

Tresco 2019



Tresco Abbey Garden is located on a small island, surrounded by Atlantic Ocean, as we approached the island ourselves on a small rocking boat, I thought to myself that whatever is waiting for us there will be spectacular and I was right. The Garden has incredible history to learn about, wide plant range to explore (over 4 000 species) and useful skills to gain for horticultural apprentices.

In one week, we improved our knowledge of Mediterranean zone plants which included many hardy, wind and chill resilient trees and shrubs. These plants were used as one big, living, windbreaking protection creating a sheltered microclimate inside its walls. This microclimate in combination with the Isles of Scilly's unique weather conditions (the temperature very rarely drops down below 10C) allows Tresco Abbey Garden to grow remarkable plants and rightfully holding status of subtropical paradise.

The garden has been put through many struggles in the past but two of them were truly catastrophic. The frost and snow in 1987 which destroyed almost 80% of the plants in the garden. Thousands of tender plants, succulents, palm trees over 50 years old and even frost-tender New Zealand Flame Trees (introduced in 1851) were lost. The second event which caused enormous damage was a hurricane in January 1990. Ninety percent of the shelterbelt which was surrounding the garden for over 130 years was gone. Despite all of these unfortunate circumstances Tresco Abbey Garden has recovered, thanks to the hard work of many dedicated horticulturists, and re-established itself to its present glory, which we were able to see, explore and work at.

For one week we became part of a Tresco Abbey garden team, we were given a tour of the garden by the head gardener, Andrew Lawson who talked us through the importance of the shelterbelt, plant ranges specific to the planting zones inside of the garden (three main plant zones-hot top terrace, mild middle terrace and cooler, shady lower terrace), techniques and maintenance challenges, seed collecting and their distribution, traditional tasks such as cut flowers, fresh fruit and vegetables for the Abbey and seasonal requirements.



Protea neriifolia

Nursery

We also have been given detailed tour through the nursery which is positioned on a lower level of the garden. One could clearly see the advantages of having the nursery on a site, as most of the propagated plants came from seeds and cuttings which were collected in the garden. Leucadendron propagation from seeds could also see the benefits of the nursery being on site as the branches which were pruned out from the Leucadendron argenteum were burned and the smoke was run through water (creating 'smokewater') in which the seeds were soaked as part of the seed scarifying processes. It certainly is a challenge to propagate some of the plants which grows on Tresco as they can have quite complicated and unique germination process (recreating the natural environment for seed germination) and I really enjoyed to be talked through the different techniques.



Some of the plants which we were lucky to see in bloom.

Our trip took place in the last week of November, this time of the year in many gardens usually means 'rest time' the time in which garden goes to sleep. That doesn't implement in Tresco Abbey Garden. It seemed to me that the garden didn't took notice of summer being over and just carried on blooming.

As you can see on the top right, we were able to spot stunning Protea cyanoides and see below Protea 'Ice Pink'.



The top terrace was covered with Aeoniums, Agaves and Aloes which were just about to start flowering. Blossoming while we were there were Erica discolour, Leptospermum scoparium (see below) and Grevillea lanigera.



Correa decumbens

