

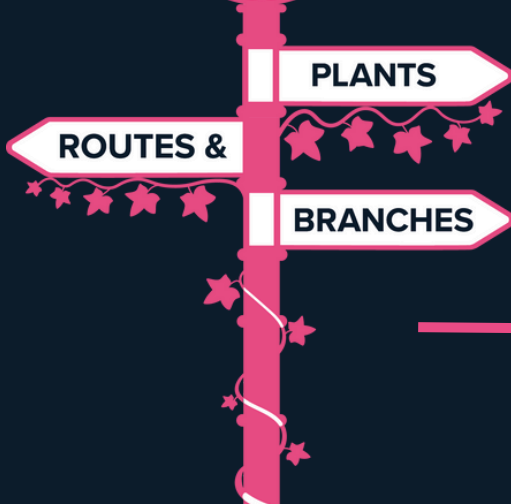
# PLANTS, ROUTES & BRANCHES PRESS PACK

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**RHS CHELSEA FLOWER SHOW 2024  
STAND GPA004**

**DESIGN CONCEPT**  
**CHRIS BIRD & LUCY LEWIS**  
**LECTURERS IN HORTICULTURE**

**DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION**  
**LEVEL 3 STUDENTS IN HORTICULTURE**



# PLANTS, ROUTES AND BRANCHES

## PRESS RELEASE

### SPARSHOLT COLLEGE CELEBRATES LAUNCH OF RHS CHELSEA FLOWER SHOW GARDEN ENTRY FOR 2024

Sparsholt College has teamed up with The Colegrave Seabrook Foundation to create Sparsholt's 2024 RHS Chelsea Flower Show Discovery entry '**Plants, Routes & Branches**' - GPA004.

They celebrated the launch of the garden with a morning unveiling the design joined by Sparsholt College Alumni and Industry Professionals. Visitors gathered at the college's Hampshire Rural Business Centre to meet the enthusiastic student team, sharing their experiences and to wish them the best of luck for the project ahead.

The garden has been designed by Sparsholt's multiple-medal-winning team including Chris Bird and Lucy Lewis in celebration of Sparsholt College's 125th Anniversary of Horticultural training in Hampshire which begins next academic year in September 2024. The exhibit will explore the history of plant introductions from Hampshire whilst celebrating the impact of influential horticulturists and the role the college has played in their professional growth.

Sparsholt College Group which includes Sparsholt College, Andover College and University Centre Sparsholt started in Old Basing, Basingstoke in 1899 as the Hampshire Farm Institute. Moving to Sparsholt village near Winchester in 1914, the college and its students have been influential within Horticulture over the years and will continue to do so.

The design consists of four areas, all essential in supporting students of horticulture to become dedicated industry professionals. The **Laboratory Area** including a Choisya timeline. A **Nursery Growing Area**, home to nursery beds, informational boards and five RHS Chelsea Plant of the Year 2024 entries:

- *Philadelphus* PETITE PERFUME WHITE ('W1')
- *Mahonia eurybracteata* subsp. *ganpinensis* METEOR ('HILLMAH')
- *Sempervivum* x Chick Charms Giants GOLD MINE ('GGM2022')
- *Petunia x atkinsiana* NICOLA ('Kernicola') (Tumbelina Series)
- *Delosperma* DESERT DANCERS RED ('FSDD2112'PBR)/PURPLE('FSDD2117' PBR)

The second half of the garden includes a **Classroom Area**, set up with desks , textbooks and an interactive plant test and finally a **Workshop Area** with details of tools throughout our history, from a rotary cultivator through to a 21st century robotic mower. All four areas surround a central 'Demo Shed' with a corrugated panel roof made of recycled plastic, one of many sustainable features.

Most importantly, the garden will look to the future generations of horticulturists, exploring the numerous and exciting career routes they may follow. This includes continual developments of new plants, showcased through the RHS Chelsea Plant of the Year. The garden aims to signpost potential career routes and opportunities provided by the Horticultural industry for both new learners and those looking to branch out their careers.

Quin Walling, Horticulture student said: "The launch has been an interesting networking event; we've got to meet lots of local plant breeders and past students and it's been really enjoyable to meet possible future employers. I can't wait to see how the garden all comes together and the finished project at the end of it. We've got a lot of landscape construction skills now, which has been fun to learn."

