
ROYAL ENTOMOLOGICAL SOCIETY GARDEN AT RHS CHELSEA SHOWCASES STAR PLANTS FOR AN INSECT-RICH GARDEN

The Royal Entomological Society Garden at RHS Chelsea Flower Show, designed by Tom Massey and supported by [Project Giving Back](#), will highlight the vital role that insects play in our gardens and our lives. These tiny creatures are crucial to healthy ecosystems, but insect populations are declining worldwide. Gardeners can play an important part in creating biodiverse green spaces where insects can thrive by choosing plants that provide sources of food and habitat.



Inspired by nature found on brownfield sites, the Royal Entomological Society Garden features a mix of native and non-native planting providing rich biodiversity. Some of the plants included – such as the humble dandelion – are commonly considered weeds but are long-flowering and can be more resilient to the effects of our increasingly unpredictable climate.

Tom Massey comments: “Insects are a key species in our ecosystems, but many are suffering mass global decline. We, as gardeners, have a vital role to play in their recovery and survival through the choices we make particularly when it comes to hard landscaping and planting. The best thing you can do to support insects and a range of other wildlife in your garden is to choose a wide range of plants with year-round interest to prolong the seasons when they can feed and thrive, and introduce a very varied mix of plants to increase biodiversity value.”

This is a selection of the key plants that Tom is including in the Royal Entomological Society Garden, chosen for their ability to attract and support a wide variety of beneficial insects:

Common dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*) Dandelions provide a good nectar source for many flying insects such as lacewings, ladybirds and a larval food source for moths. They are one of the fastest developing plants in the UK going from seed to flowering plant in just 10 days and their cheerful yellow flowers are a common sight early in the year.

Pygmy borage (*Borago pygmaea*) This hardy perennial borage is low growing and provides a long-lasting source of nectar and pollen, attracting a variety of pollinators particularly bees. After a bee has visited a flower, it refills with nectar within two minutes.

Viper’s bugloss (*Echium vulgare*) A native biennial producing large, elegant spikes of blue flowers from late spring into the autumn that are a magnet for insects. Growing even in poor soil, it provides food for a range of insects including twenty species of butterfly, bees, hoverflies as well as several rare insects that only live on this plant.

Beth’s poppy (*Papaver dubium* subsp. *lecoqii*) A delicate annual with powder pink flowers, this poppy provides important food source for many insects including beetles and damselflies.



Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) - This native hedgerow tree supports over 300 species of insect and can be pruned to suit any sized garden. Flies, including hoverflies, have been counted as the main insect group visiting its flowers, as well as small beetles.

Common hazel (*Corylus avellana*) - A rich source of food and habitat for a wide range of insects, this tree is suitable for any sized garden and fully hardy. Hazel leaves provide food for moth caterpillars.

Simon Ward, CEO of the Royal Entomological Society comments: "Our ecosystems and the health of our planet rely on insects, yet most gardeners see them as pests and want to kill them. We want to inspire everyone to think again about our relationship with insects and learn to value their place in nature. In more urban spaces, gardens play an even more pivotal role in providing plants

The RES Garden is designed to highlight the crucial role that insects play in our world, even in urban areas like London,

Not only does the RES Garden include a wide range of plants to support insects, but it also incorporates different habitats for insects including a dead tree sculpture, rammed earth floors and walls, hoggin pathways and piles of dead wood, rubble, sand and gabion walls. The central feature of the garden is an outdoor laboratory providing a space to study insects and during the week of the show will be used for real scientific research, monitoring and studying insects visiting the garden. The striking design of the lab roof is inspired by the morphology a compound insect eye and its walls are permeable habitat panels.

After RHS Chelsea, the garden will be relocated to a permanent site at IQL Stratford in East London at the gateway to the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park where it will provide a long-term opportunity for learning and research.

For further information about RES visit www.royentsoc.org/chelsea

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For media enquiries about the Royal Entomological Society, please contact Jennie Spears or Clare Johnson at Bloom PR & Communications at hello@bloom-pr.co.uk

NOTES FOR EDITORS

About Royal Entomological Society

The Royal Entomological Society is devoted to the understanding and development of insect science. It is one of the world's leading authorities on insect conservation and control, supporting international collaboration, research and the publication of insect science discoveries and understanding. RES aims to show every person how remarkable and valuable insects are and wants to enrich the world with insect science. It funds, organises and supports events and activities through its outreach and education programmes. Find out more at www.royentsoc.org

About Project Giving Back

Project Giving Back is a unique grant-making organisation set up with the sole purpose of providing funding for gardens for good causes at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show. PGB was launched in May 2021, with funding from two private individuals, 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 up to 42 gardens inspired by a range of good causes at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show in 2022, 2023 and 2024. Find out more at givingback.org.uk.

About Tom Massey:

As a garden designer Tom Massey has become synonymous with environmentally conscious gardens that work in harmony with nature and the people they are designed for. Tom's has previously designed at RHS Chelsea for Lemon Tree Trust in 2018 and Yeo Valley Organic in 2021. Tom regularly appears on BBC's *Your Garden Made Perfect*, he lectures in sustainable garden design at the London College of Garden Design and this April released his first book, *The Resilient Garden*.