



RHS RHS Malvern Spring Festival

7 - 10 May 2026



Blooming Borders Application Factsheet

Factsheet for Exhibitors

RHS Malvern Spring Festival

Thursday 7 May
to Sunday 10 May 2026

Deadline for applications: **Friday 29 August 2025**

Click [here](#) for the application form.

The Shows Team are passionate about supporting designers and are available to offer guidance throughout the process.

Before you apply

Before completing your application pack, please read through this document. It has information about the following:

- [About Borders](#)
- [Application process explained](#)
- [How to apply](#)
- [Design proposal](#)
- [Key information](#)
- [Key dates](#)
- [Key contacts](#)





Blooming Borders

NEW to RHS Malvern: Blooming Borders is a planting design category that offers opportunities for garden designers, plants people, horticulturalists and landscapers to kick-start, or further their careers in the horticultural industry whilst gaining exposure and experience exhibiting at an RHS Show.

Located at the entrance to the Show Garden area, the borders create a stunning, expansive planted walkway, becoming a captivating feature in the Festival's highest-traffic zone. This collaborative space promises to leave a lasting impression on all who visit.

Funding and Sponsorship

Each successful applicant will be awarded a £1,500.0 (ex VAT) grant – 50% will be paid prior to the Festival and the remaining 50% will be paid after breakdown is completed. Payment schedules will be confirmed within the site Contract.

Applicants are encouraged to consider and seek additional sponsorship opportunities, this could be in the form of product supply, 'goods or services in kind' agreements, direct funding or Crowd Funding.

Grants are awarded to all successful applicants in this category (further details on page 5).

Application process explained

Step 1 - Complete application form and submit your design proposal

Step 2 - Selection panel

The Selection Panel is there to review all applications, provide constructive feedback and check that submissions are feasible and suitable for the category and the RHS Malvern Spring Festival.

Step 3 - Feedback and further details

The Shows Team will share feedback provided by the Selection Panel for comment, additional information or clarification from the applicant.

The applicant must review and respond to the feedback within the timeframe given by the Shows Team.

Step 4 - Acceptance

Following the response to feedback and final review by the Panel, successful applicants will be offered a space at the Festival. The designer will receive an 'Allocation of Site' letter along with their Site Contract to be signed and returned to the Shows Team. News of allocation is embargoed until the Shows Team announces the successful participants (all detailed within the contract).

Step 5 - Show information

Once the signed Site Contract has been returned, the applicant will be required to provide various other details in the lead up to the show, including completing a Media Form - the content of which will be used in press releases, website pages and the Show Guide.

They will also have access to an Exhibitors Manual containing information about the Showground and available services.



How to apply

Read this factsheet thoroughly

This factsheet contains all the information you need to guide you through the application process. If you have any questions please contact a member of the Shows Team.

Complete the application form in full

Ensure all sections of the application form are completed making sure the most relevant person is selected to act as the coordinator. The designated exhibit coordinator will be the primary contact and they will be responsible for distributing relevant material to the rest of the team.

Submit the design proposal in the correct format

Please see the RHS Hampton Court Palace Garden Festival's Pocket Planting sample proposal [here](#) (judged under the same criteria as Blooming Borders).

This document is a guide only to show the desired level of detail, quality of the drawings and layout for your design proposal.

The design proposal should be submitted as a single PDF and labelled clearly. Maximum file size available to upload on the form is 25Mb, files exceeding this must be emailed or sent via WeTransfer to the Shows Team.

It is in the applicants best interest that applications are submitted in accordance with the below. Applicants may reach out to the Shows Team if they are unsure of the format, layout or level of detail and information required:

- All drawings and images must be scaled to A3. All drawings will be viewed digitally not printed to scale.
- Annotations must be clear and legible at A3 size
- Design proposals must not exceed 20 pages
- Design proposals must include at least one of each of the following six drawings:

1. Master plan

A 2D colour plan to scale showing the border from above. This plan should be fully annotated with dimensions and key elements of the design such as planted areas and hard landscaping e.g. boulders, gravel and walkways should be included

2. Layout plan

A 2D black and white outline plan. Similar to the master plan, this outline version allows the main elements of the border to be clearly seen and should include key dimensions e.g. path widths.

