

Forum 2025 - Speakers



Zara and Angus Gordon Lennox - Gordon Castle Walled Garden

Angus and Zara Gordon Lennox took over the running of the Gordon Castle estate in 2008. Once they had rewired and replumbed the castle fit for exclusive use guests, their attention turned to the Walled Garden which had been put down to grass for the previous 30 years.

In 2014 Arne Maynard was asked to design a master plan for the 8 acres which Zara, along with a small garden team, have been creating over the last 11 years - a new productive and beautiful space.

Gordon Castle Walled Garden has won Historic Houses Garden of the Year and the RHS regional partner garden of the year.

Zara will give us her insights into their work and ambitions behind the restoration, to establish what we see today.



Maggie Tran

Head of Gardens and Growing for Tanera Mòr.

Tanera Mòr is a large-scale island restoration and regeneration project in the far North West of Scotland.

Maggie's role includes growing food for the island's many guests and 130 members of staff in an ecologically sustainable way, with an emphasis on increasing biodiversity and horticultural innovation in the often harsh northern coastal environment context. She also facilitates guests in therapeutic garden work.

Maggie trained at Great Dixter and RHS Wisley and was a RHS/ GCA Interchange Fellow at Longwood Gardens in the USA. Prior to her work on Tanera, for five years she was the head gardener of Bramdean House, a private garden in Hampshire. This role included developing a one acre kitchen garden and renovating its extensive ornamental borders.

She takes inspiration from restoration and rewilding projects like Birch Farm and the Knepp Estate and is developing ways to adapt some of their methods and approaches to the unique project and setting of the Highlands. On Tanera, Maggie combines current regenerative practices, crofting lore (specialised small scale agriculture specific to Scotland) and the discipline of Victorian style kitchen gardening.

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Chris Wardle

Garden and Designed Landscape Manager – Aberdeenshire and Angus, National Trust for Scotland.

Having changed career from the military to horticulture, Chris has worked for 25 years for the National Trust for Scotland (NTS) in a variety of roles from assistant Head Gardener then Head Gardener at Crathes Castle, to Garden Advisor and plant database manager, and seconded to administer the School of Heritage Gardening at Threave.

Training at Capel Manor College, Enfield and then at Askham Bryan, York. Chris has worked at Sutton Place, Guildford and High Beeches in Sussex. A Chartered Horticulturist with IOH and member of the PGG, Chris's specialism is in trees, woodland and landscape management.

His wife Ruth is also a horticulturist, running her own gardening business for 16 years before joining the NTS as gardener. She is now Head Gardener at Castle Fraser, one of our hosts for the garden visits on Friday 19th September.



Nick Dunn VMH

Director, Frank P. Matthews

For decades, Nick has been a 'cornerstone of British horticulture' establishing Frank P. Matthews reputation for British trees across the UK and internationally. Nick started aged 10, helping his father Andrew Dunn, in his grandfather Frank Matthews nursery.

Nick studied at Hadlow College, then working throughout the UK and USA on a variety of crops, eventually returning to work on the nursery in 1974.

He has been instrumental in the introduction of new tree species and cultivars, ensuring the nursery is at the forefront of horticulture and tree cultivation, and through his many external roles, supporting the gardening and top fruit sector and protecting plant health across the UK.

Company director at Frank P Matthews, Nick is also member of the RHS Council, Horticulture Board, Gardens Advisor, and many other Committee involvements. In 2010 he published his book 'Trees for your Garden' in conjunction with the Tree Council, the foreword written by the late Peter Seabrook.

Nick was awarded the RHS Victoria Medal of Honour (VMH) in 2017.