



Beth Chatto: A Life with Plants

Catherine Horwood 288pp, 2019, Pimperl Press, ISBN 9781910258828, RRP £30

This book is a must for any reader intent on an insight into the life of one of the greatest gardeners of all time, the late Beth Chatto. The author has committed herself to researching her subject by not only having spent time with this great lady, but also through interviewing countless friends and colleagues. She has even delved into Beth Chatto's private diaries and personal notebooks for a deeper understanding.

Beth left her mark on the world of horticulture, changing the way we look at wild plants and plant communities. Her garden in Elmstead Market, Essex, remains a lesson in 'right plant, right place'. Beth was a marvellous communicator and a great teacher – anyone who came into regular contact with her found her to be open and approachable, and felt a personal connection.

I knew Beth well, so when this book came out it was hard to imagine it could offer more on the remarkable woman that we all knew, admired, and loved. Rich with

information, this biography gives the reader an intimate understanding of her life, as well as her professional achievements. It made me realise that in one way Beth was open to us all, but that she was also a very private person, too.

From humble beginnings as the daughter of a village constable, to a young woman with drive and determination, then to love and marriage with Andrew Chatto (undoubtedly the greatest influence on her life), and her eventual fame and recognition – this book covers it all. It is a fascinating, honest and skilfully put together read. It is the only book on this great woman's life, and one well worth having.

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