

# Books

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## The Genus Tulipa

Diana Everett 416pp, 2013, Kew Publishing, ISBN 9781842464816, RRP £68 **RHS price £42**

This eagerly-anticipated book took 10 years of dedication involving many thousands of miles of travel, much in remote areas of central Asia. It is an extraordinarily beautiful book; unusually, both written and illustrated by a botanical artist and not a botanist. Her love of the genus shines through, not only in her approach to the necessarily dry botanical descriptions but also in her personal introductions to each species.

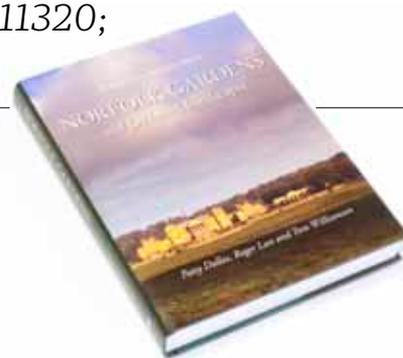
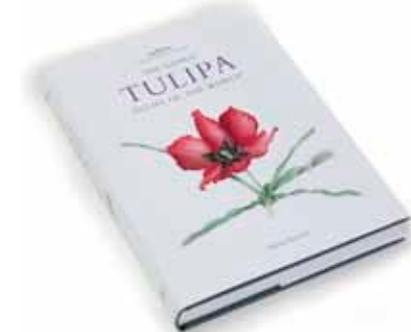
What sets this book apart as a work of art is its collection of 138 delicate and detailed watercolours, half of which were painted in the wild. Most of the others were painted at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew of plants grown from wild seed. These are supported

by excellent photographs of the plant taken in the wild where possible.

There are three introductory chapters. The first places tulips in their geographic and social setting, then there is a practical chapter by Kew horticulturist Richard Wilford on growing tulips. The third outlines the new classification system for tulip species, which has not yet been widely adopted – and its use here has introduced an inevitable complication into the book.

Tulips are intrinsically varied with a disparate distribution which has led to a plethora of species names, some 150 when Diana started her project. The new DNA-based classification has reduced this to 78, lumping many previously accepted species together. The editors then had the unenviable task of trying to slot Diana's 150 paintings and descriptions into the new classification, which makes for a slightly uncomfortable read.

This is not a gardening book, as few of these bulbs make good garden plants, but it is a must for lovers of tulip species. ●  
**Christine Skelmersdale** is Managing Director of Broadleigh Gardens



## Norfolk Gardens and Designed Landscapes

Patsy Dallas, Roger Last and Tom Williamson 200pp, 2013, Windgather Press, ISBN 9781905119929, RRP £29.95  
**RHS price £**

With an introduction by HRH the Prince of Wales and a weight that qualifies it as a 'tome', this book announces its intentions as an erudite work before you even get to the text.

The authors are Tom Williamson and Patsy Dallas, both landscape historians, and Roger Last, a Norfolk-based film and garden maker, supported by volunteers from the Norfolk Gardens Trust. The resulting publication is a kind of 'Pevsner' for lovers of designed landscapes in the county.

It kicks off with a fair amount of hand-wringing about the enormous task the authors set themselves. But it was worth it. The introduction alone is a fascinating, easy-to-read distillation of Norfolk's great landscape history.

The bulk of the book details hundreds of gardens by parish in alphabetical order. This caused me to search for a map. The authors seem keen to disassociate themselves from a garden visiting guide. Even so, a map would have been a valuable addition to the reader's understanding of the relationship between the gardens and/or the wider landscape.

Otherwise, I loved this book. I rang a few of the garden owners who were also positive. Descriptions vary between a few paragraphs for smaller gardens to four pages for the huge parkland of Holkham Hall. There is a captivating balance between historical facts and contemporary descriptions. The images are chosen for their quality and relevance and complement the text beautifully.

In the future this book will become a precious snapshot of a county rich in heritage and garden design. ●  
**Ursula Cholmeley** is Garden Director of Easton Walled Gardens.

## Bamboo

Susanne Lucas 224pp, 2013, Reaktion Books, ISBN 9781780232010, RRP £16 **RHS price £**

This book is both a celebration and exploration into the impact this ancient plant has had on our world. From its early beginnings, to the diverse role bamboo has played in food, horticulture, navigation and architecture, the author takes us on a delightful journey through bamboo's majestic history.

Complementing this colourful work is an assortment of photographs and illustrations, leading us through a curiosity shop of facts and timelines, and it is from these we sense the passion the author has for her subject. But this book is not a nostalgic reflection on how bamboo has shaped the past. On the contrary, it is a book brimming with potential

and resonating with possibilities, whether using bamboo as a natural power source, a carbon dioxide 'sink' or for its medicinal properties. We are reminded, and astounded, at the numerous applications bamboo has to offer our industrialised world.

Especially useful to professional collectors is her appendix, which cites the many different tribes and subtribes of bamboo, as well as a complete bibliography, a further reading list, associations and a detailed collection of gardens and arboreta from around the world. This diverse, radiant work is entertaining and enjoyable. ●

**Michael Brisbane**, nurseryman, has more than 25 years experience with bamboo

