

RHS Greening Great Britain for health and environment

The Royal Horticultural Society (RHS), the world's leading gardening charity kick starts 2020 with a number of announcements:

- A call to action on the nation to get Greening Great Britain for the nation's health and for the environment
- RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2020 Garden for Friendship will promote 'making friends through gardening'
- A RHS Plant Health Garden will feature at RHS Chelsea, highlighting the International Year of Plant Health.
- 30 July 2020 is the opening date for RHS Garden Bridgewater; its fifth garden and the biggest horticultural project in Europe.

The Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) is calling on the nation to get Greening Great Britain for the good of the nation's health and for the environment.

Sue Biggs, RHS Director General says: "The RHS has long championed the benefits that both gardens and gardening can have on our health and for the environment. For the last two years the RHS has worked with the NHS to promote gardening for good mental health, we now run a pioneering social prescribing project at RHS Garden Bridgewater and are creating a Health and Wellbeing Garden at RHS Garden Wisley."

This year, the RHS Chelsea Flower Show continues to see designers promoting the health benefits of

gardening with a strong restorative theme emerging in designs by Robert Myers, Sarah Eberle, Matt Keightley among others. As well as the uplifting displays in The Great Pavilion created by nurseries who live by the ethos 'growing is good for you', a number of exhibits in the Discovery Zone will shine a light on the different ways in which horticulture impacts our health, happiness and community. The benefits of indoor plants will also be highlighted in the new Houseplant Studios.

The RHS Garden for Friendship designed by award winning garden designer Jo Thompson, in collaboration with TV and BBC Radio 2 presenter Zoe Ball, will celebrate how you can make great friends through gardening at the 2020 RHS Chelsea Flower Show.

Loneliness is a key issue in the UK today and the RHS and NHS will again be joining forces through the RHS Garden for Friendship to promote gardens and gardening for good mental health, which is something that both Zoe and Jo believe strongly in and attracted them to this project.

Through its science research the RHS has long championed the environmental benefits of plants; from capturing pollution and cooling cities to helping defend against flooding.

The RHS is also committed to improving plant health and helping to keep our garden and green spaces free of pests and diseases. The RHS Plant Health Garden at this year's RHS Chelsea Flower



Artist impression of the new walled garden at RHS Bridgewater which is due to open July 2020. Credit: Tom Stuart-Smith

Show will explore some of the threats on our doorstep and inspire gardeners to promote healthy gardening practices for the benefit of people and planet. The garden has been designed by Adam Frost and is in collaboration with industry partners including Defra to celebrate the UN's International Year of Plant Health.

Opening on 30 July 2020, RHS Garden Bridgewater in Salford, Greater Manchester will bring world-class horticulture within an hour's drive of 8.2m people in the North West and is already making a positive impact on the lives of hundreds of local people.

The centrepiece of Bridgewater is the 11-acre Weston Walled Garden comprising 11 gardens.

Completion is subject to fundraising a further £4m, and the garden will then continue to grow with plans for an arboretum and glasshouse being among future plans for the 154-acre site.

Sue finished: "The opening of RHS Garden Bridgewater is one of the most exciting moments in the history of this gardening charity. This Garden is so different from any other RHS Garden and is being created with the Salford community. We've worked and consulted with many local people and organisations and are so proud of what everyone has achieved. We hope it will be a much loved garden that will be cared for and visited by many generations to come."



Illustration of the RHS Garden for Friendship. Credit RHS/ Jo Thompson



Volunteer Co-ordinator, Nelle Jervis, helping with the clearance at the RHS Garden Bridgewater volunteer day (Credit: RHS / Mark Waugh)