

THE DESIGN AND DECORATION ISSUE

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Cut-flower expert

Becky Crowley

Continuing our series of profiles of a new generation of exciting design talent

Becky Crowley has made a name for herself over the past five years as the manager of the cutting garden at Chatsworth House in Derbyshire. A trained florist, garden designer and gardener, she had set her sights on working at Chatsworth many years earlier, after visiting as a teenager. 'I can remember seeing a female gardener working there and that always stayed in my mind,' says Becky.

She went on to study fine art at Sheffield Hallam University and then started work at a local florist. It was not the direction in which she had originally intended to go, but she found that she loved working with flowers and while there she was introduced to the idea of garden design as a career. Becky enrolled on a part-time landscape design course at RHS Garden Harlow Carr, near Harrogate, and then started working for Sheffield-based Hallam Garden Design. Next came a job as a horticultural researcher for BBC TV, but in the back of her mind, Chatsworth was a goal.

'I found I was always Googling "garden jobs at Chatsworth",' she admits. 'Then, one day, I came across an advertisement for a botanical studentship,' she says. Applying just in time, Becky won the place on the training scheme and has never looked back. 'While I was training, the Chatsworth florist went on maternity leave, so I took her job for a while - and then the job in the cutting garden came up.'

Serendipity, it seems, was very much in play and, over the last five years, Becky has brought the Chatsworth House cutting garden to new heights of perfection. 'In the past 10 years, the flower-growing movement has changed dramatically,' she says. 'It's very exciting. There are so many more plant choices - especially if you are able to grow from seed.' With two Victorian glasshouses and an acre of land to play with, she has created a superlative



Becky at Oxford Botanic Gardens & Arboretum

Over the *past five years*, Becky has brought the *Chatsworth House* cutting garden to new heights of *perfection*

cutting garden. She shares the results with the world regularly in her beautiful Instagram posts.

There would not be many reasons to tear herself away from this dream job, but in January, 37-year-old Becky decided to take a sabbatical and go to work with Erin Benzakein at Floret Farm in the US (the subject of 'Petal Power', this month's plant collectors feature), where she is helping to design a series of gardens to complement the flower fields. She is loving the experience, she says, but left her heart in the cutting garden at Chatsworth, to which she will return next year. beckycrowley.com ▷