

## THE ROYAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY'S ALPINE AND ROCK GARDEN EXPERT GROUP

As one of the seven RHS Expert Groups, the RHS Alpine and Rock Garden Expert Group provides an invaluable source of horticultural expertise. Formed in 1936 as the Joint Rock Garden Plant Committee, the group consists of experts in these specialised plants and their diverse growing conditions. Members come from all corners of horticulture – amateur, professional and commercial. They voluntarily commit their time to act as RHS ambassadors, helping to:

- advance the knowledge and understanding of horticultural and sustainable growing practices;
- extend our regional, national and international networks;
- share the best in gardening with RHS members and the wider gardening public;
- and help to open up gardening to beginners, young people and urban dwellers.

Some of the ways in which the RHS Alpine and Rock Garden Expert Group does this are:

- By delivering outreach activities with a wide audience such as providing advice at RHS shows, visiting relevant gardens (including RHS gardens), nurseries and community groups;
- To input into events at RHS Shows, Gardens and other RHS events to promote horticulture and engage more people in gardening;
- To help build horticulture for the future by promoting and enabling opportunities for careers in horticulture through active engagement with students at all levels;
- To submit proposals for plant trials, establishing recommendations for trials and the make-up of relevant assessment forums;
- To coordinate rolling reviews of the relevant Award of Garden Merit (AGM) list for garden worthy plants;
- To liaise with the Science and Collections Guidance and Oversight Group where appropriate, including assisting with support for Trials output;
- To assess, recommend and ratify plants for award where appropriate; including RHS Chelsea Plant of the Year;
- To assist with website content, publications, media, trials reports and other areas;
- The group also attends Alpine Garden Society and Scottish Rock Garden Club events all over the UK, judging and assessing rock garden and alpine plants for RHS plant awards, including the Award of Garden Merit.

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The RHS Expert Group will meet at the following SRGC shows in 2026:

Perth, Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> April

Hexham Autumn, Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> October

The 2026 Alpine and Rock Garden Expert Group core members are:

Carole Bainbridge, Ian Bainbridge, David Carver, Razvan Chisu,  
Diane Clement (Vice-chair), Colin Crosbie, Ray Drew, Kit Grey-Wilson,  
Jim McGregor, Gavin McNaughton, David Millward (Chair), John Mitchell,  
Sally Petitt, David Rankin, Bertie Swainston

RHS Expert Group Co-ordinator: Helen Burden

The full membership can be found at:

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/horticulture-hub/rhs-expert-groups>

Contact the Expert Group at [expertgroups@rhs.org.uk](mailto:expertgroups@rhs.org.uk)

## Plants submitted for awards at meetings in Scotland

Details of plants to be considered at the Expert Group meeting must be entered on forms obtainable from the honorary secretary (Dr Carole Bainbridge Tel: 01557 814141; email: [greenscenedesign@hotmail.com](mailto:greenscenedesign@hotmail.com)) on the morning of the show and returned by 11 am.

- a) Plants may be entered for the competitive classes in the show, in which case the show secretary will arrange for the plant to be moved to the meeting room. In order to assist the show secretary, the owner must provide a separate note of the plants and the classes in which they are being exhibited.
- b) Plants not on the show bench must be delivered by the owner directly to the meeting room by 11 am.

A herbarium specimen may be required for the horticultural herbarium at the RHS Garden at Wisley, in order to provide scientific material for record and study.

The following awards may be recommended:

First Class Certificate, Award of Merit, Preliminary Certificate  
Botanical Certificate, Cultural Certificate

*The group may also recommend a plant to be considered for  
the Award of Garden Merit.*