



RHS CHELSEA FLOWER SHOW 2024 21st – 25th MAY

THE NEWT IN SOMERSET BRINGS HISTORY TO LIFE BY RECREATING A GARDEN WITHIN A ROMAN VILLA



- ***A colourful peristyle colonnaded garden, inspired by the ancient gardens of Pompeii and Naples circa 78 AD and the estate's own recreated Roman Villa***
- ***Planting informed by the aesthetic and wellbeing choices of a thriving urban Roman household, creating a space designed to encourage physical and mental wellbeing***
- ***2024 marks The Newt's third year as headline sponsor - continuing to support RHS's mission to safeguard the future of horticulture***

This Spring, The Newt in Somerset will bring a glimpse of the Roman Empire to the RHS Chelsea Flower Show. In its third year as official headline sponsor, The Newt in Somerset's team of architects and horticulturists have recreated a colonnaded courtyard garden inspired by the remains of those found in ancient Pompeii and the wider Naples region circa 78 AD.



Honouring gardening traditions in playful and innovative ways, has always been at the heart of The Newt in Somerset experience. For RHS Chelsea 2024, the team at The Newt has taken inspiration from their recent reconstruction of a 4th Century AD Roman Villa found on the Somerset estate to create a peristyle courtyard garden, as would have been typical of a flourishing household at the height of the Roman Empire. An extension to a villa's internal space, planted courtyards offered a contemplative garden room integral to the Roman home, providing light, colour, fresh air and natural fragrance.

Visitors at RHS Chelsea will be invited to step back in time and immerse themselves in the colours, fragrances and planting styles of this particular era. There will also be a true taste of Somerset hospitality on offer during the show, including a cyder stand and hospitality suite all sourced from the West Country working estate.

THE ROMANS ARE COMING

Located in the main showground, *The Newt in Somerset: A Roman Garden* will follow the style of the 1st Century AD, maximising light and air within a compact space. Every inch will showcase the Romans' careful eye for design and the interplay between nature and architecture. Aesthetic choices of colour, fragrance and ornamental planting will create a moment of joy and repose, whilst medicinal planting will highlight the Romans' knowledge of plants' health and wellbeing properties. This dual purpose still resonates today, with much to be learned by the modern gardener - knowledge that The Newt is keen to share.

The peristyle garden will feature 1,600 individual plants of 13 different varieties, informed by the popular choices of 1st Century AD. A mulberry tree will take centre stage, flanked by wild cherry and pomegranate trees on either side. Medicinal plants including chamomile and lavender have been chosen for their relaxing, soothing properties, whilst opium poppy has been selected for pain relief, thyme to relieve coughs, colds and infections and Madonna lily to treat ulcers and external burns.

From a decorative perspective, four Roman Herms (sculptures) will create a focal point with fountains placed at each corner of the garden and braziers positioned at each end. The central garden will be encircled by a water channel, effective for collecting rainwater and irrigating the plants. The walls enclosing the courtyard will be decorated with frescoes, which were typical of the period.

GROWING A NEW GENERATION OF GARDENERS

The Newt in Somerset's ongoing sponsorship of the RHS Chelsea Flower Show supports the work undertaken by the Royal Horticultural Society - an independent charity - including scientific research, education and community programmes that help safeguard the future of horticulture. The partnership is founded on strong mutual values which underpin both The Newt and the RHS, particularly a belief in the vital benefits and positive impact of access to nature.

Education and inspiration shape the guest experience at The Newt in Somerset - with a continued focus on inspiring the next generation of gardeners. Their garden apprenticeship programme, launched in 2020, is currently guiding three young apprentices through a two-year programme spending time in ornamental, edible, woodland and turf departments, learning the rhythm of horticulture in all its forms. One young member has just been recruited full-time into the Ornamentals team, and will be part of the build team creating this year's garden at Chelsea.

Chelsea will once again see The Newt co-host the 'Young Horts' Breakfast' with the RHS. Some 200 young horticulturists from around the country are welcomed to The Newt's hospitality suite with speeches by the RHS Director General, and The Newt's CEO and Head Gardener. They are then taken on private tours of the show gardens, offering unique access and insight into growing a career in gardening.

Budding gardeners can access The Newt's schools' programme from an early age, now expanding into areas outside of the county. The estate has welcomed over 3000 children between September 2023 –



September 2024 to its 'Roman Villa Education Programme' and is currently developing its 'Outdoor Education Programme', which will include a further 1100 children between September 2024 – September 2025. It hosts a Forest School and regular tours and workshops aimed at children, with under 17s visiting the gardens free with an adult member.

