

METHOD FOR RESTORATION OF BORDERS FOR HESTERCOMBE GARDENS

1. Accurate survey - measured drawing of border 1/8" = 1' 0" scale.
2. Trace original plans (Xerox copies) exactly referring to originals at Hestercombe or clearer Xerox copies in Archives, preferably on A2 imperial squared tracing paper.
3. Make a list in alphabetical order of all the plants named on the plan in their original names as indicated on the plan.
4. Go through this list with the help of RHS Dictionary (Cannington), plant catalogues old and new etc. and work out the present day names for these plants.
5. Where Miss Jekyll is vague about the species or type used, refer back to her books (Cannington Library).
6. Where nothing can be found out about the plant, or when it is totally unavailable or when it is an annual and therefore too heavy a labour except in very limited circumstances or any other problems referring to the plants, consult the experts at Cannington College of Horticulture, Mr. Cheek or Mr. Brookfield, for suggestions for substitutes checking that habit, growth, flower colour, form and flowering period are as close to the original as possible or at least tone in with the overall theme for the border and marry happily with adjacent plants.
7. Decide on density of planting for each plant with the help of "Readers' Digest Encyclopaedia of Garden Plants and Flowers", "Ground Cover Plants", catalogues, etc. N.B. For wall plants it is preferable to count the number of suitable holes available on site or keep to the numbers suggested by Miss Jekyll.
8. Overlay (1) over (2) and draw up new plant group outlines adjusted to new areas and where necessary to achieve total ground cover.
9. Work out the numbers of each plant needed and pencil in on the plan using densities from (7) and areas from (8). There is a sheet drawn up in squares of various densities which can be used to work out numbers for each group by counting the squares adjusted to fit the shape. These plant numbers are invariably different from Miss Jekyll's plans particularly with reference to herbaceous material. It is preferable to be over generous with the numbers, if possible financially, as this allows for failures and produces quick ground cover which reduces the heavy labour factor of weeding.
10. Go back to the plant list and enter up on card index system all new plants giving their old name on the plan, numbers and which border they are to be found in, reasons for substitution, references to books and any other relevant information. Each plant is coded according to the initial of the generic name, e.g. - Campanula latifolia is coded C and given a number which is only relevant to its sequence in the restoration programme. All new plants added on new cards should be given a higher number in sequence.

11. The planting plan (combination of (1) and (9)) is then stencilled in using the plant code and density, and working the same way up as if you were standing in front of the border. The code and plant name is then stencilled in the same way up in alphabetical order in a key.
12. Check on site whether there are any plants worth retaining in the border, and whether any plants are available from existing stock in the gardens.
13. Check with the gardeners on the programme for clearing the border, weeding and fertilising. Keep them well informed and supplied with plans etc. Arrange for a nursery bed to be prepared where plants can be heeled in prior to planting if necessary.
14. Order the plants. Lists of those suppliers used can be found in the accounts file. Blooms are the cheapest by far for herbaceous material but for this reason always sell out quickly, so early ordering (August-September) advised. Check with Cannington if something unusual cannot be obtained; they may be able to propagate or suggest other suppliers.

Always check by 'phone to suppliers if the quantity and type at the price stated in the catalogue is available when required. The suppliers if requested will usually hold the number required until the order can be placed. State clearly on the order the numbers, name and price per plant. The code and authority is inside the front of the accounts file and where possible the plants should be delivered direct to Hestercombe. The gardeners will unpack the plants on arrival and they will check the numbers against the delivery notes which will then be sent on to you here. Do not pay on delivery notes. Separate invoices are required for each order which if correct should be photocopied and signed by you with "pass for payment" the original sent to Ray Giles in this department.

Copies of all information should be kept in the accounts file in sections according to the nursery and should follow in sequence of each order placed and not by date only, i.e.

- * (1) Request for fixed price quotation
- * (2) Quotation from nursery
 - (3) Acceptance of quotation and order (green copy)
- * (4) Confirmation of order and for delivery date
 - (5) Delivery note checked by gardeners
 - (6) Copy of invoice

* optional may be done by 'phone.

15. Planting has in the past been carried out in the spring but this has been determined by the clearing programme. If the borders are ready and the plants are there, they can be planted any time between October and March in suitable weather conditions. In fact, wall plants are better planted in the autumn as they can suffer from spring drought.

The borders can be marked out with shallow lines filled with sand, or pegged or marked in any way which is easiest to do. The gardeners can manage this from a plan but may need a little guidance along the way. Cannington in the past have offered help in the planting by providing student labour for one or two whole days. Obviously it is best to let the gardeners do as much as they can but this offer of help is invaluable if a lot of plants need planting in a hurry at the end of the season. This help has to be organised early on so as Cannington can fit it into their curriculum for the term.

16. After planting the borders will need to be kept weed free and well watered. Any failures should be noted and booked for replacement the following planting season. Where staking of herbaceous plant material is required, this should be done with brushwood and NOT canes or stakes. Miss Jekyll greatly disliked "unnatural" staking. Labels should be supplied if possible, black matt formica from Dolphin Products. See file for information on type previously used.

LMR, Jan 1975.

Lorna McRobie, January 1975

The books referred to above are:

Royal Horticultural Society, *Dictionary of Gardening*, ed. by Fred J. Chittenden (Oxford University Press, 1965).

Reader's Digest, *Encyclopaedia of Garden Plants and Flowers* (London: Reader's Digest Association Ltd., 1971)

Thomas, Graham Stuart, *Plants for Groundcover* (London: Dent, 1970)