

Good to know

Town Place, Freshfield, RH17 7NR
Open through the National Garden
Scheme Sun 9, Thurs 13, Thurs 20, Sun
23, Sun 30 June, Sun 7 July (2pm-6pm)
£6, children free. Cream teas
Also by arrangement June and July
for groups 20+
www.ngs.org.uk

Everything's rosy

Town Place in Freshfield draws in visitors with its romantically planted garden brimming with harmonious colour and scent

WORDS AND PHOTOS: Leigh Clapp



Good colour and fragrance are important attributes for the roses chosen.



Cupped old-fashioned blooms



Jewels of raindrops.



Enjoy the colours and scent in the shrub rose garden

Stretching over three acres the atmospheric gardens at Town Place peak in June with over 600 roses, herbaceous borders, a herb garden, potager and topiary. This beautiful landscape has been created since 1990 by owners Anthony and Maggie McGrath, both keen gardeners, who work very much as a team. Their shared interest in visiting gardens and an admiration for the classic English cottage style has guided the evolution. Anthony's focus is on the overall structure, sketching plans as they developed each area, while Maggie who has taken courses in horticulture and garden design deals with the finer points such as planting and colour schemes. "We wanted separate areas for roses, a spring garden, herbaceous borders, herb garden and so on and it all evolved," Anthony adds.

June is all about the roses, set off by the deep greens of yew and boxwood hedging, forming pretty pictures around the characterful 17th century Sussex farmhouse. "In June the season is just beginning and the garden looks fresh," says Maggie. "The herb garden should be ablaze with colour. Depending on the weather there will be a show of roses. As the month goes on the roses get into full show and

the herbaceous borders steadily come to climax."

Roses American Pillar, Paul's Scarlet and Albertine scramble over the timber façade of the house forming a backdrop to the sunken floribunda rose parterre prolific with 150 roses in shades of crimson and pink, such as Munstead Wood and Eglantyne. Framing the scene are pergolas draped in climbers, including the prolific creamy white, fragrant Mme Alfred Carriere.

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Stroll across the expanse of lawn and past the 45-metre purple themed herbaceous border backed with a wonderful tapestry yew and conifer hedge to the English rose garden where you'll find some 400 roses of 47 cultivars. A plan displayed in the summerhouse, itself clad in the clear pink, thornless Zéphrine Drouhin, will help you identify the medley of beauty before you. Roses are planted en masse, enclosed in low hedges, with lawn paths and tunnels of pergolas abundant with more climbers, including crimson, cupped Flstaff, soft pink

Lady Sylvia, blush toned Mme Butterfly and the slightly deeper Ophelia. Take a moment to sit on the bench and absorb the scents and shades of blooms all around, before moving on to the spring garden with its lines of standard Heritage roses.

Other areas to explore include the rather wonderful herb garden, loose and carefree, yet still with that touch of elegance from a central arch topped with Mme Alfred Carriere and focal point terracotta urns placed to finish the design. A camomile path and the medley of herbs and cottage garden plants is quite delightful. Journey also to the potager, an orchard with beehives, a hornbeam allée in the shape of a Romanesque church complete with cloisters, an aromatic chess board garden and an ancient oak, believed to be 800 years old, before completing your visit with a delicious cream tea. ♦

An extra treat for the diary
Be quick off the mark to visit *Lowder Mill in Fernhurst, GU27 3DJ, opening for the 15th year, this lovely garden may also be familiar as a location for the Disney film Christopher Robin. Open through NGS: Sat 1 June (11am-5.30pm), Sun 2 June (10.30am-5.30pm), £4.50, children £2. www.ngs.org.uk*

Get the look

- Roses star across the garden with dedicated beds of shrub roses, climbers and standards
- Traditional style from clipped hedging and a long herbaceous border
- Different areas loosely divided
- Romantic billowing plantings
- Densely planted herbs and flowers in a joyous jumble
- Balance between formality with structures including hedging, clipped form and pergolas and harmonious informal planting infill
- Focal points from planted urns
- Seating placed to enjoy the vistas

MAGGIE'S ROSE GROWING TIPS

- It's important to realise that modern roses are quite artificial and far removed from their wild ancestors. They need a lot of love and attention
- Feed with well-rotted farmyard manure plus fertiliser (we use Vitax Q4)
- Spray with a fungicide every few weeks, starting from whenever there are new shoots in the spring
- Water new plants
- Dead-head vigorously through the flowering season.
- Winter pruning is in two stages, each taking a third off. Finally, it's important to reject varieties that do not do well. Some roses are fussy about soil and situation. So if they don't like it you should cut your losses and replace them.



The joyous jumble in the herb garden