



Thurloe Square Gardens - Horticultural Policy

General Design Principle

It is the intent to respect the original Victorian concept of the design: a structured plan integrating curved inner paths, which invite curiosity and exploration, and straight perimeter paths which parallel the surrounding roads, to create a charmingly informal space - a pleasure garden. From within, dense perimeter planting creates a sense of privacy. The perimeter planting also contrasts with the solid classical façade of terraces that surround the Square on three sides, and conceals the vehicular bustle of the Cromwell Road to the north. Major trees in the perimeter beds, as well as major trees within the central area of the garden, create a sense of scale and permanence all year round, and, when in leaf, add to the pleasurable sense of 'privacy' within. Maintaining, infilling and replacing, as necessary, the major trees around the perimeter, and centrally, is an ongoing commitment, and an essential part of long term planning. Similarly, we are keeping the perimeter planting dense and substantially to eye level or above, with a renewal program to replace some of the senescent shrubs such as lilac and aucuba. The concept of landscape unfolding as you walk through the Square requires densely planted, internal shrub and mixed borders as well, of at least medium height and containing enough evergreens to create a sense of opacity.

Planting Principles

1. Climate changes and increasingly restricted availability of water impact on the choice of new plants. Drought-tolerant plants are desirable, although newly planted plants may still need watering until established. It is accepted that reinstating the defunct computerized watering system is not sensible, in view of the increasing cost and increasingly restricted availability of water.
2. Encouraging wildlife is another important factor in choosing new plants. Scented plants and those which berry or fruit (avoiding poisonous species) are preferable, as are reproducing species over sterile cultivars and hybrids.
3. Large, informal swathes of bulbs, corms, and tubers such as cyclamen are to be built up and naturalized, adding low- and medium-height interest, especially out of high season. Bedding plants, especially in formal bedding out schemes, are to be avoided. As a general guide, the smaller the individual plant, the larger the grouping.
4. Architectural/picturesque large shrubs or small trees will be planted individually as focal points where appropriate, such as at one or both ends of a curved bed, by a gate or where two paths converge.
5. Wherever possible, existing planting will be propagated, through self seeding, suckers, division of clumps and easily rooted cuttings, to establish new beds, infill existing beds, or be bartered with other gardens managed by Robert Player.
6. Small areas of lawn which are awkward to maintain, such as those between large perimeter beds, will be gradually replaced with ground cover hardy perennials and shrubs.
7. Mundane structures, such as the leaf compost enclosure and electricity substation in the northern perimeter bed and the gardeners' compound, will be camouflaged by dense planting.