

Kew at Wakehurst

YOUR FREE NEWSLETTER WITH MAP AND FAMILY TRAIL



Taking adventurous journeys

– New steps for small feet in exciting new ‘play spaces’



Talking Totems: three musical totem poles in Horsebridge Wood

There are a wide range of adventurous journeys which take place from Wakehurst, and we reveal some of them in this special-issue newsletter which marks the arrival of a series of new outdoor ‘play spaces’ for enquiring minds. These are being introduced throughout the summer, so come back again and again, to explore the new ones which have been added.

Our intrepid seed and plant hunters travel the globe, often to desolate areas, working alongside scientists and with local communities to collect, conserve and study the specimens they have collected... preserving plants for this and future generations.

However, the seeds’ journey does not stop after collection. It continues even after safe arrival at the Millennium Seed Bank. Here our dedicated and highly-trained scientists painstakingly process them for storage, or use them for conservation projects. Seeds and plants collected from around the world are carefully cultivated in our nursery and planted out in the beautiful botanic gardens.

And our visitors can have adventurous journeys too – exploring the wonders of the gardens, admiring plants from many different countries of the world. This year sees a wonderful addition at Wakehurst. Adventurous Journeys is the name of our fabulous series of ‘play spaces’ being developed throughout the gardens. We want our younger visitors to become plant-hunters and explore parts of the garden they may not have been to before: some of the more remote areas which hold botanical secrets. We are using many natural materials and local craftsmen to create the Adventurous Journey spaces, with many skills and talents among our own staff and volunteers.

Each of the new play spaces represents a skill used by plant-hunters. Young, enquiring minds can search for the tactile, bronze seed capsule on each feature. At the base of each capsule is the question ‘Is it banked?’. Children will be able to draw the seed and name it on their special plant-hunter passport. At the end of their journey they can find out the answers to the questions in the Millennium Seed Bank exhibition.



Unexpected Endings – creating one of the new Adventurous Journey play spaces

Play spaces

Tunnels and Tents is our first play space. Created by a local artist using some of our willow, it has already proved popular being by the main path from the Visitor Centre to the gardens. We are using local bricks for our labyrinth, called Unexpected Endings, and local wood sculptors have designed our Talking Totems in Horsebridge Wood. For some of our play spaces we are reusing materials which were originally sourced from Wakehurst and taken to Kew to create their temporary Plantastic play area. In its second life it tells the plant-hunter story. The maze and the bronze seed capsules, have been designed and made by an artist who is one of our valued patrons.

More play spaces will be added over the next year so try them out... you are never too old to have an Adventurous Journey!



Bronze seed capsule – Look out for these and record them in your Passport

Monkey puzzle mash

Wakehurst is home to an extraordinary collection of plants, brought to Sussex by generations of horticultural adventurers prepared to travel to the remotest corners of the world in search of rare and endangered species. Often risking life and limb in the process.

Today, seed collecting in the wild remains at the heart of our work, helping to secure the long-term survival of threatened species - either through conservation as seeds in Kew’s Millennium Seed Bank, or as part of the amazing living collection in our garden and woodlands.

A short walk to Coates Wood (behind the Seed Bank) transports you to the forests of the southern hemisphere. Here, fast-growing species of *Eucalyptus*, collected in Tasmania in 2008, already provide a beautiful display of coloured bark and foliage.

Jo Wenham, our plant propagation and conservation manager, recalls the beauty and perils of collecting seed over ten thousand miles from home: “Tasmania offered breathtaking views from the outset, from the beautiful turquoise waters and white sands of Wineglass Bay to the



Chile – Our intrepid collectors braved a major volcanic eruption in the name of plant conservation

isolated wilderness of the central highlands, 1,500 metres above sea level. This is snake territory and after only an hour I had my first encounter with a deadly king snake.’

Fortunately Jo and the team retreated to safety, and returned to Wakehurst with over a hundred collections of seed. Many of these germinated successfully and have grown with astonishing speed in our nursery. Most have now been planted in Coates Wood or the newly-renovated Tasmanian bed in the Southern Hemisphere Garden.

The following year our team travelled to Chile, braving a major volcanic eruption to collect species including a rare yellow-flowered form of *Embothrium coccineum*, spectacular *Lobelia tupa*, and *Araucaria araucana* known as the monkey puzzle tree. Often seen as single specimens in gardens and parks, *Araucaria* naturally grow together in large numbers, an unusual effect we hope to be able to create here by planting an entire grove of monkey puzzle seedlings in Coates Wood.