Lucy Lewis, Horticulture Lecturer at Sparsholt College, said: "Plants, routes and branches is about celebrating 125 years of education at Sparsholt, influential horticulturalists and all the plants that they've bred and what exciting careers paths our students may take in the future."

Our aim for the garden is to inspire young people or career changers to look at a career in Horticulture and all the potential interesting places they could go – it's more than just lawnmowing, the amount you can do with a foundation in Horticulture is phenomenal. This will be my seventh RHS Chelsea Flower Show and it is a fantastic experience to share with our students. I am excited to be taking more of a leading role this year and could not be prouder of our team as we start to prepare for the show."

The horticulture team are encouraging those with a link to horticulture at Sparsholt College to share their stories, experience and images with us for the project. Please send them to [Hortstories@sparsholt.ac.uk](mailto:Hortstories@sparsholt.ac.uk)

NOTES TO EDITORS:

About Sparsholt College

- Sparsholt College has a international reputation for excellence in horticulture and garden design, the selection of courses provide students with valuable knowledge and training to launch them directly into industry or higher study at university.
- As part of the City and Guilds Level 3 course, students work with our experts on garden displays entered into the RHS Chelsea Flower Show. Sparsholt College has won over 25 medals. This included ten Gold medals and seven 'Best in Category' awards.
- In previous years, Sparsholt College have submitted entries including The Natural Kalendar 2020/21, Home from Home 2022 and Rustic Recipes Reimagined 2023

Facebook: @SparsholtCollege    Twitter: @Sparsholt\_Coll    Instagram: @sparsholt\_coll    Tiktok: @SparsholtCollege

For more information, please contact the press team: [press@sparsholt.ac.uk](mailto:press@sparsholt.ac.uk)

About The Colegrave Seabrook Foundation

1. Last year approaching £30,000 was awarded in scholarships to students studying a broad range of different subjects within the field of ornamental horticulture, including plant breeding, pest and disease research, growing techniques and sales and marketing.
1. Bursaries are used by students to purchase resources, pay for course fees, to fund research and for travel to visit nurseries and horticultural establishments worldwide.
1. 2024 is the 30th year that the Foundation have been supporting students, and in excess of 200 students have benefited from scholarships and the support the Foundation can provide.
1. The Foundation have recently launched their second series of podcasts, "Cultivate your Future" which are aimed to provide an insight into the wide variety of roles and careers available in the professional world of horticulture. You can listen to and find out more about these podcasts from: <https://colegraveseabrookfoundation.org.uk/podcasts/>

For more information on the Colegrave Seabrook Foundation visit our website:

[www.colegraveseabrookfoundation.org.uk](http://www.colegraveseabrookfoundation.org.uk) Alternatively contact Administrator, Nicci Gow at [info@colegraveseabrookfoundation.org.uk](mailto:info@colegraveseabrookfoundation.org.uk) or one of the Foundations trustees.

Social Media:

Website: [colegraveseabrookfoundation.org.uk](http://colegraveseabrookfoundation.org.uk)

Facebook: TheColegraveSeabrookFoundation

Twitter: ColeSeabrookF

LinkedIn: The Colegrave Seabrook Foundation

Instagram: colegraveseabrookfoundation

For more information regarding the Foundation, contact one of the Trustees or the Administrator, Nicci Gow at: [info@colegraveseabrookfoundation.org.uk](mailto:info@colegraveseabrookfoundation.org.uk)

Head of Horticulture Bill Boyd at Sparsholt College Group 1960



2024 marks the 125th anniversary of offering horticultural education at Sparsholt College Group. Sparsholt College Group started in Old Basing, Basingstoke in 1899 as the Hampshire Farm School. Moving to Sparsholt near Winchester in 1914, the college and its students have been influential within horticulture over the years and aim to continue this in the future.

Plants, Routes & Branches explores the history of plant introductions from Hampshire, whilst celebrating the impact of prominent horticulturists and the role the college has played.

