



100
YEARS
1922-2022

Announcing an American Horticultural Society Travel Program

HAMPTON COURT GARDEN FESTIVAL & THE GARDENS OF SOUTHERN ENGLAND

JUNE 26 - JULY 5, 2023

WITH AHS HOST TRACY WARD VIOLETTE, LECTURER GARDEN
HISTORIAN MARION MAKO AND TOUR MANAGER
VERITY SMITH OF SPECIALTOURS



Dear Friends,

I am excited to invite you to join AHS' trip to England in the summer of 2023 for a fabulous program visiting gardens in the southern English counties of Kent, Sussex and Hampshire. This trip has been designed exclusively for AHS members.

If you have never visited the legendary gardens of Sissinghurst Castle in Kent, this is your opportunity! For those already familiar with Vita Sackville-West's immaculate creation, we've added the new Delos Garden, a romantic Mediterranean escape re-imagined by Dan Pearson, to admire.

We'll also visit the famous and inspirational garden, Great Dixter, home of the late Christopher Lloyd, who dared to challenge the traditional horticultural taste of his time. In addition, we will have access to a variety of privately-owned gardens, selected for their summer beauty, planting and design. You can expect the best of Britain - herbaceous borders, wildflower meadows, prairie planting, Elizabethan knot gardens, rose gardens and walled kitchen gardens.

Of course, we have also included several new and unique experiences. As England is becoming known for its wines, we will tour, taste and enjoy lunch at an award-winning wine estate. We will also spend an afternoon with the head gardener at Knepp, home of Isabella Tree, the author and passionate advocate of re-wilding, now a hot topic of discussion. In addition, we have been invited to lunch with Rosemary Alexander, founder of The English Gardening School, which provides serious studies in gardening techniques, knowledge of plants, and garden layout and design. We'll also find time to explore the charming and unspoilt town of Rye, as well as historic Winchester.

During the tour, we will also enjoy a visit and lunch at Gravetye Manor Hotel, where the superbly maintained gardens are considered the masterpiece of 19th-century plantsman William Robinson.

Our tour concludes with a relaxed day at the Hampton Court Garden Festival on the grounds of the historic royal palace admiring the sensational show gardens and supplier stands. Our finale will be returning to Lainston House for a July 4th farewell dinner.

You'll visit all these garden spots in the company of expert Garden Historian Marion Mako, whom you may have met on AHS' recent trips to Provence or the Netherlands, as well as Verity Smith of Specialtours, who designed this wonderful itinerary.

Our choice hotel accommodations embrace the history and allure of England. Three hotels have been converted from beautiful manor houses with dates ranging from Elizabethan times to the 17th century. You'll find all three in the midst of lovely surroundings. We end at the 5-star hotel, Lainston House, the epitome of English country house luxury and charm.

Whether you are a loyal traveler or a new member, we hope you'll join us on this journey to see gardens in England. We'd be delighted to welcome you on this special AHS Travel Study Program! A convenient reservation form is enclosed in this brochure.

Most sincerely,



Suzanne Laporte
President & CEO

HAMPTON COURT GARDEN FESTIVAL & THE GARDENS OF SOUTHERN ENGLAND

WITH LECTURER GARDEN HISTORIAN MARION MAKO AND TOUR
MANAGER VERITY SMITH OF SPECIALTOURS



Join lecturer Marion Mako and tour leader Verity Smith of Specialtours for this once-in-a-lifetime garden travel experience.

MONDAY, JUNE 26 - KENT (D)

On arrival at London Heathrow Airport, we will transfer by coach to our first accommodation, Chilston Park Hotel. Set in 22 acres of Kent parkland, the 17th century country manor house has been converted into an elegant 4-star hotel located on the edge of the Kent Downs, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Chilston Park has been home to authors, aristocrats and politicians and has the feel of a family home adorned with portraits and antiques. On arrival we will have lunch, followed by free time to relax at the hotel. In the early evening, we'll gather for welcome drinks and an introductory talk by Marion Mako followed by dinner in a private dining room.

TUESDAY JUNE 27 - KENT (B, L)

Leave the hotel for the Weald of Kent to visit Sissinghurst Castle Garden, part of the National Trust, for an out-of-hours tour of one of England's most famous gardens. Accompanied by Head Gardener Troy Scott-Smith, we will learn how Sissinghurst was created by Vita Sackville-West and her husband Harold Nicolson. We'll walk through the series of themed garden rooms, which will be at their peak in June, including the most recent addition, the Greek-style Delos Garden. Based on original plans by Vita, Dan Pearson has redesigned the dry garden with a carefully planted collection of Mediterranean plants in gravel on rock terraces.

Continue to Cranbrook to tour Chapel Down Vineyard. Established in 2001, Chapel Down is England's leading winemaker. We will enjoy a tasting of their award-winning wines. The Swan Restaurant, where we will have lunch, has beautiful views across the vineyard and surrounding countryside.

