



# Workshops for Secondary Schools



Where plants inspire lives

**RHS Garden Wisley**  
Learning and Families

[rhs.org.uk/wisley](https://rhs.org.uk/wisley)

Registered Charity Number: 222879/SC038262







## The Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) is the UK's leading gardening charity

At our flagship garden at Wisley in Surrey we have superb facilities on offer and a dedicated, experienced team of Education Officers waiting to welcome secondary school pupils. We passionately believe that through engaging with plants and gardening young people can improve their understanding, and deepen their appreciation, of the natural world.

The Education team at RHS Garden Wisley have developed an exciting range of workshops for secondary students which we hope will encourage you to bring your students for a visit.



These workshops are detailed in this brochure and available for booking now.

The RHS is a charity, all educational visits are free of charge if booked in advance but donations are most welcome (we suggest £50 per class).

If you would like to bring a school group to the garden to study a topic not covered in this brochure then please get in touch with an Education Officer and we will design a programme to meet your needs. Key Stage 5 students, special needs groups and those studying for vocational qualifications are very welcome and can be easily catered for.

## Introducing green plants



Green plants are fundamental to life on earth as we know it. The ability to produce their own food through photosynthesis means that they are an essential part of almost all ecosystems. Come and explore our stunning Glasshouse and find out how plants in steamy tropical, temperate and dry desert habitats have adapted to ensure that regardless of the climate they can make their own food. We finish by taking a look at the dark and mysterious world of the plant root in our Root Zone.

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## Me, myself and I – cloning in plants



Cloning may have hit the headlines in recent years but plants have been reproducing through clones for millions of years. We discuss the relevance of cloning to plants and how we use cloning in horticulture. Visit our fantastic Growing Lab and find out how plants produce clones in the wild and how you can produce your own clones at home and at school.

An additional option is a visit to the propagation department at Wisley (depending on numbers and availability of propagation staff)

## Make yourself at home

### – plant adaptations around the world



Plants have adapted to thrive in a range of challenging environments and many of these adaptations are displayed by plants found in our stunning Glasshouse. Come and see for yourself what it takes to survive in the wild and then get up close and personal with our carnivorous plants – some of the most highly specialised and fascinating plants on the planet and take cuttings from another specially adapted plant – succulents.

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## Think like a scientist!

### – learn how to plan a plant based experiment



Learn how to plan an experiment and visit the beautiful plants in our famous trials field then find out if you've got what it takes to take on the role of a trials' committee or to survey in our 'Plants for Bugs' trial. There is an option to devise your own experiment to take back to school.

Also available for Key Stage 4.

## Focus on photosynthesis



Take on our photosynthesis challenge using our data loggers and see if you can discover the limiting factors for photosynthesis in very different habitats at Wisley. Data is entered on laptop computers, discussed and recorded for follow up at school.

You will also have a chance to explore our wonderful Glasshouse to find out how plants found in different environments have adapted to make sure that they are never short of food.

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## How to survive in the wild – plant adaptations from around the world



Building on the plant adaptations programme for Key Stage 3, this course encourages you to test your powers of deduction! Explore our fantastic plant collection and see if you can guess which resources these plants fight for and which adaptations give them an edge in their natural environments. Take a close up look at the carnivorous plants – among the most fascinating plants on the planet and take cuttings from another specially adapted plant – succulents.

# People and Plants

– explore some of the ways that people use plants



Discover how important plants are in our lives and where some of our food plants originate. Using a variety of food plants such as apples, decide which you would stock in a supermarket. Choose the criteria such as appearance, taste, travel, shelf life and nutritional value. Test the product by tasting and using scientific tests. Discuss objective and scientific tests and visit the food producing areas of the garden to find out what is grown at Wisley.

This workshop can be adapted for KS3 and a seed planting option is available.

## Key Stage 5

Help and support is available for AS and A2 issue reports, investigations for International Baccalaureate or other Key Stage 5 courses.

## Other Topics

We are able to tailor make workshops on subjects such as sustainable living, conservation, economic plants or green gardening. Please contact an Education Officer on 01483 212432 or email [schools@rhs.org.uk](mailto:schools@rhs.org.uk) to discuss these or other topics.

## Revision sessions

Revision sessions for GCSE, AS and A2 biology can be arranged. The minimum number for a guided visit is 15 students.

## Science and gardening club

Science and gardening clubs are welcome to visit RHS Garden Wisley either for an Education Officer led session or as a self-guided group. This can be during the school day or after school time. The minimum number for a guided visit is 15 students.

## Themed Weeks

We sometimes arrange themed days or weeks such as National Science and Engineering Week or National Insect Week. Please let us know your contact details if you'd like to add to our mailing list for special events by telephoning 01483 212432 or email [schools@rhs.org.uk](mailto:schools@rhs.org.uk)





## Horticultural Skills – workshops to meet the requirements of RHS level 1 qualification

These may also meet the requirements of other qualifications such as 14 - 19 Environment and Land Based Studies Diploma, ASDAN and B-Tech and City and Guilds and can be adapted to suit individual requirements.

