

National Achillea Plant Collection - Worth Park Crawley

Worth Park has just been awarded National Plant Collection status for its Achillea cultivars (yarrow) plants by Plant Heritage, who's principle aims are the conservation of garden plants.

Plant Heritage is the only national charity in the last 45 years to ensure the cultivated plants we grow will be available to future generations for cultural, medical, culinary, and aesthetic use. They do this through the National Plant Collection® scheme, our Plant Guardians® and our local group network. There are around 700 National Plant Collections containing over 95,000 different types of garden plants.

The project was started over two years ago by Stephen Peters, Head Gardener of Worth Park, and Tom Moore, Horticulture apprentice, at that time to adapt a particular area of the park for plant conservation. The plant collection now holds over 160 plants of 45 different varieties of various cultivars. The plants themselves are ideal for pollinators, drought tolerant and easy to propagate and therefore are a perfect addition to the park's ethos of sustainability and conservation.

There are important reasons of this plant collection and others across the UK. The world of plant conservation is constantly changing due to climate change, biodiversity loss and the advance of new plant pests and diseases.

Therefore, we must regard all plant collections, domestic or global, as a unique gene pool that has adaptive potential to climate change but also contributes to global efforts to halt biodiversity loss. It can also be regarded as a living resource library for scientific inquiry, recreation, conservation, botanical and horticultural education, public parks landscape aesthetics, seed science and plant heritage value. At the same time, these collections can help to support the creation of new cultivars and hybrids for the future.

Stephen Peters

Head Gardener and Curator

Worth Park