Araucaria cones grow at the top of the tree so harvesting the seed can be difficult – locals often use guns to shoot the cones down, although ropes and a tarpaulin proved an effective and much safer alternative. The nut-like seeds have long been an important source of food to the indigenous Mapuche people, who enjoy them roasted or, as our collecting team were delighted to discover, as a delicious monkey puzzle mash!

Adventurous Journeys

- 1 Tunnels & Tents 2010
 - 2 Scents of Direction 2010
 - 3 Unexpected Endings 2011
 - 4 Time Travel 2011
 - 5 Talking Totems 2011
 - 6 Root Route 2011
 - 7 Sightseeing 2011
 - 8 Be a Bee 2011
- Currently installed ● Shortly to be installed

- Shelter/Hide
- View point
- Picnic tables
- Baby changing facilities
- Snacks and drinks
- Oak signposts
- Guided walks start from Carriage Ring
- Toilets

- Paths**
- Made-up and suitable for wheelchairs
 - Gravel or bark, uneven in places
 - Grass paths
 - Steep paths



To help you find your way, oak signposts at several key locations are numbered to correspond to their position on this map. The route around Wakehurst is approximately 3.6km (2.3 miles). There are dramatic changes in height amounting to some 70 metres (225 feet).
The steep paths are marked in red.

Year-long pleasure

Enjoy 363 days of Wakehurst magic for just £24 with our annual ticket. **UPGRADE** today at the Visitor Centre and your entry fee will be refunded. Call 01444 894067 if you would like one mailed as a gift.

EVENTS

EASTER FUN

Egg Quest Easter trail
Friday to Monday 22 to 25 April
11am to 4pm

Go on a quest to find out what goes into your Easter egg.
£2 including chocolate egg and craft activity

MAY HALF TERM ACTIVITIES

Globetrotting
Come and take part in activities which will take you around the world.
Monday to Friday
30 May to 3 June
10.30am to 3.30pm
£2 including activities and crafts

SEEDS

The great seed swap
Saturday 17 September
11am to 5pm
£2

COMING THIS SUMMER

UK wild flower seed production in the Nursery
"The Seed" a multimedia production.

JOIN A COURSE

Spring photography workshop

Saturday 30 April
10am to 4.30pm
Tutor: Clive Nichols
Course Fee: £70 (£60 Concessions, Premier Friends)

Seasonal Stroll and Soup

Tuesday 19 April
(Spring Border, Water Garden and woodland flora)

Tuesday 12 July
(Cottage Garden, shade tolerant planting)
10.30am to 1pm
Tutor: Paul Reader
Course Fee: £20 per date (includes soup)

Kingfisher and badger watching evenings

5.30pm to 9.30pm
Monday 16 May
Thursday 19 May
Thursday 4 August
Tutor: Steven Robinson
Course Fee: £25

Bat evening

Tuesday 9 August
6.30pm to 9.30pm
Tutors: James Pumfrey & Jenny Clark
Course Fee: £20 (includes soup)

Drawing workshop

Thursday 22 September
10.30am to 4.30pm
Tutor: Erica Baxter
Course Fee: £45 (£40 Concessions, Premier Friends)

Flower arranging demonstration: Nature's Bounty

Wednesday 5 October
1.30pm to 4pm
Dr Christina Curtis
Tickets: £20 (£15 Concessions, Premier Friends, NAFAS Members) (includes tea and cake)

For further information or to book please contact Adult Education on 01444 894310 or 0208 332 5626 or email adulted@kew.org or download a booking form at www.kew.org

Visitor information

- Adults are asked to supervise their children, especially near the many open water features. For first aid or emergency help, contact our rangers, Visitor Centre or catering staff. Control room tel: **01444 894000** (24hr). There is an emergency telephone in the Millennium Seed Bank exhibition.
- Baby changing facilities are available in: Visitor Centre (**I6**), The Stables (**H4**), Millennium Seed Bank (**H6**), and by the Walled Garden (**G4**).
- The Seed Café (in the Visitor Centre (**I6**)). Start your day with morning coffee, pastries and cakes, our famous freshly baked "pig in a blanket", sandwiches and drinks throughout the day. Tea and scone before you go? Outdoor terrace.
- The Stables Café (**H4**). Eat the seasons: fresh, seasonal, local ingredients in our lunch served 11.45 – 2.30 pm. Delicious new menus every month. Soup, sandwiches and mouth-watering cakes with a range of hot and cold drinks throughout the day.
- Picnic recycling point has been installed on the path to the Visitor Centre (**I5**), for paper wrappers, plastic bottles and cans.
- Wheelchairs are available to borrow, enquire at ticket desk. Electric buggies available by pre-booking on 01444 894070 8.30am – 4.30pm Mon – Fri.

