GROWERTALKS

GT in Brief

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In Memoriam: Peter Seabrook

Chris Beytes

We're saddened to report the death of Peter Seabrook MBE*, the dean of British garden communicators, January 14, at the age of 86, after suffering a heart attack at his home. Peter was a renowned writer and broadcaster, gardener and Chelsea Flower Show exhibit designer. He'd been a television gardener as early as 1965 and had written a gardening column for The Sun newspaper since 1977, where he penned more than 2,300 columns, never missing a week. We in America know him from "The Victory Garden," where he was a guest correspondent for more than 20 years.

He was passionate about getting kids gardening and about supporting his local RHS (Royal Horticulture Society) garden, Hyde Hall. In fact, he was passionate about every aspect of the garden, from breeding and growing to retailing and the end consumer. And he knew every aspect, too, having begun working in the industry at age 10, helping at a local nursery.

Pictured: Peter Seabrook, while visiting garden centers with Chris Beytes in 2019.

Peter skipped school to attend his first Chelsea Flower Show in 1952 and never missed one after that. In fact, he told me in an email last October that he wanted to do something special for his 70th Chelsea show.

"I have asked for the Monument Site, the largest in the Pavilion," he wrote. "But goodness knows whether the RHS will allocate it to me."

It's said that the Queen delighted in Peter's exhibits and he would present her with a posy every year.

Victoria Newton, Editor in Chief of The Sun, wrote on the occasion of his passing, "For 45 years, Peter Seabrook MBE was a huge part of the Sun family, helping millions of readers with their gardening queries. His projects with schools helped more than 3 million children discover and share his passion for plants and vegetables. The day before he died of a heart attack, he was helping children at a school in Essex plant acorns to grow oak saplings to plant for the Queen's Jubilee Canopy."

She added that Peter was adored by all, "from the royal family and celebrities to ordinary people who wanted his help to grow plants, even if they had the smallest plot or no garden at all. To them, Peter was their gardener."

Peter lost his wife of 60 years, Margaret, in April 2020. She had been in a care facility for nine years, suffering from

Alzheimer's and vascular dementia. He named a verbena Margaret's Memory, in her honor to raise funds for the Alzheimer's Society. He leaves behind daughter, Alison; son, Roger; and grandchildren Tom and Rachel. **GT**

**MBE means "Member of the Order of the British Empire," an honor presented to a British subject for making a positive impact in their line of work. Also, the RHS gave him its top award, the Victoria Medal of Honour.*