

G THE ENGLISH GARDEN

WIN
HAYTER
LAWNMOWER
WORTH
£1,500

APRIL 2006

FOR EVERYONE WHO LOVES BEAUTIFUL GARDENS

£3.20 A\$7.95

*Putting the zing
into spring*

ART WORKS
in the GARDEN

NEW SERIES

THE PRODUCTIVE
WALLED GARDEN

Month by month guide to
growing fruit and vegetables



PRETTY AND PRACTICAL IDEAS

Bringing the **BLOSSOM** indoors
CONSERVATORIES to suit your budget
Garden owners' **GREAT WAYS WITH POTS**
QUIRKY TOPIARY in the Lake District





ART IN THE GARDEN

Rills and thrills

Eye-catching sculpture adds its own sparkle to the drama of water features and angled drystone walling in Rose and John Dejardin's Wingwell Nursery garden

PHOTOGRAPHS CLIVE NICHOLS WORDS ALI WARD

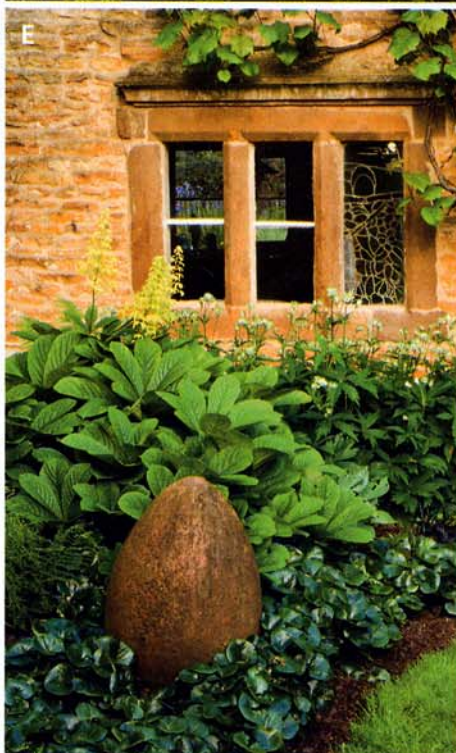


Garden designers do need to have a recognisable style, of course, but a danger to avoid is resting on one's laurels, relying on the same plants time and time again. Whenever I feel myself slipping towards that pit, I take myself off to Wingwell Nursery in Rutland, to visit Rose Dejardin.

Some people seem simply to have been born for horticulture, and Rose Dejardin is one of them. She exudes a love of plants that is both infectious and revitalising. Having started a biology degree course, she jumped ship to become a landscape architect. Then, when she realised she missed getting her hands dirty, she found work as a gardener at Exeter University.

Twenty three years ago, when she was looking to change career once more, she and her landscape architect husband John began ▶





ALL PREVIOUS PAGE (TOP) Angled drystone wall with potentillas and stachys and, in the background, *Allium*, by Ruth Moilliet. (A) Metal bird sculpture by an unknown artist, bought by Rose Dejardin at a Red Cross plant fair some years ago. (B) *Bird Man*, bought from the sculptor Chris Marvell.

(C) Dramatic 'plantings' of slate by John Dejardin. (D) *Spoon*, by Rebecca Newnham, part of last year's exhibition. (E) Ceramic egg sculpture by Rose Dejardin, with *rodgersia* and *Asarum europaeum* acting as a foil. (F) An artistic drystone wall with *astrantias* and ferns, and the rill (top left of picture).

searching for a place where they could open a plant nursery. Armed with soil testing kits and boring holes into the ground with their augers, they crisscrossed Rutland looking for decent soil, preferably with a house attached. And so Wingwell Nursery in Wing came into being, at much the same time as Rowan, the Dejardins' first son, was born. Fortunately, the couple have the kind of energy and dynamism that it takes simultaneously to start a business, have a baby and restore a property (as turned out to be necessary at Wingwell).

