



Cornwall Professional Gardeners Group (The CPGG) formally the "Head Gardeners Group", a brief outline and history

2003 Antony

2004 Tregothnan

2005 Tresco

2006 Trelissick

2007 Heligan

2008 Pencarrow/Tremeer

2009 Mt Edgecumbe

2010 Trevarno

2011 Trewithen

2012 Pine Lodge

2013 Duchy College Rosewarne

2014 Glendurgan

2015 Heligan

2016 Enys

2017 The Eden Project

2018 Trebartha

The "Head Gardeners group" was started at Antony by Sir Richard Carew-Pole as a way of the head gardeners of Cornwall meeting, sharing ideas, experiences, news, gossip and to break down the invisible boundaries between gardens. Knowledge sharing and communication was the driving force.

A quote from Barry Champion, who initially ran the group, sums up one of the underlying principles of the head gardeners days:

"With regard to the Head Gardeners annual get together, it was instigated by Sir Richard in the first instance to facilitate the professional and social intercourse between all the Head Gardeners and senior gardeners managing heritage gardens. It was felt that the relationships between the private gardens was not conducive for mutual exchange of ideas

and to try to end the isolation some private gardens felt. The N.T. always has gardeners training days but not so in private gardens. Obviously training was important but to have a strong social element was of equal merit."

The list of venues for previous "Head Gardeners days" read like a who's who" of Cornish gardens, there are several still to add to the list and any garden willing to host should contact Gary at Trewithen.

The group has evolved over time and in 2016 was renamed the CPGG. John Lanyon (National trust), Ben Probert (self-employed), Ned Lomax (Glendurgan) and myself co-ordinate the group and try to keep an exciting and varied programme going. This has allowed us to be more inclusive of all people working in professional horticulture in Cornwall (It is no longer a requirement to have the title "Head Gardener" to be on the mailing list, or for that matter to be in Cornwall.) The annual "Head Gardeners Day" continues in the same vein as previous years and involves a meet up at a garden, usually a lecture, pasty lunch then off for a tour of the garden with the head gardener. The only difference now is that it is open to one delegate per garden where as the workshops are usually a first come first served event.

The CPGG and its meetings, workshops and "Head Gardeners days" allow for a networking that was previously un heard of. Visiting other gardens, meeting like minded people from your own peer group seeing, learning and experiencing the different techniques, problems and politics of those gardens in an informal format and setting can only be of a great benefit to all those involved. Plus that new knowledge and experience taken back to the gardens will benefit and inspire staff in those gardens .

Alongside the "Head Gardeners days" are the training days and workshops. These allow all staff within the gardens to attend study days thus improving knowledge of staff throughout Cornish gardens. These "Workshops have included a Daffodil study day at Cothele, A conifer identification day at Pencarrow, Camellia propagation master class at Trewithen, Ken Cox on "Woodland Gardening" at Trelissick, to name a few. These days, for private gardens, are essential and are fully supported by the CGS (The Cornwall Garden Society who help cover costs for the workshops including a pasty lunch at most workshops).

We also hold "Walk and talk" opportunities with some of the world's finest horticulturalists these have included world renown Rhododendron expert Ken Cox , Tony Kirkham, Head of the arboretum at Kew, on tree identification and Jim Gardiner on magnolia identification. There are plenty in the pipe work for the coming years.

If you work in Horticulture within Cornwall and would like to be part of the groups exciting network then please email [gary@trewithengardens.co.uk](mailto:gary@trewithengardens.co.uk) and we will add you to the mailing list.

*Prepared by Gary Long for PlantNetwork, April 2019.*