Continue to the coast of East Sussex for leisure time in the historic town of Rye.

Once a Cinque Port, Rye now lies two miles inland from the sea. The cobbled lanes and medieval half-timbered buildings house a wealth of independent shops and galleries. You may wish to visit Lamb House, where Henry James, this Georgian townhouse's most famous resident wrote, *The Wings of the Dove*.

Return to the hotel for dinner independently.

WEDNESDAY JUNE 28 - KENT (B, L)

Leave the hotel for Great Dixter, the family home of the late gardener and author Christopher Lloyd. The estates garden, a shining example of the Arts and Crafts design movement, was originally designed by the leading architect of the time, Edwin Lutyens. Lloyd, alongside Head Gardener Fergus Garret and his talented team have brought the garden to perfection. Garrett will guide us on a tour, highlighting the Lutyens' style of curved yew hedges and the interconnected relationship between the farm buildings and garden. Lloyd and Garrett's skill in mixing contrasting and complimentary colors is evident throughout this magical garden with its extensive borders and tapestry of plants. We will then take a private tour of the medieval part of the house including the Great Hall. Lunch will be in the Yeoman's Hall, which was built in the 16th century and moved to Great Dixter in 1910.

This afternoon we'll visit Pashley Manor Gardens, a beautifully planted garden set around a listed Tudor house and receive an introductory talk by the owner. We will pass between the espaliered pear trees and vine-covered arches into the rose garden, revelling in the rich blues, purples, cool creams and greens that make up the perfect English Country Garden. There will be time to relax and admire the views while enjoying a cup of tea from the café. Return to the hotel.

This evening, gather for a private reception in a garden near the hotel, within a parkland setting. It has topiary, rolling lawns and immaculate yew hedges, as well as a walled garden with a formal box and lavender parterre. Return to the hotel for dinner independently.

THURSDAY JUNE 29 - WEST SUSSEX (B, L, D)

Today, depart by bus with our luggage, for West Sussex. Our first stop is Brighton to visit a private garden set around a traditional style Sussex farmhouse. The four-acre garden shows an Arts and Crafts influence with interesting herbaceous borders, a walled vegetable and herb garden, and a Japanese inspired garden – all surrounded by a woodland. The garden designers will join us for the visit to talk about their design process and the Arts and Crafts influence.

Continue to Fletching to visit another private garden. The owners will host us for lunch in the garden before a walk through the six-acre formal garden. Each garden room reflects a period of English garden design. We'll find an Elizabethan herb garden, a wildflower meadow and a pre-Raphaelite allee of white wisteria, clematis and lilies.

From Fletching, we drive to Ockenden Manor for a three nights' stay. The 4-star hotel is an Elizabethan manor house with 28 traditionally decorated rooms and a spa set on eight acres of beautiful grounds overlooking Cuckfield Park. This evening we will dine in the award-winning hotel restaurant.

FRIDAY JUNE 30 - WEST SUSSEX (B, L)

This morning we will leave by coach to explore the fabulous gardens at Gravetye Manor Hotel. With the Head Gardener, we'll explore the restored masterpiece of plantsman and author William Robinson, best known for his concept of the wild garden, a landscape that celebrates nature rather than controls it. His most influential books include *The Wild Garden* and *The English Flower Garden*, which remains the best-selling gardening book ever printed. He also ran several gardening journals such as *Garden Illustrated*. After a tour of the kitchen garden, we will have lunch at the hotel, where the chef will use ingredients fresh from the garden.

Continue to the Knepp Estate. Accompanied by the Head Gardener, we'll explore this pioneering 'rewilding' project, made famous by the owner Isabella Tree's book, *Wilding* and learn about recent achievements. This unique project is based on the concept of restoring freedom to nature to reverse the loss of biodiversity. We'll also see the dramatically transformed 19th century walled kitchen garden, pool garden, and former croquet lawn, rewilded in 2019 by Tom Stuart-Smith.

Return to the hotel for dinner independently.

SATURDAY JULY 1 - WEST SUSSEX (B, L)

Our day begins with an out-of-hours visit to Sussex Prairies. We'll meet the owners of the garden and hear about the naturalistic planting inspired by the Dutch 'New Wave' with acres of perennials planted in spiralling beds.

Continue by coach to visit a beautifully designed private garden with over 600 roses and stunning herbaceous color-themed borders interspersed with ornamental grasses and topiary. We'll walk through the gardens with the owners.

Following lunch at the nearby historic Griffin Inn pub, we'll continue into the heart of the South Downs National Park to visit Charleston House (subject to confirmation). This Sussex farmhouse became a focal point in 1916 for the Bloomsbury Group, a circle of writers, intellectuals and artists. We'll walk through the well-preserved house with a guide and admire the interiors that have, influenced interior design in the UK. The tour ends in the charming grounds, which include the Centenary Garden and Walled Garden designed by Roger Fry as a summer playground to inspire painting.

