



# emma's HINTS & tips

## Pure Inspiration!



Where do professional gardeners get their inspiration and creative juices? Chelsea or Hampton Court RHS Flower Shows you may think. Well, yes some motivation may be absorbed walking round the perfect show gardens, but in reality they are just that – 'show' gardens and impossible to achieve in reality. The idea of the show gardens is to create an untouchable paradise where there is not one leaf out of place and every plant is at its very best. How I love to attend Chelsea and Hampton Court, but for me, real inspiration comes from real gardens.

I find December and January very long months and long for the sight of the first snowdrop. I try to visit Beddington Lordship in February for the large collection of snowdrops planted in mass drifts and on the banks of the old moat. If you are early you can also purchase snowdrops in the green which is always more successful than planting bulbs. They tend to settle and multiply quicker when planted in the

green. You may also purchase rare, larger snowdrops than the general bulbs, such as double flowering.

In spring The Beth Chatto Gardens at Elmstead Market in Colchester offers fantastic ideas for all garden requirements as there is a gravel garden, a damp garden, woodland and alpine garden. There is also a nursery full of unusual plants and fantastic restaurant!!! The RHS Hyde Hall is not far from here either!

Last year I had the pleasure of visiting East Rushton Old Vicarage, a 20-acre coastal garden full of exotic plants with many interesting features, such as a sunken garden, tropical garden, desert garden, New Zealand border, church meadow and walled garden. I fell in love with the attention to every detail in this estate. The gardens are not open every day so please check the web site for opening times.

Another garden for breathtaking ideas is Great Dixter at Northiam in Rye. True colour inspiration from the late owner Christopher Lloyd is shown best in the Long Border which is full of shrubs and herbaceous planting jam packed to provide interest for as long as possible. The borders display a good example of 'double planting' where bulbs (spring and summer flowering) are planted under herbaceous perennial plants. The sunken exotic garden and huge yew topiary peacocks are also worth a 'Kodak moment'!

## Letter to the Editor

### Emma's Garden Hints

*She's a treasure! Emma's practical advice has transformed my garden and I am once again an active gardener, eagerly awaiting her next installment. Even the foreign names are converted for the ignoramus, and my local nursery is astonished with my new found wisdom.*

*Thank you Emma - "You're my favourite gardening guru". Eat your heart out Titmarsh!*

Villager



For inspiration closer to home I always enjoy a drive through Arlington Business Park, Hatfield I love the dogwoods in

winter and find they have been planted very well for full impact. As they have been planted in mass in a long border next to the road, as you drive towards them the dogwoods are 20-30 deep and the colour red jumps out at you with the evergreen foliage behind.

Failing visiting a garden, *BBC Gardens* illustrated magazine in full of beautiful gardens as well as *The English Garden* magazine, of which I am addicted to! Wherever you get inspiration, enjoy!

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