Defra and Wakehurst

The government department Defra funds about 55% of our running costs. However, the gardens and our vital conservation work rely on your support to continue.



Visitor services

If you experience difficulties during your visit, please tell our staff or call 01444 894067.



No commercial photography is allowed without written permission.

Opening hours

March to October:
10.00am to 6.00pm
(last admission 5.30pm)
November to February:
10.00am to 4.30pm (last admission 4.00pm)

Please note: Sunday trading laws apply to the Visitor Centre shop. Catering is not affected.

Wakehurst is open throughout the year (closed only 24 and 25 December). There is something new to see every month!

The buildings close before the gardens, so it is a good idea to visit them first.



Weddings and private events at Wakehurst

Wakehurst Place is proud to introduce our new all inclusive wedding package for the exclusive use of the mansion. Package prices start from an amazing £99.00 pp + VAT. We have packages ideal for weddings from 40 to 120 people including a civil ceremony.

If you would like further information or a copy of our new packages please call 01444 894334 or email wakehurstevents@kew.org.



Chris Clennett,
Garden Manager

Garden highlights

spring and summer 2011

Wakehurst has an embarrassment of riches through spring and summer. Dramatic drifts of blooms are guaranteed with naturalised narcissi beginning to flower around Mothering Sunday, and continuing throughout April. These are planted in the Chapel lawn (H4), Mansion lawns (G4) and towards Compost Corner (H2). As the narcissi fade their place is more than taken by incredible expanses of bluebells (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) into early May. Found throughout our woodlands, the best are in Horsebridge Wood (B6-F7).

Many rhododendrons were introduced by George Forrest and other famous plant hunters. In spring these plants come into their own, from dwarf species flowering in the Tony Schilling Asian Heath Garden (H3), larger shrubs in the Water Garden (G2) to tree-like specimens throughout Westwood Valley (E2-C3). Rhododendrons are a prominent part of the flora of China, which is one of the most diverse on Earth, with 31,000 native plants (20 times more than the UK).

Plant hunting continues today, and in the Southern Hemisphere Garden (G4) and Coates Wood (J8-J9) we have added many new plants in recent years. These new collections originate in Tasmania, New Zealand and Chile, where field work has broadened our collections in the gardens and banked new seeds in the Millennium Seed Bank: during May these extraordinary shrubs begin to flower. From South America comes the Chilean firebush (*Embothrium coccineum*), with its orange-red flowers, while the Australian waratah (*Telopea oreades*) produces globular heads of red. In July and August look out for the spectacular white blooms of *Eucryphia*.

Through early summer our wildflower meadows in the Slips (G3), Bloomers Valley (G8) and Millennium Seed Bank site (H6) are a mass of flowers, including buttercups, common spotted orchids and the rare grass vetchling (*Lathyrus nissolia*). In June and July our highlight is the Iris Dell (G2), which is filled with spectacular varieties of Japanese iris (*Iris ensata*). The Walled Garden (G4) is a must see throughout summer and as autumn approaches thousands of *Cyclamen hederifolium* come into flower under the trees near the Visitor Centre (I5), showing there's still plenty to see as summer ends.

Through the Slips and Bog Garden (G3) summer brings a new attraction. A display on pollination culminates with our own hives and plants grown for their value to honey bees. Here we explain some of our collaborative work with the University of Sussex on honey bee behaviour. Plants like the butterfly bush (*Buddleja*) attract many different insects which can be seen jostling for space amongst the flowers.

Why not take a guided tour with our knowledgeable volunteer guides? Daily tours take around one to one-and-a-half hours. On the second and fourth Thursday of each month at 2pm we take a longer walk through Horsebridge, Coates and Bethlehem woods to give an insight into our wonderful woodlands.

Young Wakehurst

In Bloomers Valley cast a spell and shrink down to the size of an ant...