### Practical Gardening Skills

#### Available all year round

This workshop can be adapted for students with learning difficulties.

Students will do a mix of the following activities:

Learn how to use spade, fork, rake and dibber and dig a rectangular trench and plant different types of seeds. Spot garden hazards in our practical quiz - more able students can write their own risk assessment. Learn and take three different types of cuttings and find out how to cultivate the plants. Discuss the use of common and Latin plant names.

### Propagation workshop

#### Available all year round

Take a tour of our propagation facilities and depending on the season either take cuttings from the Mixed Borders (autumn only) or learn advanced seed sowing techniques. Students will also take three different types of cutting in our Growing Lab located in the Clore Learning Centre.

### Introduction to the world of plants

#### Available all year round

#### *Especially suitable for students with learning difficulties*

Begin by taking a 'treasure' hunt in the Teaching Garden, finding out which plants we use to make products and use for food. Take cuttings and sow vegetable seeds and visit the Glasshouse looking for economic plants and plant adaptations.





## Specialist Horticulture Days – with RHS Garden Wisley garden staff

There will be a maximum of 2 sessions per year for groups of 15 or less – please book early to ensure your place.

- **Soils and digging** - January
- **Container gardening** - March
- **Hedgeline maintenance** - May
- **Turf culture** - July
- **Fruit pruning** - November

Please note that container gardening and soils workshop can take place at other times of the year but may be led by Education Officers rather than Garden staff.

Tailor made tours of parts of the garden such as the fruit growing area, arboretum or propagation department can be arranged and students are sometimes able to assist with projects in the garden.



### Travel and Tourism

Students studying for qualifications in travel and tourism can arrange a tailor made visit to Wisley – please contact an Education Officer to discuss this.



## Art

**Be inspired by the natural world. Come and visit RHS Garden Wisley and use the garden as inspiration for art work. Visits can be guided with an Education Officer or self-guided**

### Sculpture and Environmental Art

There are a number of permanent sculptures at Wisley made from a variety of material- including stone, metal and glass. Students may make their own ephemeral artwork using fallen natural objects in selected areas of the garden linking to work by artists such as Andy Goldsworthy.

### Glasshouse

The rare, exotic plants found in the three climate zones of the Glasshouse at Wisley offer opportunities to study, sketch or photograph plants close-up. The amazing variety of plants allows for different shapes, textures and colours to be studied. Visit the Root Zone to find out what goes on beneath the soil and how roots and fibres can be incorporated into works of art.

### Arboretum and Pinetum

Trees provide inspiration at all times of year, from studying seed structure to the texture of bark and leaves. Our specialist collection offers diversity and beauty.

### Floral splendour

During the summer the herbaceous and sub-tropical borders are packed with colourful specimens. They create a fantastic canvas on which to explore the uses and impact of colour.

### Model Gardens

For budding garden designers, visit the Model Gardens for top tips in designing a garden with a particular theme or use.

### Architecture

Students of architecture can discover the various buildings and structures around the garden and plan their own designs inspired by their visit.



## Self-Guided Visits

**Schools are welcome to book a self-guided visit to the garden. Self-guided visits are free of charge if pre-booked. We strongly recommend teachers book a pre-visit to discuss ideas and activities for your day. Lunches can be eaten in one of our picnic areas.**

Several areas of the garden lend themselves to science teaching. The Model Vegetable and Fruit Gardens are ideal places to engage with issues such as food production and sustainability. The garden can be used for small-scale ecological studies and the Trials Field is an excellent location for studying variation between and within plant species.

In addition to our work with science and environment groups, we regularly welcome students of art and design to Wisley. Like those planning to set up a garden at school, many art students take inspiration from our wide selection of Model Gardens, which include award-winning designs from the Chelsea Flower Show.

Self-guided visits are free but the RHS expects that students are supervised at all times by accompanying adults.

We request one accompanying adult to every 10 students at Key Stage 3 and 4. For special needs groups please discuss the ratio with an Education Officer.







## RHS Garden Wisley

**RHS Garden Wisley is one of the finest gardens in the world. Stretching out over 97 hectares (240 acres) the garden hosts a stunning plant collection. This includes many species of fruit and vegetables, alpine and glasshouse plants, as well as perennials, bulbs, herbaceous and woody specimens.**

### The Glasshouse

The Glasshouse at RHS Garden Wisley was officially opened by Her Majesty The Queen on the 26th June 2007. This world-class facility covers an area equivalent to 10 tennis courts and rises an impressive 12m in height. It is a stunning building with a magnificent plant collection and is the ideal place to bring young people to inspire them with a passion for plants.

Within the Glasshouse more than 5,000 different cultivated plants are planted in three climatic zones. This design makes it easy for visitors and students to compare the very different plants adapted to life in the dry temperate, moist temperate and tropical areas of the world.

Also situated within the Glasshouse is the atmospheric Root Zone. An underground cavern containing a state-of-the-art, interactive exhibition guiding you through the mysterious world of the plant root.







