Bamboo Alex is going to Sussex

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Alex Lawson

Scotsman Alex Lawson, the man who created one of the finest bamboo gardens in Europe at Pitt White, Uplyme, is leaving next Wednesday to take up a new appointment in Sussex.

Alex has been appointed head gardener over six men and will be responsible for an 80-acre garden at Leonardslee, owned by Sir Giles Loder.

The garden is open to the public and has some bamboo.

Alex has written a best-selling book on bamboo. Sir Giles read it, was impressed and offered Alex a job and a new house.

"It's a chance in a lifetime, and I shall be getting double the wage that I receive now," said Alex. "Naturally, I shall be sorry to leave the district, but you have got to go where the money is."

Alex, formerly a head gardener at Bude, has worked in the four acre garden at Pitt White for Dr N Mutch for the past 14 years.

The garden has 82 species of bamboo - more than can be found at Kew - and has been featured in television programmes and in books.

And Alex, currently writing a second book on bamboo, has become as famous as the garden.

Recently, he cultivated a species of bamboo, thought to have been extinct, and sent seeds back to the country of origin, the USA. Now the bamboo, used as a wind-break, is thriving.

Alex has two children, a daughter at university and a son at the Woodroffe School.