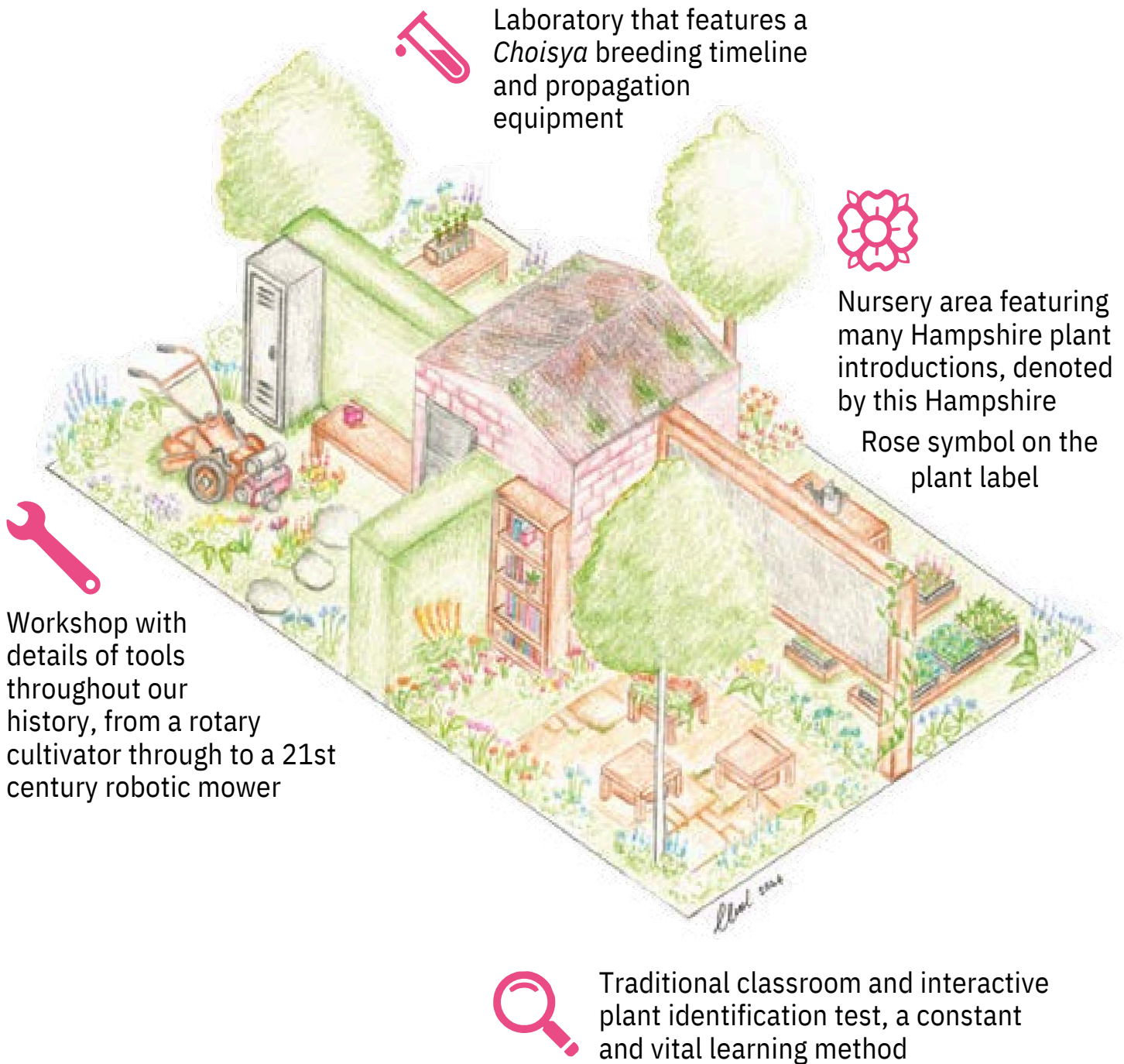
Within the garden, we also look to the future generation of horticulturists, exploring the numerous and exciting career routes they may follow. This includes continual developments of new plants, showcased through the RHS Plant of the Year competition.

The display aims to signpost some of the potential career routes and opportunities

provided by the horticultural industry for both new learners and those looking to branch out in their careers, with the support of our sponsor, The Colegrave Seabrook Foundation, which helps students in horticulture in various ways. They include recent Sparsholt students Jess and Alice featured on [colegraveseabrookfoundation.org.uk](http://colegraveseabrookfoundation.org.uk)



Our successful and dynamic education approach, combining classroom and hands-on learning and work experience, whilst harnessing the latest technology, is showcased in our exhibit. The design consists of four areas, all essential in supporting students of horticulture to become dedicated industry professionals.