A STORY OF GARDENING – FROM A BRITISH ROMAN VILLA TO MODERN TIMES

Alongside a vibrant educational programme, visitors can access an interactive history of gardens conveyed through three innovative permanent exhibits that appeal to all ages. The Roman Villa - Villa Ventorum, meaning 'Palace of the Winds' - opened in 2022 as a pioneering archaeological and educational experience. A life-size replica of the ruins of a Romano-British Villa dating back to 351 AD includes rooms, kitchens, a working complex of Roman baths and a vineyard garden spanning to an area of approximately 10.5 acres. The Roman Villa is located alongside an engaging, technology-led visitor centre and museum, carefully positioned over the original villa's foundations and ruins.

Both the villa and museum offer a window into life in a Romano-British household – including the sounds, smells, and sights of daily rituals, staying true to archaeological evidence. This experience has inspired their garden at RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2024.

Also within the estate is The Story of Gardening – a subterranean centre using interactive displays, virtual reality and garden rooms to transport visitors to gardens throughout history; from the retreats of Islamic kings to Chinese philosophers, English landowners and the inhabitants of today's living skyscrapers. Journey into the woods to discover the Beezantium, a honeyed jewel box that's like stepping into a real life beehive. Honeycomb walls, audio guides and observation hives offer a unique insight into the fascinating life of bees.

FROM THE EXPERTS

Ed Workman, CEO of The Newt in Somerset, notes:

"We look forward to another action packed RHS Chelsea Flower Show, and we are pleased to play a small part in helping the charity fulfil its mission, ensuring that horticulture thrives through education and innovation for many generations to come."

Stephen Herrington, Head Gardener at The Newt in Somerset and Co-Designer, notes:

"Planting in the horticultural traditions of the Roman Empire has been a fascinating journey. Drawing on our team's passion and expertise, we are aiming to convey to the modern visitor the sense of joy that the Romans would have derived through the scent and colour of their gardens."

Katie Lewis, Estate Architect at The Newt in Somerset and Co-Designer, notes:

"There is much to learn from the Romans, who were early pioneers in creating beauty through the precise interplay of nature with architecture. We hope that visitors to this year's RHS Chelsea Flower Show will be inspired by stepping back in time with us."

ABOUT THE NEWT IN SOMERSET

The Newt in Somerset is a working 'farm with rooms', recently named the World's Best Boutique Hotel at the World's 50 Best Hotels. With 2,000 acres of land, much of which is used for arable and livestock farming, its thirty acres of formal gardens are the main draw for some 200,000 visitors each year. The gardens were shaped over the last two centuries by successive enthusiasts and some of horticulture's most significant names, including Penelope Hobhouse and Nori and Sandra Pope, whose experiments with colour delighted visitors in the mid-1980s. Today's visitors can enjoy garden-to-table menus, horticultural courses and



workshops, fresh produce in the shops and botanical treatments in the spa, along with an annual programme of talks, workshops and events led by The Newt's knowledgeable team.

The estate's ethos is to combine traditional practices with modern facilities and thinking, farming in a circular way that gives back to the soil. Livestock and crops regenerate each other to create a balanced ecosystem. Everything is rooted in a deep respect for the land and all creatures living on it.

ABOUT THE RHS

Since our formation in 1804, the RHS has grown into the UK's leading gardening charity, touching the lives of millions of people. Perhaps the secret to our longevity is that we've never stood still. In the last decade alone we've taken on the largest hands-on project the RHS has ever tackled by opening RHS Garden Bridgewater in Salford, Greater Manchester, and invested in the science that underpins all our work by building RHS Hilltop – The Home of Gardening Science. We have committed to being net positive for nature and people by 2030. We are also committed to being truly inclusive and to reflect all the communities of the UK. Across our five RHS gardens we welcome more than three million visitors each year to enjoy over 34,000 different cultivated plants. Events such as the world famous RHS Chelsea Flower Show, other national shows, our schools and community work, and partnerships such as Britain in Bloom, all spread the shared joy of gardening to wide-reaching audiences. Throughout it all we've held true to our charitable core – to encourage and improve the science, art and practice of horticulture –to share the love of gardening and the positive benefits it brings. For more information visit www.rhs.org.uk. RHS Registered Charity No. 222879/SC038262

THE NEWT IN SOMERSET

Location: The Newt in Somerset, Bruton, Somerset, BA7 7NG

Website: www.thenewtinsomerset.com

Facebook/Instagram: [@thenewtinsomerset](https://www.facebook.com/thenewtinsomerset) / Twitter: [@thenewtsomerset](https://twitter.com/thenewtsomerset)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

Perowne International: thenewt@perowneinternational.com / +44 (0)20 7078 0295

The Newt in Somerset: annika.scott@thenewtinsomerset.com