

PRESS PACK

RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2024

Bowel Research UK's Microbiome Garden explores the fascinating link between a healthy landscape, a healthy gut and a healthy mind



The [Bowel Research UK](#) Microbiome Garden designed by [Sid Hill](#) and [Chris Hull](#), explores the fascinating link between a healthy landscape, a healthy gut and a healthy mind.

Approximately, three quarters of the population in Britain are at risk of bowel disease due to the lack of variety in their diet. The Bowel Research UK Microbiome Garden which features a pioneering edible meadow, aims to address this by inspiring people to rewild their diets, their gardens and their relationship with the land.

Talented young designers and RHS Chelsea debutants Sid Hill and Chris Hull, have drawn inspiration for the garden design from medical and botanical research, focusing on the connection between the ecological health of a landscape and the health of our own gut

flora. Informed by ancient cultures that tend and harvest the local landscape, Sid and Chris have designed a beautiful and diverse garden that harnesses edible plants and the gut and soil microbiomes all working together synergistically to improve both our overall physical and mental health.

Pioneering Edible Meadow

The planting scheme takes inspiration from wild meadows, with a mix of ornamental grasses such as **Deschampsia cespitosa**, **Sesleria autumnalis**, **Briza media** and **Hordeum jubatum**, which combine with edible perennials to offer a harvest for both people and wildlife. The pioneering 'edible meadow' combines a selection of feature plants including **Persicaria Bistorta**, **Camassia quamash** and **Lupinus luteus**, to create a rich tapestry of yellows, blues and pinks. This trio of beautiful plants are commonly grown in gardens across the UK, but few people know that they are great food crops too and they could offer a myriad of gut health and microbiome benefits. For the full plant list [click here](#)

Hand Crafted Sculptural Features

The Bowel Research UK Microbiome Garden features an **oak sculptural wall** which has been hand carved and scorched by Sid, Chris and the team from [Atlantes Landscapes](#), to provide a striking physical metaphor for the human bowel. The wall meanders through the rear of the garden and coils around a hexagonal **timber shelter 'The Hive'**, made by the team from Douglas fir and Cedar to provides a space where people can gather to prepare food or take refuge from the elements.

A boardwalk, made from Devon grown and milled oak, leads through the meadow and three **bee skep hives** emerge from the woodland-edge. The skeps have been traditionally crafted using biodynamic cow manure, creating habitats for bees, attracted to the rich floral display of the meadow, providing a source of honey, which is recognised as a natural pre-biotic for the gut microbiome.

The Design Duo



[Sid Hill](#) who has 15 years of experience of managing a landscape business and holds a 1st Class Honours degree in Ethnobotany & Landscape Design from the Eden Project, said: "*Current science indicates that cultivating plants in ecologically rich environments fosters diverse microbial communities. Including these plants in our diet facilitates the transfer of beneficial microbes to our digestive system and human microbiome, promoting a healthy bowel and overall physical well-being.*"



[Chris Hull](#), who has over 16 years' experience working in horticulture and garden design and who is also a regular presenter on the hit [BBC TV show Garden Rescue](#). said: *"Studies show that mental health issues such as anxiety and depression could be prevented and treated by creating a healthy balance of gut flora. It's no secret that just being in green space can improve your mental well-being, but what's better than using beautiful, ecologically rich plants which have pro and prebiotic benefits too."*

Bowel Research UK, which supports early career medical researchers, are delighted to be collaborating with designers who are creating their first garden for RHS Chelsea Flower Show.



Lynn Dunne, Chief Executive Officer of Bowel Research UK, said: *"We are so excited to have our first RHS Chelsea garden this year, thanks to the generosity of Project Giving Back.*

Our garden has a direct link to the research we fund into the gut microbiome, including a recent study by the research team at Imperial College that opens up the very exciting prospect of being able to offer precision medicine for bowel cancer patients around their individual gut microbiota.

*Moreover, there is so much more to discover about the effects of the microbiome on bowel disease outcomes which is why we are keen to support more research projects in this field and we have launched a *£250-thousand-pound grant appeal for further research into the human gut microbiome in 2024."*

A Lasting Legacy – Garden Relocation

Following RHS Chelsea Flower Show, the garden will be relocated to the [Apricot Centre](#) in Totnes, Devon, which runs a sustainable farm helping children and families understand the fundamental link between the wellbeing of the soil, food and habitat, and the mental and physical health of the people who work in and around its farm.