Laboratory that features a *Choisya* breeding timeline and propagation equipment



Nursery area featuring many Hampshire plant introductions, denoted by this Hampshire Rose symbol on the plant label



Workshop with details of tools throughout our history, from a rotary cultivator through to a 21st century robotic mower



Traditional classroom and interactive plant identification test, a constant and vital learning method

***With this garden, we hope to showcase the phenomenal variety of career routes within horticulture and celebrate Hampshire and Sparsholt's horticultural contribution.***

# Plants for the Future RHS Plant of the Year 2024 Entries

Innovative, varied and low-input 2024 plant introductions, including three offerings from Hillier Nurseries, Hampshire:



*Philadelphus* PETITE PERFUME WHITE ('W1') – suited to a modern garden, this compact, naturally branching, free flowering plant has an intense fragrance and a flower which has an almost cruciform look, with recurved petals that is quite unique for this genus. Bred by Hillier Propagator Alan Postill.



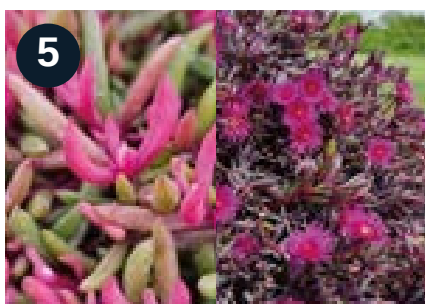
*Mahonia eurybracteata* subsp. *ganpinensis* METEOR ('HILLMAH') – deep green leaves, dense globose habit, deep red foliage in spring and a flush of yellow flowers from August to November give this outstanding garden plant year-round interest, while the compact habit makes it suitable for a variety of spaces. Bred over a 12-year period by Hillier Propagator Alan Postill.



*Sempervivum* x Chick Charms® Giants GOLD MINE ('GGM2022') – a breeding breakthrough quadrupling the size of this genus, by Chris Hausen in the USA, this development is hardy, drought tolerant and easy to grow, with dramatic colouration and huge rosettes to 30cm across. Introduced in the UK in 2024 by Hillier Nurseries.



*Petunia* x *atkinsiana* NICOLA ('Kernicola') (Tumbelina Series) – bred in the UK by Tim Kerley of family firm Kerley & Co. it has sturdy performance credentials. The colour and flower shape is new, featuring a central flourish of petals with contrasting frame – a modern twist on a traditional summer favourite, great for baskets, tubs and borders.



*Delosperma* DESERT DANCERS RED ('FSDD2112'PBR)/ PURPLE('FSDD2117' PBR) – this dynamic series offering two cultivars with vibrant purple and red foliage during winter and spring and intense eye-popping purple and red flowers in summer is a year-round visual feast.

# PLANTS, ROUTES & BRANCHES PHOTOGRAPHY



**please email  
[press@sparsholt.ac.uk](mailto:press@sparsholt.ac.uk) to  
request download link**

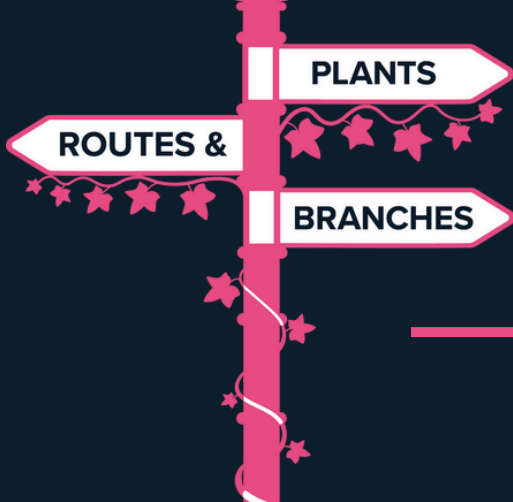




# PLANTS, ROUTES & BRANCHES PLANT LIST AND ONLINE PRESS PACK



please scan the above or visit  
[sparsholt.ac.uk](http://sparsholt.ac.uk)



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**WITH THANKS TO:**



**The Colegrave Seabrook  
Foundation**  
Supporting students in horticulture



**Hardy's**

**Willier**  
NURSERIES



**Thompson & Morgan**  
*Experts in the garden since 1855*  
thompson-morgan.com

**Hazel, Keith and George Smith**



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