

BBC
Gardeners' World Fair
at Audley End House & Gardens, Essex
1-3 September 2023
Autumn

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Cambridge garden design showcase at BBC Gardeners' World Autumn Fair

Three stunning show gardens will shine a spotlight on talented Cambridge garden designers at the BBC Gardeners' World Autumn Fair at Audley End House and Gardens from 1 - 3 September.

The Downing College Gardens team have designed the *Rest to Follow Your Path* wellbeing garden to highlight the importance of gardens as supportive spaces for positive mental and physical health, inspiration and sanctuary. The showcase garden has been designed to illustrate how beautiful spaces can make us smile, expand our minds, and strengthen our relationship with the wider world. Bees will offer a reminder of the need for a system of mutual support to thrive and achieve wellness.

A cat sculpture by Laurence Broderick, gifted to Downing College by the Cats Protection Cambridge, and the rose, *Rosa 'Little White Pet'*, demonstrate the beneficial relationship between humans and animals. Other highlights include ceramic daffodils and tulips made by artist Helen Radcliffe to represent *Narcissus pseudonarcissus* 'Downing College' and *Tulipa gesneriana* 'Downing College', and a pagoda made from reclaimed materials by members of Phoenix Trust Milton, a local social enterprise supporting people with learning disabilities and complex needs. Cedar logs, preserved from the college's oldest tree after it was felled in 2021 due to disease, are a feature of the garden, providing an

opportunity to reflect upon the life cycle and beauty of nature past and present. The garden has sustainability at its heart, with many of its plants propagated and grown on site and materials reclaimed from former projects.

After the Autumn Fair, the garden will become a permanent feature at Downing College.

Jack Sharp, Downing College Head Gardener said: “A show garden is a new area for us to explore and a great way to promote Downing to new audiences, with the added benefit that the garden will become a permanent feature in College.”

Cambridge flower grower, florist and garden designer, Kim O'Brien, has designed *The Life-Force Garden*. Kim is an award-winning dahlia grower, known to her thousands of social media followers as @dahliafarmerama, and her beloved blooms play a starring role in the garden's design. The movement of water through hollow dahlia stems provides the garden's central inspiration, drawing parallels between plant systems and human blood vessels and tissues.

Fibonacci spirals, which are found throughout the human body and in nature, are a highlight, representing plants and nature; mind; body; spirit and the deep connections between them. A hexagonal sculpture and circular pond are reminiscent of cell structure and blood vessels, with floating cut dahlias renewed daily to represent cell renewal, and a spirit sculpture that represents the body as it prepares to move to the next realm. A mindfulness path, fragrant pollinator-friendly planting and wildlife features, circular patio seating and a rustic tree seat also feature.

Kim O'Brien said: “The garden is a useable, practical space allowing the mind to contemplate, unwind and refresh. Trees, features, sculptures and statement plants are placed according to the focal points generated by the Fibonacci spirals. The tapestry of planting is laid in swathes that follow the natural flow of the spirals around the space, inviting the mind to meander and find its connection to The Life-Force Garden.”

Much loved at BBC Gardeners' World Events, the Beautiful Borders are compact 9m² designs which offer inspiration for small gardens and challenging spaces, packed with design features and creative planting. This year's Beautiful Border theme is 'My Garden Escape'.

Cecilia Sandrini, a designer, gardener and founder of Plant Based Gardens in Cambridge, has created *This Nest Will Give You Wings*, a Border designed for a child with sensory needs. Surrounded by native birch and ferns with an open space in the middle, the small-space garden invites a child to

hide within the shades of green, to reset, to 'build a nest', to meditate or to play and feel safe within a space that is theirs.

Cecilia Sandrini said: "This is a love letter to my children; as I have learnt to be the parent of children whose sensory needs are sometimes quite different to my own, I want to create spaces for them that we can all enjoy. It is also an awesome opportunity to create a show garden for the new local BBC Gardeners' World Autumn Fair."

Rachel Poletti-Gadd, Portfolio Director - Gardening Division at Immediate Live, organisers of BBC Gardeners' World events, said: "It's wonderful to have so much garden design talent on the doorstep and we can't wait to see all the Showcase Gardens and Beautiful Borders in situ at Audley End for the Autumn Fair. Visitors are sure to be inspired by exciting design features and planting ideas to take home and try in their gardens at home."

The BBC Gardeners' World Autumn Fair, in association with English Heritage, takes place at Audley End from 1 – 3 September. Highlights include Showcase Gardens, Beautiful Borders and the Association of Professional Landscapers' competition gardens, the BBC Gardeners' World Magazine Stage hosted by *Gardeners' World* magazine with special guests including Frances Tophill (Friday), Arit Anderson (Saturday) and Adam Frost (Sunday), 'In Conversation' talks in the magnificent Parterre gardens, Plant Expert tours of Audley End's organic Kitchen Garden, dahlia bouquet workshops, mushroom growing workshops, historical performances by Mr Vert, the Victorian head gardener, a bumper crop of exhibitors selling plants, garden tools, kit and accessories, a Plant Crèche, the BBC Good Food Market and live entertainment. Tickets include access to Audley End House, gardens and grounds. Well-behaved dogs welcome on leads in the gardens and grounds

Find out more and book tickets at www.bbcgardenersworldfair.com. Details correct at time of writing.

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Notes to editors:

For further information, interviews or pictures, please contact:
Julie Parmenter at Brampton PR, e: jparmenter@hotmail.co.uk, tel: 07775 715936

Press accreditation BBC Gardeners' World Autumn Fair is open. To apply for a pass and for more information on the show, [please click here](#)

About the **BBC Gardeners' World Autumn Fair**, Audley End House & Garden, Essex:

Friday 1 Sept	10am – 5pm
Saturday 2 Sept	10am – 5pm
Sunday 3 Sept	10am – 5pm

Autumn Fair advance standard ticket prices:

Adults: £22.30 (10am entry), £18.80 (12pm entry) or £15.30 (1.30pm entry)
Concessions (aged 65+ and students): £20.15 (10am entry), £17.00 (12pm entry), £13.80 (1.30pm entry)
Children: Under 5s tickets are free of charge and age 6–17 are at a discounted child rate
English Heritage member adults: £11.50 (entry any time)
English Heritage member concessions: (aged 65+ and students): £10.35 (entry any time)
Plant Expert Tours: £7.50
Oyster mushroom workshops: £10

Book tickets at bbcgardenersworldfair.com.

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