

GARDEN NEWS

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Mediterranean Border in Winter

BUCKING THE LATEST FASHION

As I write this a severe weather warning is being issued, telling us to expect night-time temperatures of -4°C and a heavy snowfall in Central London and that in December with the High Border still displaying colour! And of course it had to be the year I had decided to adopt a different way of preparing the border for spring.

Instead of cutting everything down in one go, we worked seemingly unsystematically from one perennial clump to another, putting in the alliums and tulip bulbs interspersed with their under-planting of forget-me-nots and aquilegias before moving on to the next pocket. To be honest there were moments of emotional hesitation, especially when I had to select the next clump that would fall under the blade of our Turkish knives, but we were not alone during these dithering moments: our blackbird family observed us patiently, while our robin, with his fluttering hops and jaunty attitude, could not wait until we had finished digging manure into the cleared ground, darting around

our feet to feast on the surfacing worms and caterpillars which provide the birds with their winter 'speck'. This plump, round-headed robin bears an uncanny resemblance to the bulbs of the early flowering tulip 'Orange Emperor' which we were planting, with their orange-red papery tunics. On the other hand *Tulipa* 'Purissima' looked more like a garden gnome, with a pointed red head and its roots suggesting a little white beard. I wondered if a real tulip specialist can identify the individual cultivars by the shape and colour of their papery tunics. I fear I only distinguish between them when it is nearly too late, but fortunately the presence of our confident robin prompted me to remove the wrong cultivar I'd put into the ground.

I expect you may have noticed on your lunchtime walks during the autumn that we did not hurry to take out the skeletons of kiss-me-over-the-gate (*Persicaria orientale*) or the sunflower 'Valentine' at the first sign of decay. We allowed them to complete their natural cycle and let them develop their seed heads,

which is the more natural approach to gardening. It is also a very fashionable winter look, although that is a matter of taste and tolerance, and I confess that my intolerance of untidiness was over-stretched, but that was allayed by a feel-good factor as we were providing a source of energy-rich food for our blue-tits, which make themselves at home for the winter in the Mediterranean border, their short, fluttering flights bringing life to its fading colours.

I am a Doubting Thomas about the trendy fashion for such a winter look, something much promoted by designers and the gardening press in the UK. One of the main reasons for the traditional cut-down of a herbaceous border is to prevent pests over-wintering and to stop the spread of diseases, so taking out the summer's growth of plants like perennial sunflowers will curtail the spread of mildew spores and cutting back other plants like delphiniums will stop bacterial blossom blight being able to survive through the winter.

In Europe it is possible to follow the fashion of leaving a border up throughout the winter as the temperatures there drop below -10°C , freezing the ground for several months which kills off these pests and diseases. However, our blackbirds, robin and blue-tits will be provided for here by the safe guardians of the winter – grasses, cardoons and sedums which are 99% disease free and therefore will also give soul food for the two-legged visitors to the Inner Temple Garden in the dormant months of winter.

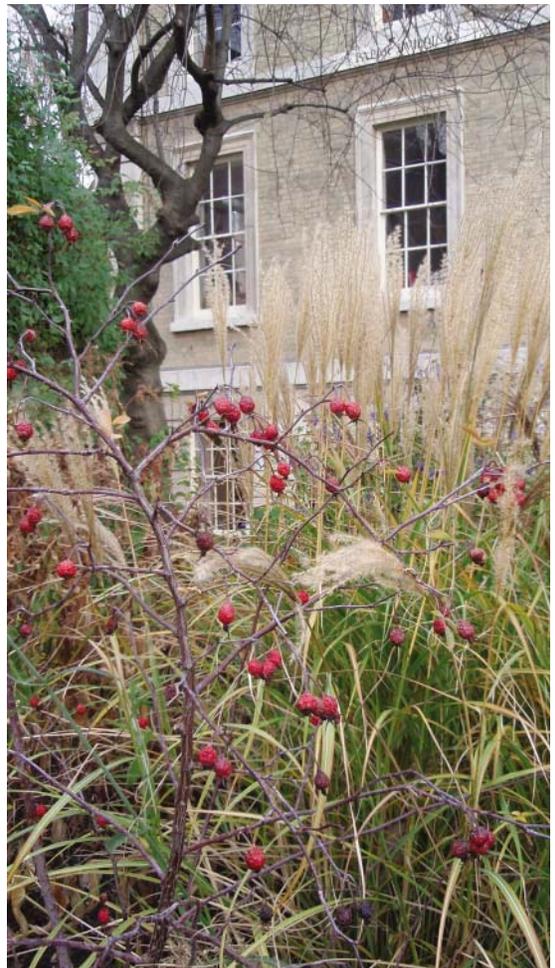
By the time you read this we will know whether the Met Office predictions of deep frost and snow were accurate, but whatever the weather has thrown at us the promise of spring will soon begin to show in the bright colours of our bulbs which are ready to break through the ground, followed by a splendid display of 9500 tulips and alliums making the Garden *en fête* for our first Open Day of the year on Sunday, 8th May, when we open for the charity the National Garden Scheme. Of course all of you will have the chance to enjoy that show in the weeks beforehand, and I hope that every season in the Garden will provide you with pleasure during 2011.

