working on an *ad hoc* basis for a small firm of horticultural consultants.

I found work as a journeyman, and especially with Cheals of Pulborough, learned many of the 'old skills' such as pruning, grafting, budding roses, top-working amenity trees and a host of horticultural techniques that are no longer practiced on a day-to-day basis, then taught by 'old boys' who had decades of experience, which I found both fascinating and stimulating.

There were two commercial apple orchards in my area, where I worked as a contract pruner, charging different rates per tree – from sixpence for a pollard, to half a crown for a large Bramley, leaving the clearing up to others. This proved to be good winter work, even when the weather was inclement.

I was fortunate in my timing when entering horticulture, as many of those old skills were becoming redundant in this country, with many more plants arriving from the Continent at lower prices than British growers could match. The skills are still there of course, but mainly in specialist nurseries and practices.

I was also learning other skills, including the use of scythes and swop-hooks, stone-working tools including pitchers and dressers, working with hand tools, as then there were no strimmers, disc cutters or battery-operated machines available to the industry. In the 1960s and 1970s, most small operations were carried out using hand tools.

The 60s

Looking back the horticultural industry appeared to me to be heavily reliant on chemicals for all kinds of everyday use. In the orchard Malathion and Paraquat, DDT and Rogor were splashed

about with little care or concern. I would carry arsenic and cyanide in the van, along with Phostox gas pellets for rabbits and moles, and think nothing of the dangers involved. There were no controls over purchasing or training requirements that I was aware of. In my hard landscaping work, I could buy neat, 100% hydrochloric acid in gallon jars from the chemist, for cleaning stone and mortar stains, without the need for any paperwork.

The 80s

Some 40 years ago, most hard landscaping materials used in domestic gardens were made from concrete. Paving slabs came in a wide range of finishes and colours, some emulating natural stone, others in modern patterns and designs. Walling blocks were similarly styled, with two main manufacturers leading the market – and many smaller operations, some offering lesser quality products, with unregulated aggregates and poor colour fastness.

How the gardening world has changed since the 60s! There were no 'garden centres' as such, only nurseries, some of whom sold garden requirements such as grass seed, fertiliser, composts and sundries. Most supplied open ground plants, lifted, bagged and dispatched to