***Research Appeal into Gut Microbiome**

In conjunction with Bowel Research UK's Microbiome Garden at RHS Chelsea Flower Show Bowel Research UK has launched an appeal for major donations to create a ringfenced pot of £250,000 for researchers to apply for PhDs or small grants for research on the gut microbiome. Please [click here](#) for further information.

Hear the Sound of Healthy Soil

Bowel Research UK has worked with Real Chemistry and GAS Music Ltd to create a short film where viewers can hear the sound of healthy soil and renowned microbiome author Mr James Kinross in conversation with Dr Saliha Mahmood-Ahmed describing the benefits of

healthy soil on the human gut microbiome and our individual health. To view please [click here](#)

Gut healthy information

For further information about the pioneering work of Bowel Research UK and to find gut healthy recipes from the charity's **RHS Chelsea Flower Show Ambassador Dr Saliha M Dr [Saliha Mahmood-Ahmed](#)**, who is NHS doctor, chef and winner of BBC's MasterChef competition in 2017 please [click here](#)

ENDS

For further information:

For RHS Chelsea media enquiries please contact: Jane Southcott pr e:
jane@janesouthcottpr.co.uk or M: 07787 527430

Plant List

Trees

- *Elaeagnus umbellata*
- *Sambuca nigra*
- *Corylus avellana*
- *Viburnum lantana*
- *Acer campestre*
- *Crataegus monogyma*

Grasses

- *Deschampsia cespitosa*
- *Sesleria autumnalis*
- *Briza media*
- *Hordeum jubatum*

Edible Meadow Theme Plants

- *Camassia quamash*
- *Persicaria Bistorta*
- *Lupinus luteus*

Filler Plants

- *Myrrhis odorata*
- *Silene vulgaris*
- *Anthriscus cerefolium* - Chervil (annual)
- *Anchusa azurea*
- *Anethum graveolens* - Dill
- *Aquilegia vulgaris*
- *Allium schoenoprasum*
- *Viola odorata*

About Bowel Research UK

Bowel Research UK is a national charity that funds life-changing research into bowel cancer and other bowel diseases. Every year over 16,000 people die from bowel cancer in the UK and over a million suffer from bowel disease. The charity's mission is to save and improve people's lives funding cutting edge treatments for bowel disease by investing in the best science.

About the Designers:

Chris Hull has over 16 years' experience working in horticulture and garden design and he has BSC Hons in Garden Design from Sparsholt College. He is also a regular presenter on the hit BBC TV show Garden Rescue. Chris runs his own business Greenbook Landscape Design Ltd, designing sustainable gardens that stand the test of time, with a focus on using locally sourced materials and creating diverse plantings. In 2020 Chris won the Pro Landscaper's '30 Under 30 Award' and his work has featured in Pro Landscaper magazine and Dream Garden magazine.

Sid Hill, gardening since age 10, brings 15 years of experience managing a landscape business and holds a 1st Class Honours degree in Ethnobotany & Landscape Design from the Eden Project. His work has received international recognition, includes features on BBC Gardeners World, BBC A Country Summer, Gardens Illustrated Magazine, and Garden Masterclass. Sid was Awarded the Prince of Wales Trophy for Sustainable Horticulture and the 30 Under 30 award by Pro Landscaper, Sid is dedicated to creating landscapes that echo wild plant communities, support biodiversity, grow food ecologically and improve people's lives.

Contractors

Assisting Sid and Chris with the garden build will be garden contractor [Atlantes Landscapes](#). Plants are being supplied by Mark Straver at [Hortus Loci](#).

About Project Giving Back

Project Giving Back (PGB) is a unique grant-making charity that provides funding for gardens for good causes at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show. PGB was launched in May 2021 in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and its devastating effects on UK charitable fundraising - effects that have since been exacerbated by the cost of living crisis. PGB will fund a total of 15 gardens at RHS Chelsea Flower Show in 2024 and intends to fund up to 60 gardens at the show from 2022 - 2026.

Project Giving Back was established with funding from two private philanthropists who are RHS Life Members and keen gardeners. They wish to remain anonymous. PGB will help UK-based good causes recover from the unprecedented effects of the global pandemic by giving them an opportunity to raise awareness of their work for people, plants and the planet at the high-profile RHS Chelsea Flower Show. Find out more at www.givingback.org.uk