

Building the British Plant Nursery Guide

Gilly Pollock

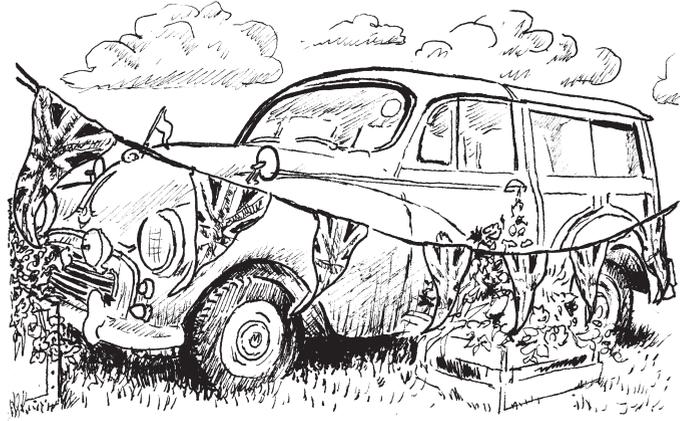
The last few years have been difficult for nurseries but help is at hand! From an early age, I have enjoyed gardening and creating beautiful gardens. Like most people, I used to go to garden centres and buy plants that looked pretty but didn't give much thought to where or how they were grown. But as my interest in gardening developed, I became more selective and realised that the best plants tended to be from nurseries or local plant sales. Not only were they better quality, they were often cheaper than their garden centre counterparts. I was also impressed with the advice and expertise that nurseries had to offer.

As a supporter of local traders, I felt that more people should be aware of where they buy their plants from, and that gardeners could be doing more to support the British nursery growers who have so much knowledge and a great horticultural heritage. I had become a convert to buying from nurseries and now I wanted everyone else to know about them too!

After months of research, I began to set up a website to raise awareness of the nurseries, and so the British Plant Nursery Guide was created. The result is a website designed around a potting shed, with tabs as plant labels or seed trays and just for fun, a robin who pops out from his bird-box with a cheery chirp. Here each nursery has its own dedicated profile page. For small nurseries that don't have a website or the time to maintain one, the profile page could replace the need to have their own website, saving them time and money.

I have enjoyed getting to know each nursery I represent personally - meeting the owners and staff and visiting each nursery to understand their business. Each profile is written to appeal to visitors, and includes

any interesting and quirky features that make the private nurseries unique. When I meet gardeners at shows or receive enquiries from the public, I enjoy sharing my knowledge



of the nursery business. To become a member, nurseries just have to be British based and grow a high percentage of plants at their nursery. Our website is not the only way members' nurseries are promoted. The British Plant Nursery Guide has stands at shows, such as The RHS Show Cardiff, The Malvern Spring Gardening Show and The Hampton Court Flower Show. Our stands are not conventional either! The main feature is the classic Morris Traveller car, which is the mascot for the web feature 'Jolly Jaunts'.

Jolly Jaunts are days out with a suggested itinerary and include visits to nurseries. Most are in beautiful parts of the country, so it makes sense to combine a visit to a nursery, with other attractions in the area. The show stand is decorated with vintage picnic baskets, union jack bunting and beautiful plants from members' nurseries. The Morris Traveller has caught the eye of the public, with crowds of visitors coming to visit the stand at shows. The level of interest in the website from the public, gardening groups and other societies has so far been overwhelming. More nurseries continue to join from all parts of the country - the British Plant Nursery Guide is off to a great start!

Illustration/Tom Boulton

*To find out more, visit www.britishplantnurseryguide.co.uk
email info@britishplantnurseryguide.co.uk or telephone 01600 716195.*