LONDON IN BLOOM



A CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

I'm proud to say that the Inner Temple Garden was rated 'Excellent' in 2010 by the London in Bloom Trustees. An even greater accolade is that we have been recognised by the City of London as having contributed to their having won Gold in the Britain in Bloom awards and Gold for sustainable landscaping in the City in Bloom awards.



Rose glauca with Miscanthus sinensis 'Undine'

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HARTEY THANKS FOR PAKINGTON'S PAYNES

BY HILARY HALE

AUTHOR OF *THE GREAT GARDEN: A HISTORY OF THE INNER TEMPLE GARDEN FROM THE 12TH TO THE 21ST CENTURY*



Reproduced by kind permission of Lord Hampton. Photograph © Andrew Harris.

One of the frustrations in researching the guide to the Inner Temple Garden was that constraints of length prevented me from including any more than fleeting mentions of the Masters of the Bench whose vision, tenacity and good judgement over the centuries played important roles in its evolution. I am grateful to be allowed some extra room to correct that omission, beginning with John Pakington, who laid the foundations for what was to be later called the 'Grete Garden'.

In 1528-9, his first year as Treasurer, Pakington, pictured above, instigated the erection of a new embankment of the River, which was completed at the end of his tenure in 1533-4. This is the angled line so clearly visible on the early maps of the area, expanding the Inn's southern land holdings from where the terrace outside the Hall now lies to 10-11 King's Bench Walk to the east and the end of Harcourt Buildings to the west.

Pakington was one of four brothers from a well-to-do Worcestershire family who had influence in the Tudor court, and John is recorded as being a favourite of Henry VIII. In the year of the King's coronation he was made choreographer of the court of common pleas and shortly thereafter received a grant of land in Gloucestershire. This was to be the first of many: at the dissolution of the monasteries he was ceded all the lands formerly held by a nunnery at Westwood near Droitwich, and at his death in 1560 he owned 31 manors. He was Lent Reader in the Inner Temple in 1520 and his five years as Treasurer were packed with incident. On 5 April 1529 he received an extraordinary grant from Henry VIII, in that he was given permission to wear his hat in the King's presence 'or of any other persons whatsoever, and not to be uncovered on any

occasion or cause whatsoever against his will and good liking'. In 1531 he was heavily fined for a misdemeanour in the conduct of his office, but the following year was made serjeant-at-law.

At the same time he was not idle in the Inner Temple, an appreciation of him recorded in the Parliament of 5 February 1533-4, recognises not only his "many and sundry paynes in the buyldying of the walle betwene the Thamez and the garden" but of his greater pains in building new chambers, co-financing the new ceiling of the Hall with one Adam Pilkington, and of donating ten pounds towards the apparels of the Temple, generosity resulting in the order by Parliament that "all the chambers between the lybrarey and Barington's Rentes be hens forthe namyd and callyd Pakyngton's Rentes, and the companey, for his greate dyligens, labors, and payns takyn for the greate profet of the Howse of the seyde Temple, gevyth unto hym hartey thanks".

Shortly after that was written he was made a justice of North Wales and *custos rotulorum* for Worcestershire, where a calendar of that county's justices of peace described him as "a good, wise gentleman". He was knighted by Henry VIII in 1545, after he had led a commission to inquire into the embezzlement of jewels from the shrine of St David's.

His marriage to Anne Dacres resulted in the birth of two daughters, and his lands passed to his nephew whose son, also John, caught the eye of Elizabeth I. His physical attributes (he was said to be over 6ft tall) and prowess caused her to name him 'Lusty' Pakington, and a comparison of the portraits of the two men show many familial similarities, perhaps throwing light on Henry VIII's liking for the older Pakington and for the energy he expended for the betterment of the Inner Temple.