3. Perspectives

These should highlight key views into the border in 3D, either in perspective or axonometric form. Views from a visitor's point of view into the border should be included. The 3D views should be in full colour.

It is useful if at least one 3D view is an artist's impression as this helps to understand the 'feel' of the border (which is often difficult to capture with computer drawings). This will also be needed for use in media if the design is accepted.

4. Sections

These plans should show excavation depths and key heights of all elements of the border (including both soft and hard landscaping).

5. Preliminary planting plan

The preliminary planting plan should be presented in the same way as the master plan, showing key structural plants and plantings schemes. The plan should be accompanied by a separate planting list – this does not have to be a final definitive list but needs to be a good indication of plants to be used.

Mood boards can be submitted but should not replace the planting plan and list as they are a key part of the application.

6. Design intention

The design intention is the tool to translate the narrative of the border design, including the atmosphere and visual impact intended to the Show Teams, Selection Panel and Judging Panel.

This is the document the Judging Panel will use along with the Planted Categories judging criteria to assess your design.

Approximately six weeks before the Festival applicants will be contacted by the RHS Judging Team sharing details of how to submit a final version of the Design Intention to account for any small revisions to the design.

- Keep your language simple and your explanations clear
- Do not leave questions unanswered. If you state 'no' or 'not applicable' to any questions, explain why this is the case.

7. Budget

A preliminary budget breakdown should be included installation, maintenance, breakdown/relocation costs.



Design

There are 3 pre-allocated pocket shapes to choose to design to. Applicants will be asked to select a first and second choice preference within the application form.

The Shows Team reserves the right to make the final decision on pocket shape allocation and site allocation.

Please click [here](#) to view shape options PDF files for each option (paper size: A3 scale 1:1)

Landscaping

Blooming Borders is a planting design exercise, heavy/involved hard landscaping is not permitted in this category.

Natural materials (boulders, crushed shell, gravel) and props (water features etc) may be used if appropriate and proportional in size to the rest of the design. It is advised to include justification for use of such at the application stage.

Public Access and Boundaries

Public access onto borders is prohibited. Pathways may be included within the design if appropriate, but these will not be accessible during live days of the Festival.

Exhibitors must erect a barrier around their border to protect and mitigate the risk of damage to the design during the Festival. It is the responsibility of the exhibitor

to provide this.

Barriers should be in keeping with the style of the border and can be rope and post style or similar. It should not obstruct the viewing.

Barriers cannot be placed further than 0.5m outside the edge of the border's allocated site and must be 0.75 to 1.25m high.

The barrier choice does not need to be included as part of the design proposal or application.

Planted Categories Judging

This design category will be formally judged. Each border will be judged for an RHS Medal. The Planted Categories Judging Criteria can be found [here](#).

Please note the planted categories judging criteria is different from the garden judging criteria.

This design category will also be open for the People's Choice Award.

Key information

Essential information online

- [Planted Category Judging Criteria](#)
- [Biosecurity](#)
- [Terms and conditions](#)
- [RHS Sustainability Policy](#)

Build

All exhibitors are responsible for completing their Border within the allocated build schedule.

Allocated Site: Pre-Arrival Preparation

All borders will be prepped with a turf scrape prior to exhibitors' arrival. Note: Shows Team cannot guarantee the quality or firmness of the soil onsite. Exhibitors must be mindful of this when planning excavations. It is advised to not solely rely on the excavated soil for dressing or finishing your border. Soil conditioner available onsite free of charge, limited supply first come first serve.

Maximum excavation depth: 1m.

