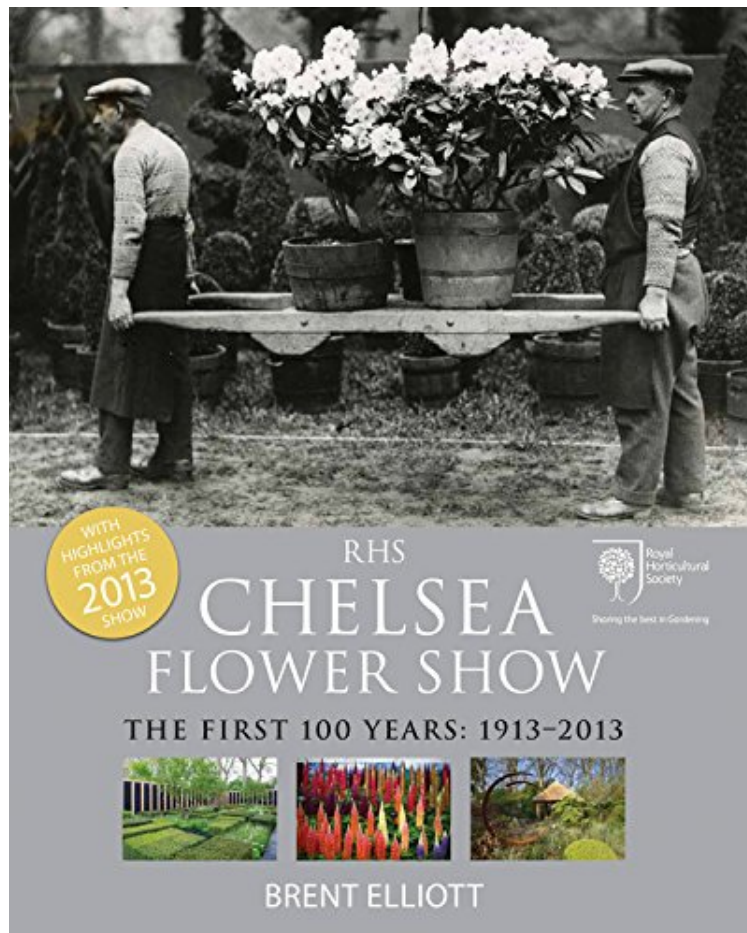


[Read ebook] RHS Chelsea Flower Show: The First 100 years: 1913-2013

RHS Chelsea Flower Show: The First 100 years: 1913-2013

Brent Elliott

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Brent Elliott : RHS Chelsea Flower Show: The First 100 years: 1913-2013 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised RHS Chelsea Flower Show: The First 100 years: 1913-2013:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Good present for gardeners/flower lovers !By DovokeBought as a birthday present for my mum. She has had a flick through it and seems delighted (lots of nice colourful pictures, etc !) but says she is going to save it for the colder weather, when she will read it properly !Overall, a good choice of present, I think.1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. ChelseaBy IREYNABeautiful condition gave as a gift to friends in USA absolutely loved it as new2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. The perfect introduction for Americans, with wonderful photos!By Beth in IowaBeing American, I had little idea what the Chelsea Flower Show even was, other than a presumably desirable event included in garden tour packages that were advertised in magazines like "The English Garden" and "Gardens Illustrated." But my total ignorance is now at an end, due to two educational sources: one is the BBC coverage of this year's show that I watched on YouTube last month. The other is

