Gary Long, Head Gardener at Trewithen, receiving the Garden of Excellence award at Chuxiourng

Last year, in Chuxiourng, Trewithen became one of only 30 gardens around the world to be recognised as an International Camellia Society Garden of Excellence, and it is the only privately owned garden in Cornwall to receive the award.

We have been busy managing the collection with new plantings that include our new Camelliarium, a term used by George Johnstone in an RHS article in 1937 and one that I will try to bring back! This is a large area in the far south of the garden that used to be a huge cherry laurel hedge - we are talking about the size of a football field! The planting consists of new hybrids we have not yet got in the collection, several species to add to our increasing species count and some other Theaceae family members including Schima, Stewartia and Cleyera.

The other new planting is Phase One of our Reticulata Plantation: this is going in and around the southwest windbreaks of the Garden as seen from the Rose Garden and Plant Centre. There are several reasons behind the project; most obviously the aesthetics and also to add to our reticulata count. I will keep you informed of Phases Two and Three as they are competed in the coming months/years.

The Reticulata Plantation

The other element of managing the camellia collection is tackling the size of some of our mature specimens. The garden was never designed: it evolved from woodland under planted with cherry laurel for game cover to the garden it is today.

How many of us have been guilty of planting too closely? Many, maybe even most of us, will have been tempted from time to time of planting to fill in the gaps. To counter this I am undertaking a fairly robust pruning regime, the latest subject being our *Camellia x williamsii* ‘E.G.Waterhouse’ which was in danger of splitting apart with the sheer weight of the blooms in spring. While still in bloom this spring I pruned back to the main stem in a Hat Rack style, leaving only the main framework. After 8-10 weeks of mild anticipation, the stems started to bud up until the whole shrub was eventually covered in new growth. In two season’s time it will be a picture. It looks harsh but is completely necessary to keep the collection healthy.
New for 2014

Entry to the Gardens will be free for ICS members. Just bring some ID showing you are a member and enjoy the Camellia Collection when it is at its peak flowering.

Hat-rack pruning

Lastly we have reviewed our Garden opening season and from 2014 the Gardens will be open from March 1st to June 30th, seven days a week, 10am to 4.30pm. This allows us to concentrate on our best season, the spring. Our web site will have up-to-date galleries throughout the year showing highlights from the Garden and you can follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Pintrest.

www.facebook.com/trewithengarden
www.twitter.com/Trewithengarden
www.trewithengardens.co.uk
http://www.pinterest.com/trewithen/boards/

Mount Edgcumbe Country Park, Torpoint, Cornwall, UK

Lee Stenning

Mount Edgcumbe has been an ICS Garden of Excellence now for ten years and is due for an inspection next year.

Last year our major project was the creation of a Camellia Trail with dedicated interpretation. This is a great improvement on the four boards and laminated sheets that we had used previously and this costly improvement was funded by our Friends Group.

This year we have started work on pruning the Collection because many of the original camellias were planted too close together.

One of the main effects of this pruning programme was that the flowering of some of the larger plants was greatly reduced this spring and it was for this reason that I pulled out of showing our camellias this year. It did, however, give me the opportunity of judging at the Cornwall Garden Society Spring Show at Boconnoc, together with Jennifer Trehane. I will start showing again in 2015.

We are continuing our propagation programme and are selling a limited number of plants.

The Collection as always is very popular in season and I am continuing to grow the Collection with new acquisitions.

Camellia Festival

Gardens of Excellence celebration

Devon and Cornwall are home to the four current UK Gardens of Excellence:


This year, 2014, these gardens will be joining together to create a colourful and informative display celebrating the camellias of the southwest. The display will be part of the glorious spring event, the Cornwall Garden Society Spring Show, held at Boconnoc Gardens near Lostwithiel in Cornwall, April 5th and 6th.