

My favourite PLACE

NEW
SERIES!

RHS GARDEN ROSEMOOR, DEVON
By Jekka McVicar



'It's just the most exquisite use of space in a garden'



Renowned herb expert Jekka adores RHS Garden Rosemoor in Devon. Jekka's book, *A Pocketful Of Herbs*, is released on March 5 by Bloomsbury.

Jekka McVicar is best-known as one of the UK's foremost herb experts, but had no hesitation in choosing RHS Garden Rosemoor in her native south-west as her favourite place.

I first visited RHS Rosemoor soon after it opened in the early 1990s, with my two young children and a girlfriend and her toddler. I thought it was very linear, with some very new hedges all lined up, and I just couldn't see how it would ever work. But over the years I've watched it evolve into just the most exquisite use of space.

It's linear, of course - it follows the river - but wherever you are in the garden it gives the sense of rooms. I think that's the thing that draws me to it the most, this idea of different rooms that all have different feelings.

It was first designed by Elizabeth Banks (later RHS president) in its current form and it's a remarkable feat.

One of the things I really like about Rosemoor is it's not too big. There's an awful lot to see but you can get around everything easily. It's hard to say what my favourite part is - the vegetable area is superb, the roses are spectacular, the hot beds are something else. All of the different garden rooms give you something else and there's really something for everyone here. The planting is just wonderful throughout.

It's a genuine year-round garden. There's something to interest you at any time of year; the winter foliage, for example, is just spectacular. But you can go there in any month and always see something new.

I was inspired to plant hedges by seeing them at Rosemoor. I'd never really thought of using hedges before but now I have them around my vegetables - they keep animals out but they're wonderful for the birds. Finches and blue tits love to hide out in the hedges, and you see dunnocks on the floor underneath them. Birds are one of the best ways to keep an organic balance in the garden.

It feels very much as if it's a West Country garden, which of course it is. But I'm from the West Country and it's important - it's rooted in its community and the whole look and feel of it is true to that.

■ **RHS Garden Rosemoor, Great Torrington, Devon. Tel: 01805 624067; www.rhs.org.uk/rosemoor.**