Excavations are the responsibility of the exhibitor or their chosen contractor. The on-site Showground Estates Team can assist if an issue arises upon arrival, or during build, whereby an excavation is required. Assistance is first come first serve, bookings managed by the Site Manager.

Exhibitors also have the option to build up their site which can be requested through the Site Manager.

Maintenance of exhibits

All exhibits must be maintained (watered/ deadheaded) by the exhibitor during Show Week, outside of Show opening hours.

Breakdown

Exhibitors must complete their breakdown by the allotted completion date.

Exhibitors are responsible for clearing the entirety of their allocated space and for the removal of any materials kept in storage onsite. This is inclusive of all items brought onsite, including organic waste, building materials and rubbish.

A Clearance Authorisation must be granted by the Site Manager or Head of Operations before leaving the Showground.

Electrical services

A communal power supply will be provided during the build and this will be removed prior to the Festival. If you require a bespoke supply during the Festival this can be pre-ordered via the Exhibitor Requirements form.

Fundraising

Charitable cash collection may not be carried out within the Showground. Discreet fundraising activities may be carried out within the Promotional/Engagement Area.

Graphics, murals, painted backgrounds etc

The proposed use of graphics, murals, painted backgrounds, etc. must be shown in plans submitted in advance and the Show Manager's permission sought for their use. In all cases these must be constructed of a fire-retardant material.

Ground protection

No sand, gravel, shingle, granite chips or similar materials likely to damage mowing machines or harm wildlife may be placed directly on the ground. Any such material must be placed on a thick membrane to protect the grass and ground.

Pre-fabricated fibreglass may be used only with prior permission from the Site Manager/ Head of Operations. Glass chippings, crushed CDs, etc. and selected waste metals are not permitted.

Trackway panels are available to protect the ground during build up (limited supply), please request these through the Site Manager.

Health and safety

All exhibitors must read and abide by regulations set out in the Exhibitor Manual. Health and Safety documents must be submitted at least 4 weeks prior to the start of build-up. Access to site will not be granted until this has been completed. Significant risks associated with the build must be identified in the Risk Assessment and a Work Method Statement must be produced detailing how risks will be controlled.

Along with the Work Method Statement, additional supporting plans may be needed to support the proposed work methods; the Shows Team can advise about the level of detail required.

Sustainability

Gardens must be repurposed in accordance with the RHS Sustainability Policy. Provision for this must be clearly stated on the application form.

Tickets

Each successful border designer will be allocated 6 complimentary tickets for each day of the Festival (this includes the designer's admission to the Showground).

Water

Communal standpipes will be provided during the build and these may be removed prior to the Festival. If you require a bespoke water supply for the Garden during the Festival this can be pre-ordered via the Exhibitor Requirements form.

Key dates

The following dates are to be used as a guide and are subject to change. Dates will be confirmed at allocation and in the RHS Malvern Spring festival General Regulations for Exhibitors.

Event	Guide date
Application	
Application deadline	Monday 29 August 2025
Selection Panel meeting	w/c 13 October 2025
Feedback period	w/c 27 October 2025
Acceptance	w/c 10 November 2025
Media form deadline	w/c 12 January 2026
Health and Safety/Insurance/Permission to Dig/ forms deadline	w/c 16 March 2026
Exhibitor Requirements form deadline	w/c 16 March 2026
Build-up	
Build-up starts	Monday 27 April 2026
Border Judging	Tuesday 5 May 2026
RHS Malvern Spring Festival	
Festival Open Days	Thursday 7 to Sunday 10 May 2026
Breakdown	
Breakdown starts	Sunday 10 May 2026
Breakdown completes	Wednesday 13 May 2026



Show Contacts

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Online

RMSF website rhsmalvern.co.uk

RHS website rhs.org.uk/shows-events/malvern-spring-festival

Facebook [@MalvernShows](https://www.facebook.com/MalvernShows)

Instagram [@malvern.shows](https://www.instagram.com/malvern.shows)



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