Pick up the summer version of Family fun leaflet which has a discovery map with lots of fun ideas to do in the gardens as a family. It also has some helpful hints for a great day out.

Adventurous Journeys start here!

Become a plant hunter and have your own adventurous journeys in our new natural play spaces. This season look out for the Talking Totems, Unexpected Endings, Time Travel Root Route, Be a Bee and Sightseeing, which will be appearing between now and the autumn. Find out more when you visit them.

Family trail

From field to freezer

What happens to the seeds once the plant hunters have collected them? Some of them will end up in the Millennium Seed Bank here at Wakehurst. Follow the journey of the seed from collection to the bank and find out how we do it.

Start the trail at board 1 on the the slope down to the Millennium Seed Bank.



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Kew's Millennium Seed Bank Partnership

The last great plant hunt



Paul Smith,
project leader

In keeping with the theme of adventurous journeys that we are featuring in this edition of the Wakehurst Place Newsletter, I would like to shamelessly plug *'The Last Great Plant Hunt: the story of Kew's Millennium Seed Bank'*. We are delighted that our first 10 years of operation, and all that led up to the development of the MSB, is covered in this wonderful new book. The authors, Carolyn Fry, Sue Seddon and Gail Vines, are great writers and they all know Kew very well. From our side, MSB staff have hugely enjoyed regaling the authors with tales of daring do, descriptions of the rarest plants on the Planet, and explaining the vital research we are engaged in to ensure the survival of those plants. Like all great adventures, the journey has been tortuous at times, we've had our ups and downs and we've met some wonderful characters on the way – both plants and people. The sense of adventure comes from being pioneers and from being part of a worldwide network of people who care deeply about plants. For those of you who have followed our progress over the years, I highly recommend this book, some of the proceeds of which will come back to support our work.



Freezing living fossils



Kew scientists are investigating the best way to store cycad seeds

Our seed scientists are working with some of the oldest plants still in existence – the cycads. They have been referred to as living fossils with origins dating back over 300 million years, to the time when dinosaurs roamed.

They are a window on the evolution of plants and their 297 species and subspecies have come under the microscope of botanists in Kew's Millennium Seed Bank, based here at Wakehurst. The plants are

generally found in the warmer areas of North and South America, Africa, Asia and Australia. Many species exist as relatively small isolated populations, often in transformed habitats. The increasing interest in cycads has resulted in this group of plants becoming popular subjects of research, collection and landscaping. Illegal harvesting of cycads from their natural populations has caused the destruction of some colonies and has led to extinction of several wild populations. Over half the cycad species are now listed as threatened and clearly work needs to be done as a priority to safeguard their future.

Due to the desiccation intolerant nature of the cycad seeds, conventional seed banking in our freezer vaults is not possible for this group of plants. But, hopefully, we have found a solution in cryopreservation – storage in liquid nitrogen at the amazingly low temperature of minus 196°C. This is probably the only viable option to store the seeds and needs to be combined with protection in the wild.

Early results of deep freezing experiments with *Cycas revoluta* show promising results, and further work is now underway in our high-tech laboratories to help vulnerable cycads flora in general.

Save a species

A cure for Alzheimer's? Cancer? Food for the world?



The power to save plants that are the source of our food, medicine, shelter, livelihoods and the air we breathe is in your hands. By supporting the work of Kew's Millennium Seed Bank partnership you help ensure the survival of plants that are crucial for human existence. Adopt the seeds of one of six endangered plants and help protect our future; or make an even greater contribution and save an entire species.

Adopt a Seed, Save a Species is a way for you to get involved in this vital work. For £25 you can adopt seeds of an endangered plant species to protect its existence. Or give a seed adoption as a special gift that will make a lasting difference.

In return, we will recognise your support with an adoption pack containing a certificate and a picture of the plant species you're supporting. Seed adopters will also receive regular updates from the Millennium Seed Bank so

you can follow the progress of the important conservation work you're helping to fund.

A gift of £1,000 or £2,000 is enough to Save a Species. In return you would be invited on a behind the scenes tour of the Seed Bank at Wakehurst, with a chance to meet the scientists engaged in this vital conservation work. Your gift would be recorded on the touch screen register in the Seed Bank and you would receive a certificate marking your extraordinary contribution to the Partnership.



However you can help, we will be so grateful.

To find out more and see the species that you can support go to

www.kew.org/adoptaseed



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