This evening, we will return to the hotel before we dine independently.



SUNDAY JULY 2 - HAMPSHIRE (B, L, D)

Leave the hotel, with luggage, to spend the morning in Arundel. Visit the gardens of Arundel Castle, accompanied by the Head Gardener. The inspirational walled gardens include the renowned Collector Earl's Garden, the Stumpery, the hot and cool Herbaceous Borders with contrasting foliage plants, the Cut Flower Garden and the organic Kitchen Garden. There will be time to visit the Castle independently or walk into Arundel.

Continue to Petersfield for a very special private visit, where garden designer, author and founder of The English Garden School, Rosemary Alexander, will host the group at her home. Following lunch, we will walk through the compact garden, which is flawlessly designed and has been used as a teaching garden.

Continue into the Hampshire countryside and check-in to the Lainston House Hotel near Winchester. This elegant 5-star hotel was once the hunting lodge of Charles II. The manor house is set within 63 acres of stunning grounds and boasts the longest line of limes in England, some of which were planted in 1716. With individually designed rooms, it has an award-winning cooking school and two restaurants.

This evening we will have dinner in the hotel restaurant.

MONDAY JULY 3 - HAMPSHIRE (B, D)

This morning leave for Winchester, take a guided walk through the historic town center and visit the magnificent Cathedral. We'll stop at Winchester College and visit the medieval heart of the school including Chamber Court, Chapel, College Hall, Cloisters and the 17th Century School building (subject to confirmation). There will be time to have lunch independently and visit the boutiques of Winchester.

From Winchester, we drive through the countryside now covered in vineyards to visit Bramdean House Gardens, by kind arrangement with the owners. The garden is known for its mirror image, wide herbaceous borders, set on a central axis from the house. They will be stunning in July. Beyond, steps lead up to a one-acre kitchen garden with cutting plants and a large collection of old-fashioned sweet peas.

We return to the hotel. Dinner this evening will be private and close to the hotel.

TUESDAY JULY 4 - HAMPSHIRE (B, D)

We leave by private bus for Hampton Court Palace. Built by Cardinal Wolsey in 1514, it was given to Henry VIII. The gardens, a fine example of Tudor landscape and architecture, are the venue for the Royal Horticultural Society's Hampton Court Garden Festival. On the way, Marion Mako will give a talk on the show gardens and this year's themes. The festival offers a high calibre of show gardens, horticultural exhibits, and collections from suppliers. At the

show, travelers can choose from several cafes and restaurants for lunch independently.

We return to the hotel for farewell drinks and a Fourth of July dinner celebration.

WEDNESDAY JULY 5 - HAMPSHIRE - USA (B)

This morning, we'll depart for London Heathrow Airport for traveller's returning to the USA.

While revisions of this itinerary are not anticipated, the AHS and its travel partners reserve the right to make changes, with or without notice, that may become necessary.



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June 26 – July 5, 2023

WITH LECTURER GARDEN HISTORIAN MARION MAKO AND TOUR
MANAGER VERITY SMITH OF SPECIALTOURS

MEMORABLE EXPERIENCES INCLUDE:

- Out-of-hours visit to the historic Sissinghurst Castle Gardens accompanied by the Head Gardener
- Tour of the Knepp Estate to learn about the rewilding project and see the new garden by Tom Stuart-Smith
- A morning at Great Dixter with the Head Gardener, Fergus Garrett, and a private lunch in the Yoemans' Hall
- An exploration of the historic towns of Rye, Arundel and the city of Winchester
- Hampton Court Garden Festival, on the Members' Day, to see the high quality of show gardens and horticultural exhibitions

OUTSTANDING ACCOMMODATIONS INCLUDE:

- **Chilston Park Hotel, Kent.** The hotel is set in Kent parkland. The 17th century country manor house has been converted into an elegant 4-star hotel located on the edge of the Kent Downs, an area of outstanding natural beauty.
- **Ockenden Manor, West Sussex.** The 4-star hotel is an Elizabethan manor house with traditionally decorated rooms, a spa and an award-winning restaurant set on eight acres of beautiful grounds overlooking Cuckfield Park.
- **Lainston House Hotel, Hampshire.** This elegant, 5-star hotel was once a 17th century manor house and the hunting lodge of Charles II. With individually designed rooms, it has an award-winning cooking school and two restaurants.



Reserve your spot:

Please refer to the enclosed reservation form for pricing and instructions for reserving your place on the AHS Travel Study Program tour to England. For more information about Travel Study Program tours, please contact development@ahsgardening.org or (703) 768-5700, ext. 117. Information is also available at www.ahsgardening.org/travel.

Designed with the garden-travel connoisseur in mind, the American Horticultural Society Travel Study Program offers exceptional itineraries that include many exclusive experiences and unique insights. Your participation benefits the work of the American Horticultural Society and furthers our vision of a land of sustainable gardens, cultivated by a diverse population with a common passion for plants.