## The Clore Learning Centre and Teaching Garden

**Guided school visits are held in the Clore Learning Centre which was funded by the Clore Duffield Foundation and opened in 2007. ([www.cloreduffield.org.uk](http://www.cloreduffield.org.uk))**

The Clore Learning Centre contains a flexible learning space – the ‘Discovery Room’ and the Growing Lab – an area designed specifically for practical work. From within the Growing Lab students have an excellent view into the service glasshouses where they may see our horticultural team at work.

Outside the Clore Learning Centre is a teaching garden where students can find plants adapted to a variety of habitats, see our vegetable beds and explore various aspects of horticultural practice.





## How to book

**Booking is essential for all educational groups who would like to visit the garden for a self-guided or Education Officer-led visit. Education Officer led visits require a minimum number of 15 pupils. Special needs groups may bring smaller numbers – please discuss this with an Education Officer.**

Please book well ahead to avoid disappointment.

Call **01483 212432** to make a provisional booking. You may also contact us by emailing us at [schools@rhs.org.uk](mailto:schools@rhs.org.uk)

You will be sent a booking form to complete and return along with relevant health and safety information. Your booking will only be made permanent once we have received your completed booking form by post or email. Please note that we do not send a letter of confirmation for your visit.

For an alternative format of this leaflet please call 020 7821 3000  
textphone 18001 020 7834 4333 or  
email [membership@rhs.org.uk](mailto:membership@rhs.org.uk)

### Pre-visits

Those wishing to bring a school group to the garden are required to make a pre-visit appointment. Please telephone 01483 212432 to make a booking with an Education Officer who will be happy to discuss your requirements.

**RHS Campaign for School Gardening**

Supported by **Waitrose**



Become a member of the RHS Campaign for School Gardening, supported by Waitrose and access free resources to help you grow plants and create a garden in your school. Register at [rhs.org.uk/schoolgardening](https://rhs.org.uk/schoolgardening)

**Continuing Professional Development** courses are held for all adults teaching and inspiring children about plants and gardening. For details of the venues and courses, visit the RHS website [rhs.org.uk/schoolgardening](https://rhs.org.uk/schoolgardening)



## Important and useful information!

### Access

Our facilities are accessible for wheelchair users. Please contact an Education Officer if you have any specific needs or requirements.

### Admission

Admission to RHS Garden Wisley is free for educational groups if they have booked in advance but we recommend a donation of £50 per class.

### Adult supervision

Adults are expected to accompany school groups at all times. We request one accompanying adult to every 10 Key Stage 3 or 4 students. For special needs students the ratio of adult to student should be 1:1 if in a main stream school.

### Bad weather

Many of our programmes include outdoor activities. Please ensure that students dress appropriately with suitable footwear.

### First Aid

In the event of an emergency RHS staff will only carry out first aid with the authority of an accompanying school member.

### Lunch

Cloakrooms are available to store coats, bags and packed lunches for those groups on an Education Officer-led visit. We encourage schools to bring lunches containing as little landfill waste as possible.

### Parking

Car parking is free. Coaches may park or drop off passengers in the coach parking area – only a few minutes walk from the main entrance.

If you are having a guided visit, then an Education Officer will meet you at the main entrance. The garden is open from 10am on weekdays all year round.

### Cancellation

Secondary Schools who cancel with less than 4 weeks notice will be invoiced for a cancellation charge of £50, due to the cost of resources, visit administration and workshop preparation.



## How to contact us

### By post

Learning and Families  
RHS Garden Wisley  
Woking  
Surrey  
GU23 6QB

### By telephone

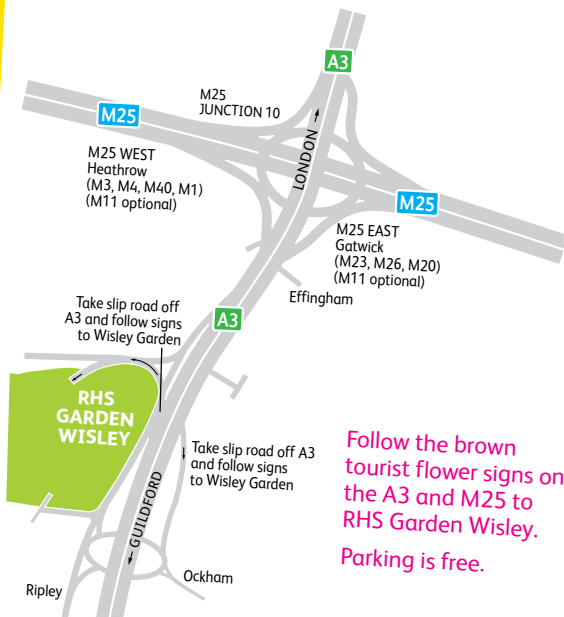
01483 212432

### By email

[schools@rhs.org.uk](mailto:schools@rhs.org.uk)

## How to find us

The garden lies between Cobham and Ripley in Surrey, off the main London to Portsmouth road (A3) South of Junction 10 off the M25.



Follow the brown  
tourist flower signs on  
the A3 and M25 to  
RHS Garden Wisley.  
Parking is free.

Photography: Fiona Secrett and RHS

[rhs.org.uk/wisley](http://rhs.org.uk/wisley)

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