

Garden notes

OWNER Paul Beard
LOCATION 14 Grays Terrace, Redhills, Durham. DH1 4AU
GARDEN SIZE Two thirds of an acre
SOIL Mainly clay with pockets of sand
VISITED Mid May
SPECIAL FEATURES Part woodland, part rock garden, this informal and unique spot sits on a tapering ridge with a spectacular view over the city of Durham. Rare plants abound on a very steep site.

CATHEDRAL VIEW

"I love to sit on the deck and look down on the garden with the view beyond, says Paul. The cathedral is particularly beautiful in the afternoon light and is floodlit at night. Occasionally I can see it through the smoke of a steam train on the line below!"

FEW GARDENS have such an incredible outlook. Paul Beard's garden sits on a high ridge with one of the finest views of Durham Cathedral. Framing the scene and making the most of the borrowed landscape, Paul grows flowering trees and shrubs under which many rare plants thrive.

It was 30 years ago that Paul and his wife Jean moved to this special place. Back then it was an unkempt formal garden with hybrid tea roses growing on a series of terraces. "We first saw the garden in June," Paul remembers fondly. "It was very warm with a gentle breeze and the overgrown lawn was tall with grasses and wildflowers; the sort of place you just wanted to sit and have a picnic."

What followed was a gradual transformation from hard edges to soft planting, from paving slabs to grassy paths. "Formality's not my scene at all," says Paul. So today paths wind their way up and down the steep ground giving a natural feel to the hillside. As well as planting trees for height and blossom, Paul also grows plants at the other end of the scale. "I've always been very keen on alpines," he explains, "and I built lots of rockeries to take up the slopes." In this way the rockeries with their layered strata and gravel scree beds seem part of the landscape, ▶

■ RED TRILLIUM

Trilliums like the moist soil enriched with humus. "I have different species growing in the shade of trees," says Paul.



Me & my cathedral garden

Knowledgeable plantsman Paul Beard grows rare trees and shrubs to frame his stunning view of Durham Cathedral



RIGHT PATH
The grassy pathways are often at an angle as the underlying clay is always moving down the slope. "I don't worry about the grass too much," says Paul, "and I've got used to cutting the lawns on this steep slope."



COME AND VISIT
Visitors to 14 Grays Terrace are welcome by appointment with donations to the NGS. Call Paul for further information on 0191 5972849. See *The Yellow Book* or ngs.org.uk for details.

TERRACE LANDSCAPING
"The house was minute when we bought it. We added on and the garden evolved around it," Paul explains.



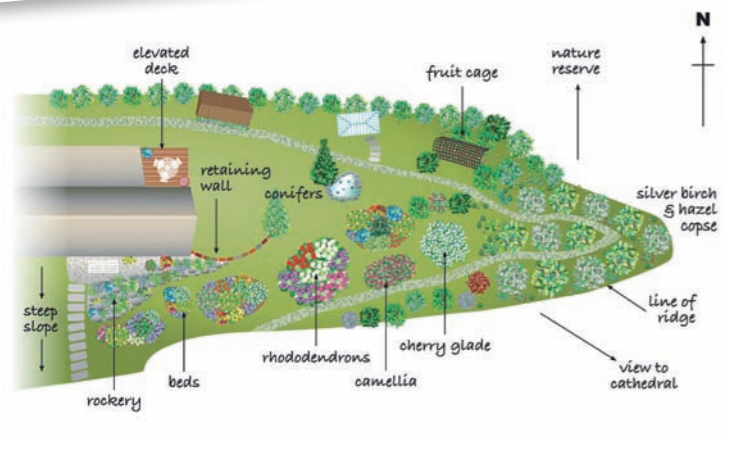
providing a perfect growing space for bulbs, gentians, cyclamen, dwarf rhododendrons and many favourite rarities.

Thanks to his skilful planting Paul now has the best of both worlds as alpine treasures revel in the sunny south-facing slope whilst woodland plants flourish in the cool shade of the trees. Amongst them are hellebores, dicentras, trilliums and arisaemas; "I'm now most into woodland plants. They go so well with my collection of amelanchiers," says Paul, who held a National Collection of these delightful trees for 15 years. Working as a landscape architect for Newcastle City

Council, he found their versatility had so much to recommend them and still keeps 15 species and cultivars. "Amelanchiers have true all year round interest," he explains "Their winter tracery, breaking of bud, delicate flowers, lovely, edible berries and great autumn colour. They are also good for the birds and amazingly resilient." Some of the other plants that Paul likes to try are more on the edge of hardiness. "I like to grow quite a lot of borderline plants," he says, "such as species from South Africa or California. I'm often tempted by unpronounceable names that I've never heard of before!"

Judging by the series of natural looking habitats that he has created for his diverse collection of plants, it's clear that even the rarities are in safe hands, helping to provide a wonderful backdrop to a unique and historic view. ■

CHEERY CHERRY
This white-blossomed cherry fills a grassy glade. "It's self fertile with dark red fruits – one of the best dessert cherries," says Paul.



Paul grows sun-loving plants in a rockery on the south side of the house, where he likes to sit on this bench looking down over the garden



SPRING GENTIAN
The surrounding space and muted background in a rockery is perfect for using short bursts of intense colour like that provided by this spring gentian. Its wide trumpets are unbelievably blue and its foliage sprawls along the ground. Try growing it in gravel as Paul is doing here.



CYCLAMEN
Cyclamen have lovely foliage and flowers. Says Paul: "They don't have any pests or diseases to speak of and spread easily. I can't understand why more people don't grow cyclamen. I grow them under a gravel mulch."



BERKEYA
Add contrasting foliage to liven up a rockery. Here the dramatic thistle spears of a berkeya from South Africa, offset the fragility of tulips. "It was covered in yellow daisy flowers last year," says Paul.



IDEAS TO STEAL

THE YELLOW BOOK *news*

"Sometimes a garden needs to be viewed in the context of the much wider landscape in which it sits," writes Chris Morley of The National Gardens Scheme. "One such garden is Fernhill near Wellington in Somerset, which has views across to the Blackdown Hills and its famous monument

commemorating The Duke of Wellington's victory at Waterloo. The garden boasts a myriad of unusual plants and hidden paths, leading through roses, and banks of hydrangeas." Full details of gardens open on behalf of the NGS can be found in *The Yellow Book*.