

PRESS RELEASE

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**Stand 380 Hydroveg/ SCI**

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HOW HOT IS YOUR CHILLI?

SCI LAUNCHES GARDEN 'SCIENCE OFF' TO REVEAL HIDDEN FOOD BENEFITS

*BBC Gardeners' World Live 2022, NEC, Birmingham, 16<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> June*

**Scientists will be available at the stand between 9am and 6pm from 16 – 19 June.**

As a result of TV cookery programmes such as 'The Great British Bake Off,' we can learn how to make the fluffiest meringues or the densest chocolate cake. Yet what about the science *behind* the foodstuffs we grow in our gardens – and the benefits they bring? At **BBC Gardeners' World Live 2022 (NEC, Birmingham, 16<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> June)**, the Society of Chemical Industry (SCI) will bring scientists to the stand to demonstrate how the chemistry behind some everyday plants brings benefits on a plate.

The team of scientists at the interactive SCI stand will show the public how to assess the sweetness of a Vitamin C packed strawberry and test the colour pigments of rainbow chard. Why are some chilli peppers hotter than others? How can we make strawberries as sweet as possible? What will it take to enjoy strawberries and cream all year round, not just at Wimbledon time? Did you know rainbow chard leaves can provide us with a quarter of our daily magnesium needs alone? Show visitors can watch the scientists measure properties in our foods, exploring the chemical structures within the plants and how they react with our everyday lives.

The recently published National Food Strategy <https://www.food.gov.uk/news-alerts/news/national-food-strategy-part-2> stressed the need for fruit and vegetables as part of our daily diet. Both strawberries and chard can be grown at home so why not find out more about the interesting properties of these tasty crops?

According to Alison Foster, member of the SCI Horticulture Group:

"The hidden chemistry of plants is fascinating and there are many benefits from everyday plants and food which might surprise you. We're taking three food items to reveal some overlooked aspects of everyday plants. Did you know, for instance, that the capsaicin heat chemical in chilli peppers is used as a pain reliever in creams, nasal sprays and pain relief patches?

"We will be hosting a series of experiments at our stand,' she continued. 'The scientists will use an electrochemical chilli heat sensor to test 'hotness' and we will explain how the

chemistry of the rainbow pigments in rainbow chard makes it different from most of the plant kingdom. Visitors can bring their own chillis and strawberries to be tested at the stand too”.

**Scientists will be available at the SCI stand every day between 9am and 6pm from 16 – 19 June.**

Sharon Todd, SCI CEO said

“Our Horticulture Group covers all aspects of plant science and production at commercial scale and speeds up the transfer of knowledge and understanding into industry for societal benefit. SCI’s themes include climate change, global health and how we feed millions and the study of plant science touches on all these areas. We’re looking forward to sharing our expert knowledge with the public and hearing how plants and gardens inspire people – every day.”

SCI’s Horticulture Group was set up in 2008 to facilitate the building of links between higher education establishments, botanic gardens, growers and producers of horticultural crops and associated supply companies. It also provides a forum for networking within a diverse industry and educates the public about the sector’s value and importance.

The Horticulture Group is also proud to have led the development of the SCIENCE garden at SCI HQ in Belgrave Square. Now, two years since it opened, the garden contains over 100 different plant types, all with a link to the Society or to chemistry more widely.

For more information, an interview with Alison Foster or Sharon Todd or a science demonstration, please contact Maxine Boersma on 07771 563373 or [Maxine.Boersma@soci.org](mailto:Maxine.Boersma@soci.org)

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#### **Note to Editors**

**About SCI:** where science meets business:

SCI is a unique global multidisciplinary network connecting scientists, business people, students and other key players involved in science-based innovation. SCI promotes innovation via its international network to advance the commercial application of science into industry for the benefit of society.

SCI works across crucial sectors as diverse as food and bio-renewables, water, environment, energy, materials and manufacturing, and health and wellbeing

For more information, please visit [www.soci.org](http://www.soci.org)

