

Garden



# Gardener's Cuttings

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## The Evolution of the High Border

Over recent years, the High Border has been undergoing a transformation, moving away from the resource intensive management that relied heavily on annual bulbs in spring and various seasonal display changes throughout the year. Responding to climate change and responsible resource management, the adaptation of the border is based on detailed observation and evaluation of environmental conditions to blend beauty with sustainable cultivation.

One of the keys to this evolution is layered biodiverse planting, where reliable trees and shrubs form the

backbone, underplanted with resilient perennials, grasses, and self-seeding plants. This structure reduces the need for replanting and therefore lessens disturbance which helps to preserve the soil structure. Undisturbed soils consist of a network of billions of beneficial organisms, such as bacteria, fungi, insects, and earthworms which together create a wonderful environment for plant health and wildlife.

Sustainable cultivation also refers to the selection of plants – we focus on choosing plant species that tolerate a range of conditions whilst supporting pollinators. The reliance on annual bulbs has significantly been reduced, as they demand replanting each year and generate excess

Layered resilient planting to raise the aesthetic and biodiverse value.







*Camassia leichtlinii* 'Caerulea' surrounded by the soft foliage of *Ferula communis* (Giant Fennel) repeating each year in Spring.

waste. Instead, bulbs in pots provide seasonal highlights, while perennial bulbs such as *Narcissus*, *Allium* and *Camassia* naturalise over time adding ecological value.

When studying for my Master of Horticulture, I absorbed the concept of 'circular economy', which I have championed in the Garden ever since. A true circular economy means nothing goes to waste and to reduce or eliminate the dependency on external resources. The 'chop & drop' method keeps green waste to decompose in situ, enriching the soil with nutrients. Self-seeding plants are encouraged to create natural repetition and structure, while standing plants throughout winter provide vital habitat for insects and birds. Selective weeding ensures a natural balance without

Succession planting in the High Border ensuring a long season of interest.

stripping the garden of diversity. Organic matter is selectively overlaid onto the soil to enhance fertility and moisture retention.

Through this shift the High Border is a living, breathing ecosystem that thrives on resourcefulness. The long-season, pollinator friendly planting with repeating patterns creates an ever changing yet harmonious space where nature and cultivation coexist. Therefore, the greatest satisfaction I take away is the cultivation of a border by blending beauty with ecological responsibility. As custodians of our gardens, it is important to champion a conscious approach of reducing waste, conserving resources, and creating beautiful, biodiverse and wildlife friendly ecosystems.

Sophie merging and evolving with the planting.

