

A PEEK INTO THE WORKINGS OF THE ROYAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

Marina Andreeva comes from Moscow, Russia; she began growing tropical orchids there in her parent’s apartment. Moving to Ireland, she has continued her orchid growing activities with considerable success. The American Orchid Society says that the *Telipogons* she likes to grow “are quite difficult to cultivate”. Anxious to add to her horticultural knowledge, as her degree is in psychology, she took courses to study for RHS qualifications and she also joined the Irish Orchid Society, where she is now a member of the Committee.

The Royal Horticultural Society run an extensive training programme at their famed garden at Wisley in Surrey. Places on these training courses are in great demand from enthusiastic gardeners, selection is very rigorous and Marina feared that having English as a second language would make it almost impossible for her to be chosen. Encouraged by Carl Dacus and by Brendan Sayers and with a considerable degree of personal effort, she gained a place for the September 2015 intake to work and study in the Wisley glasshouses primarily to increase her orchid knowledge.

The scale of the Wisley glasshouse operation emerged from some of her photographs. The public area covers an area equal in size to ten tennis courts and it rises to 12m in height. It has three climatic zones, recreating tropical, moist

temperate and dry temperate habitats. While we may have visited the glasshouses ourselves, the public area is perhaps overshadowed by the extensive connected private service glasshouses, which support the public areas. 2017 marks the 10th anniversary of the new Wisley glasshouse, which runs with extensive computerised controls to manage heat and humidity, including shading controls to avoid scorching and to retain heat at night.

You might wonder why, if you visit Wisley, you do not run across the staff or students in the public greenhouses. Marina answered this question. In principle, the staff and students work in the public areas from 7:30am until the Garden open at 10am, when they move across to the connected service houses continuing to work on until 4pm. Perhaps this increases the natural and uncluttered effect of the visit for visitors but it may undervalue the efforts of the staff. We saw a photo of orchid expert David Mc Laughlin digging out a banana plant, with Marina’s help, probably unappreciated by the attention of the visitors arriving later.

While at Wisley, Marina had visits to Kew and to the Eric Young Orchid Foundation in Jersey and she had photos to show us. She finished by explaining the work of the RHS Orchid Committee, where she had helped out at one of their meetings. She was very impressed by the knowledge of the Orchid Committee members, down to the level of individual plants, and the care they took in making decisions about the grading of plants

R BRADSHAW

Орхидеи



RHS Garden, Wisley, Woking, Surrey