Theirs is no rural idyll. Running one's own business takes hard work and dedication, whatever the type of operation. And if you have to be out in all weathers, and you do most of your business in only four months of

the year, life can be very demanding indeed. But, as for so many others who grow plants for a living, the nursery has become a labour of love for Rose and John.

At Wingwell, the Dejardins have more than three acres incorporating garden, nursery beds and a sales area, with so much to see that a visit is always a morning or afternoon well spent. Specialising in perennials, Rose dedicates herself to producing robust plants that are capable of resisting pests and diseases, and is happier doing that than just growing new cultivars with ever bigger and better blooms and ever more exciting foliage. And, with their exquisite colour, form and quality, her plants are infinitely more eye-catching than the average garden centre choice, and pay their way in any design.

As you arrive at the nursery the first thing you notice is a vibrant red wall, which cuts through the driveway in startling contrast with the cool local stone of Wingwell's buildings. The next attraction is the nursery plants, enticingly laid out in alphabetic order and, without exception, beautifully cared for. Rose is always happy to give advice to visitors for whom the choice is bewildering, and will guide the more hesitant among them towards the right plant for their specific spot.

Object lessons, which abound in her private garden, include the plantings around her own piece of sculpture, a ceramic egg, which sits in a shady corner among shade loving *Asarum europaeum*, *Rodgersia aesculifolia* and *Ophiopogon 'Nigrescens'*.

With their huge clumps of nursery stock plants, the growing beds behind the main sales area are a treat to walk around, an experience rather like exploring a jungle in the height of a tropical summer. The epimediums in particular repay attention, as Rose has a particular fondness for them and has amassed a good collection. The stunning euphorbias and cephalaria, which I picked out, have since grown to the height of my bedroom window.

Wingwell is also host to beautiful sculpture, some of it on permanent display. An exhibition last year filled the garden and nursery with contemporary pieces, and Rose hopes to repeat the experience in future years. This year, pieces by Cambridge based sculptors Rachel Wood and Matt Sanderson will be installed in the garden in time for the Dejardins' 25 June Open Day in aid of the National Gardens Scheme.

The private garden to the side of the nursery's sales area has been a chance for Rose to create a space without the constraints of pleasing a client. And it has become her idea of luxury to have room in which to experiment with her own style of planting. Especially striking in this garden are the enormous sweeps of particular genera, within which Rose sometimes uses different cultivars to produce subtle colour changes along the way.

For his contribution to this garden, John was inspired by limestone pavements, wild and rugged terrain and the interplay between man and nature. He has produced a delightful rill, winding through the entire garden, and inserted a series of slate slabs to give height. With drystone walls created at acute angles to the earth by John's brother, Andrew Dejardin, the effect is highly dramatic. The rill terminates

in a pond, whose shallow, wide margins are a safety feature, and all four of the Dejardin children have spent many summers fishing and paddling there.

Come to Wingwell with a plant wish list by all means, but I recommend keeping an open mind. Every time I've visited, I've left with a plant I hadn't previously heard of, which was destined to become my new favourite.

Wingwell Nursery is open daily from 1 February to 31 October, 10am to 5pm. For a plant catalogue send £1 in stamps to Wingwell Nursery, 5 Top Street, Wing, Oakham, Rutland LE15 8SE.

The garden will open for the National Gardens Scheme on Sunday, 25 June 2006, and it can also be visited at other times by appointment. Tel: +44 (0)1572 737727.



(G) *Sea Bird* by Chris Marvell. (H) *Seed Heads* by Ruth Moilliet. (I) A multi-coloured border with irises grows between *Semi-charred Spires*, a timber sculpture by Alison Crowther, and John Dejardin's rill. (J) Rose Dejardin with Ruth Moilliet's *Allium*, displayed on her lawn. (K) A delicate glass sculpture by Neil Wilkin in a border against a stone wall planted with alliums.

