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GARDENING TALENT

Becky Crowley

Becky is cut-flower gardener at Chatsworth, growing flowers for the house and associated events. She has won a keen Instagram following with her seasonal glimpses of the blooms she's growing

PORTRAIT ANDREW MONTGOMERY

First plant love As a child I loved moss, so much so that I asked my dad to bring a bag of it back from a trip to the Yorkshire Dales. I grew up on a 1970s-built suburban estate in Grimsby; an entirely moss-less place, so for me, moss was the stuff of camping trips to the countryside with family, and walks in woodlands with Gran.

Horticultural heroes From a cut-flower growing perspective, Sarah Raven and Erin Benzakein have been an incredible source of inspiration and knowledge. As has the Flowers from the Farm network; there are some extremely knowledgeable and determined flower folk working throughout Britain who inspire me daily.

Favourite garden Little Sparta, which was created by the late Ian Hamilton Finlay at his home in the Scottish Pentland Hills. It's the only garden I've ever been to that feels like an entire art work.

Worthwhile tip for every gardener Learning to be patient. I feel like gardening has force-fed me patience over the years. No matter how much of a rush I'm in, the plants and seasons will just carry on doing their thing.

With whom would you most like to have tea in the garden? The Kitchen Garden (in which I grow cut flowers), was the idea of the

late Deborah Devonshire, our current Duke's mother. She had the garden built in the early 1990s by her head gardener Jim Link and his staff. I never met Deborah and now she's passed into the realm of legends.

What's the next big task you'll be tackling? Early June is all about getting the tender plants out from the cold frames and into the garden. This will include plants such as the dahlias, cosmos, salvias, cobaeas, etc. There's also the small matter of the RHS Chatsworth Flower Show (6-10 June), which has many associated events that require large numbers of garden flowers.

Biggest challenge facing gardeners today Environmental responsibility; finding alternatives to the chemicals and plastics that have become standard in the industry, as well as working with more sustainably sourced materials. It's far from the easy option and it's very much a work in progress for me, but it's at the forefront of my mind as I work. □

Further information

Instagram: @beckycrowley_. Becky is teaching a course at Sarah Raven's garden Perch Hill on 10 July. sarahraven.com