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LOG ON to gardening

property



BY TOBY MUSGRAVE
The TV Gardener

IT'S been freezing cold, misty and mournful.

Yes, it must be Christmas. And you really don't want to be out in the garden.

But the good news is that you can carry on gardening – on the internet.

Now that real jobs are almost over until next spring, it's the perfect time to go online.

The worldwide web never ceases to amaze with just how much information you can find at the click of a mouse.

For general gardening advice about a wide range of topics, a very comprehensive start point is the Royal Horticultural Society's website at www.ths.org.uk. It's a deep mine of information.

Information

Through their website it's also possible to get information on how to purchase tickets for the Society's various flower shows, including the famous Chelsea Show.

Tickets usually go on sale in January and always sell very quickly, so now is the time to be checking up on how to get hold of those precious tickets.

Another great resource is the BBC gardening website, which has a whole heap of information and comments.

Head for www.bbc.co.uk/gardening where you can get involved in discussions about your problems, and offer others the benefit of your wisdom.

There's also the highly informative

How to be a Gardener area which is great for beginners. It should be – I was the Horticultural Consultant for the project!) For those looking for a bit more detail about a particular passion or pleasure, be it an infatuation for rhododendrons, a desire to grow lilies, a love of Japanese gardens, or an enthusiasm for water gardens, there are many specialist websites.

Many also have a notice board section where it is possible to get in touch with like-minded enthusiasts, where questions can be posted to other members, and, hopefully, answers received.

Just Google your chosen subject and you'll find advice by the shovel-load out there.

While researching this article, I even discovered a forum dedicated to those

who are interested in growing giant vegetables.

A great source of books, often sold at discount prices is www.amazon.co.uk or its US counterpart www.amazon.com.

Both sites also have second-hand books on offer, an especially useful tool for books that are out-of-print.

Another absolutely wonderful site for

old books is www.abebooks.com. This is an amazing site that links more than 13,000 second-hand booksellers from all around over the world, and has just about everything.

It's always worth checking international sellers, especially in the US and Australia. Even when you add on shipping costs, it's often less expensive to purchase from there than locally in the UK.

It is also fun to look for really rare books. My record asking price so far is over £60,000 for a book published in 1497!

If you're visiting gardens in the UK or abroad, it's always worth checking with a keyword search to see if the garden has its own website. Many do, and it certainly makes planning a trip easier.

A very good British site which gives heaps of information about gardens worldwide is www.gardensvisit.com. The guide is arranged by geography, and where applicable, links to the gardens' websites are posted.

There are also adverts from different companies who organise garden tours and holidays. There's also a bibliography with reviews and a comprehensive section dedicated to garden history.

The story of garden history and garden-making is a fascinating one, and there's much on offer on the web.

Website www.gardensvisit.com has an online version of the wonderful book *A History of Garden Art*, which was first published in 1928 by Marie Gothein.

Online university Suite101 also posts great articles about gardening, garden history and garden design. The web address you need here is www.suite101.com.

And for an introduction to the subject of garden history, why not visit my own website www.tobymusgrave.com and follow the link on the home page.

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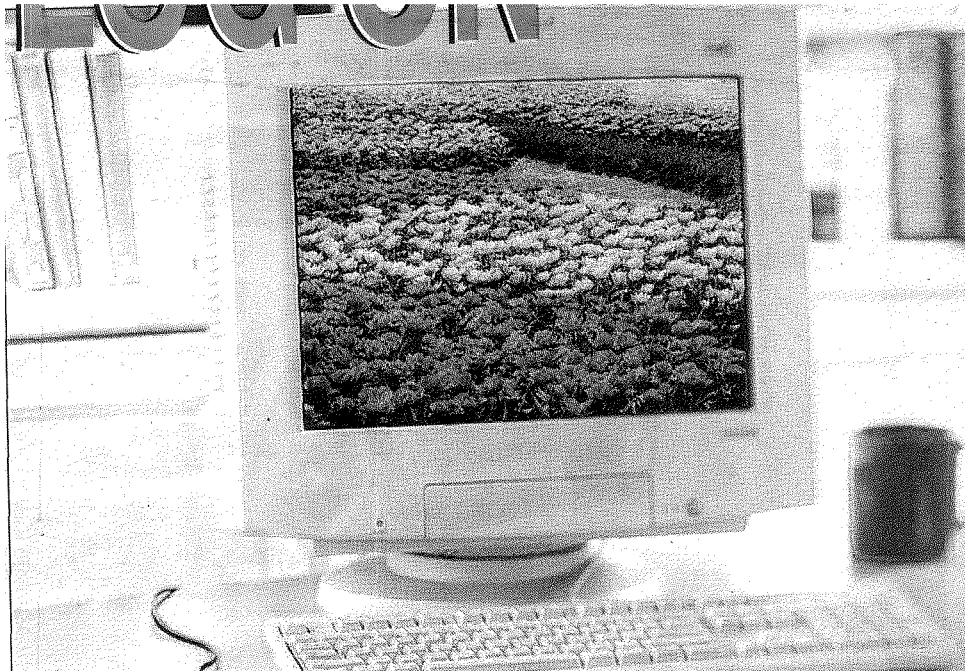
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