this book that was published right before the 2014 Show, "RHS Chelsea Flower Show: The First 100 Years: 1913-2013" by Brent Elliott. (Note: I requested and received a review copy from publisher Frances Lincoln. Not seeing any other reviews of this fascinating book, I have written a longer review than usual.) For those American readers who still exist in my former state of ignorance, the Chelsea Flower Show is a really big deal in England. Chelsea is an affluent area in central London, and every May the Royal Horticultural Society holds a five-day-long Flower Show in the grounds of the Royal Hospital Chelsea, a retirement and nursing home. The Show in its modern format comprises three main areas: 1. the huge tent known as the Floral Marquee under which plant growers and breeders exhibit hugely impressive displays of their plants 2. outside the tent are large and small Show Gardens designed by garden designers 3. additionally, the Sundries exhibitors display greenhouses, garden tools and books, and specialist plant society materials. The garden designers and plant exhibitors hope to win a gold or silver-gilt award from the RHS judges, and there is great media attention for the winners, and also for visits of the royal family on the first day of the show. After the first day, the show is open to the public and over 150,000 people purchase limited-availability tickets each year, and the BBC runs morning and evening television coverage of the show on all five days. The Chelsea Flower Show is probably most likened to an upscale, national-level version of our American state fairs (in Iowa anyway, the Iowa State Fair is a pretty big deal, with over a million attending and nightly television coverage of fair activities). But again, I knew none of this until I read "RHS Chelsea Flower Show," which covers the history of the world's most prestigious flower show. The book is filled with fascinating historic photos that I found mesmerizing -- I love historic garden photos, and those chosen by the author and editors do a great job of showing the gardening and societal trends of each decade. The first chapter covers the 19th century origins of the show: first in 1827 in Chiswick, then moving in 1861 to Kensington, in 1888 to the Inner Temple (where English barristers are traditionally housed), until 1912, when the RHS finally ended up at the much larger Chelsea site. The first RHS flower show (called the Great Spring Show) was held there in 1913, and following a break in 1917 and 1918 for the War, it was revived in 1919. During the 1920s and 1930s, the show grew in size and the gardens and exhibits became more elaborate (rock gardens enjoyed a peak of popularity during this period and drew huge crowds). And probably the most famous indoor exhibit ever was entered in 1929, when Mrs. Sherman Hoyt of California staged a tableau of Californian desert plants, which wowed the British audience with its elaborate detail and exotic plant species. The show was discontinued after Britain declared war in 1939, and sadly, was not able to resume until 1947. But by the early 1950s, attendance had increased. (In the 1950s and '60s, rock gardens began their decline and many of the new gardens featured historic garden styles inspired by Spanish courtyards and French potagers. The 1950s also saw the beginning of modernistic garden styles epitomized by the 1959 *The Times*' Garden of To-morrow, which featured labor-saving shrubs, groundcovers and paving, as well as a futuristic radio-controlled lawnmower. Also demonstrated were developments in the use of plastic containers and stainless steel garden tools, which were indeed truly revolutionary developments that modern gardeners take for granted.) By the 1960s and 1970s, earlier amateur exhibitors were being replaced by professional growers and large garden centers, as gardeners were becoming accustomed to buying container-grown plants (made possible by plastic pots), rather than growing from specialists' seeds. Bonsai was on the ascendance in popularity, and garden designers, who had previously not been listed with garden sponsors in entries, were becoming celebrities in their own right. In the 1980s and 1990s, the Show was forced to deal with overcrowding as attendance rose to new heights. And the 1990s were marked by controversy over garden styles: the general public lamented that many awards were being given to designs that hardly appeared to be real "gardens" (attractive arrangements of live plants). By the turn of the 21st century, many show garden designs were centered on sustainability, social conscience and other trendy causes, with some based on "extravagant metaphors which only become intelligible after reading the programme note," such as gardens attempting to represent the blood circulatory system or shock waves although cottage gardens and other revivalism of historic garden styles are also represented. At any rate, "RHS Chelsea Flower Show, The First 100 Years: 1913-2013" takes readers on a fascinating tour through history -- not just through the history of the Chelsea Flower Show, but also through changes in popular garden styles as well as through the greater cultural history of England in the twentieth century. Anyone interested in garden history, English gardens or modern British history should be familiar with this cultural icon of the English garden world, and Brent Elliott's book is just the introduction needed by American gardeners. The photos alone are endlessly enjoyable, and Elliot's narration of the story of the show provides just enough background for the photos, but not so much as to prove dull to general readers. Highly recommended for readers who want to know more about the biggest flower show on earth. (For more reviews that include photos, please visit my garden blog: gardenfancy.blogspot.com.)

2013 saw the publication of the best-selling RHS Chelsea Flower Show: a Centenary Celebration. This new paperback edition for 2014 captures the magic of the 2013 show by revealing the best gardens, people, plants and events that made the show so memorable. From the first admission of gnomes to the Royal Hospital showground to controversial judging and Prince Harry's commemorative garden, this book documents the best of the 2013 show to provide an up to date analysis of what makes Chelsea special. For 101 years, RHS Chelsea Flower Show has been the annual event in the world of horticulture. Royal Horticultural Society insider Brent Elliott explains how the show has grown and

changed, how it is has formed part of the social calendar and how the nation's taste in garden design and planting has been reflected and shaped by Chelsea over the years. Short pieces from some of our greatest nurserymen, nurserywomen and garden designers describe what Chelsea means to them, along with pieces from those who present the show to the public and those behind the scenes who pull it all together. A wealth of illustration draws from the extensive RHS archive and includes photographs in colour and black and white, plans and posters, many published here for the first time. Whether you come for the nurseries or the show gardens, to buy gardening gloves or foxgloves, or whether you simply prefer to beat the crowds and read all about it, this magnificent book conjures up the full Chelsea experience.

'stunningly illustrated book ... packed with wonderful photographs of displays past and present that will have you reaching for your dibber.' 'authoritative and evocatively illustrated book... equally compelling is the charting of the cavalcade of social and cultural influences that have shaped the show. Chelsea may be 100, but she is not in her dotage, and, one hopes, will long continue to surprise and delight.' 'The text crackles with his customary wry wit, and is peppered with glorious nuggets ... the illustrations are especially rich.' 'there is no better person to research and write the history of the Chelsea Flower Show than Brent Elliott ...' "the essential souvenir of a show that has reflected and shaped tastes in garden design and planting for the past 100 years .. the chronological chapters provide a fascinating journey from the early shows to present day." "rich in anecdotes as well as history and is superbly illustrated". 'relive the glory of this year's centenary RHS Chelsea Flower Show'