

Family: TELOSCHISTACEAE
Scientific Name: *Xanthoria parietina*
Common Name: Golden Shield Lichen
Origin: Globally distributed

On this bench you will find several species of lichen, as well as mosses. Look closely and you will see *Xanthoria parietina*. It stands out due to its golden colour. Lichens were once thought to be part of the plant kingdom until they were discovered to be something completely different. Lichens are a partnership between fungi and either algae, cyanobacteria or yeast. The fungus provides a home and the algae, cyanobacteria or yeast turns sunlight into sugar through a process called photosynthesis. In the article 'Queer Theory for Lichens' the lichenologist David Griffiths discusses how lichens can suggest a queer ecological way of thinking about life. He argues that lichens demonstrate that life is about interconnection as opposed to individual reproduction.



Family: LAURACEAE
Scientific Name: *Persea americana*
Common Name: Avocado
Origin: Central Mexico to Costa Rica

This tree was given its scientific name in 1768 by Philip Miller who was the Head Gardener at Chelsea Physic Garden during this time. In Central America where this tree originates, it was called *ahuacatl* by the Mayan people who lived in this region from 1800 BCE. The avocado flower has an unusual method of sexual reproduction called synchronous dichogamy. In the morning, the flower will open and only seed-producing pistils will function. It is functionally female. The flower closes overnight and then the next day it reopens with only the pollen-producing stamens functioning. It has changed from being female to male over the course of one night.



Family: IRIDACEAE
Scientific Name: *Crocus tommasinianus*
Common Name: Early crocus
Origin: Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Yugoslavia

Here you will find *Crocus tommasinianus*. Crocuses have been a symbol of queer love for thousands of years. There are many different cultivars of the crocus. Cultivars are varieties that have been produced by humans for particular qualities such as size and colour. The early crocus blooms in late winter and early spring and has purple, perfect flowers. There is an ancient Greek myth that tells of the plant's origin. Crocus was the name of a young human male who was the lover of the god Hermes. The two were playing discs. Crocus was hit in the head with the discus and was accidentally killed. In Hermes' grief, he transformed the blood on the ground into the crocus flower.



Family: LAMIACEAE
Scientific Name: *Lavandula dentata*
Common Name: Fringed lavender
Origin: Algeria, Balears, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Morocco, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Yemen

Lavender is an important plant relating to LGBTQ+ history. This lavender is a strongly scented shrub with tooth edged leaves and long flower stems. Lavender originally comes from the Mediterranean and is part of the Lamiaceae family, or mint family. The name for the colour lavender comes from the light purple flowers. Lavender is also an important colour for LGBTQ+ history. Since the turn of the 20th century, there has been a popular heteronormative view that the colour pink is associated with girls and blue with boys. The colour lavender can be made by blending pink and light blue. Lavender represents the blurring between the masculine and feminine binary.

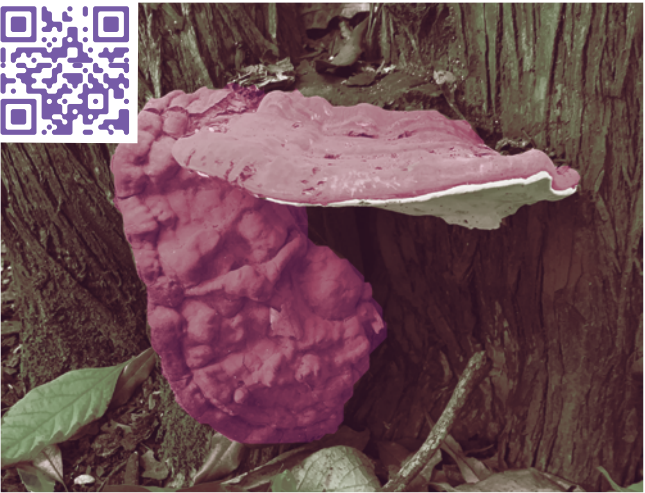
A Dash of Lavender

February 1–28, 2023

The celebration forms a part of Chelsea Physic Garden's 350 year anniversary.

Events

Evening Botanist Panel Discussion Friday 3 February 7pm - 8.15pm, £10	Rainbow Family Plant Drawing Session Wednesday 15 February 10am - 12pm, £10 per child and £15 per accompanying adult
Spells and Science Writing Workshop Sunday 5 February 10am -12pm, £15	Queer Botanical Drawing Session Sunday 19 February 1pm - 4pm, £15
If a Tree Falls, Does it Hear a Sound? Writing Workshop Sunday 12 February 10am - 12pm, £15	Queer Botanical Poetry Reading Friday 24 February 7pm - 9pm, £10



Family: GANODERMATACEAE
Scientific Name: *Ganoderma applanatum*
Common Name: Artist's bracket
Origin: Europe and parts of China

Growing on this buddleja tree stump is a mushroom. It is the fruiting body of the *Ganoderma applanatum* fungus. It is called the artist's bracket because it can be used to produce works of art, by making etchings on its underside. Artist's bracket is often found growing on wood and grows all around the world. It has a brown shelf or bracket, a white outer edge and underside, and no stalk. In 'The Science Underground: Mycology as a Queer Discipline' the authors apply queer theory to the study of fungi. There are several associations between queerness and fungi that can be found, including their marginalisation, difficulty to classify, and subversive nature.



Family: ASPARAGACEAE
Scientific Name: *Agave americana*
Common Name: Maguey
Origin: Arizona, Mexico, Texas

To many of the indigenous people of Central America where this plant is from it is called maguey. It is a succulent, which means it stores water in its leaves. Maguey is a monocarpic plant, which means it blooms only once in its lifetime. It can reproduce both asexually and sexually. Its sexual reproduction cycle lasts for many years during which it builds up energy without flowering. When it is ready the plant sends up an impressive flower spike. This spike can be up to 8 metres tall. On the spike, clusters of flowers start to open. After it reproduces, the main plant dies. In addition to reproducing sexually it can also reproduce asexually through offshoots.

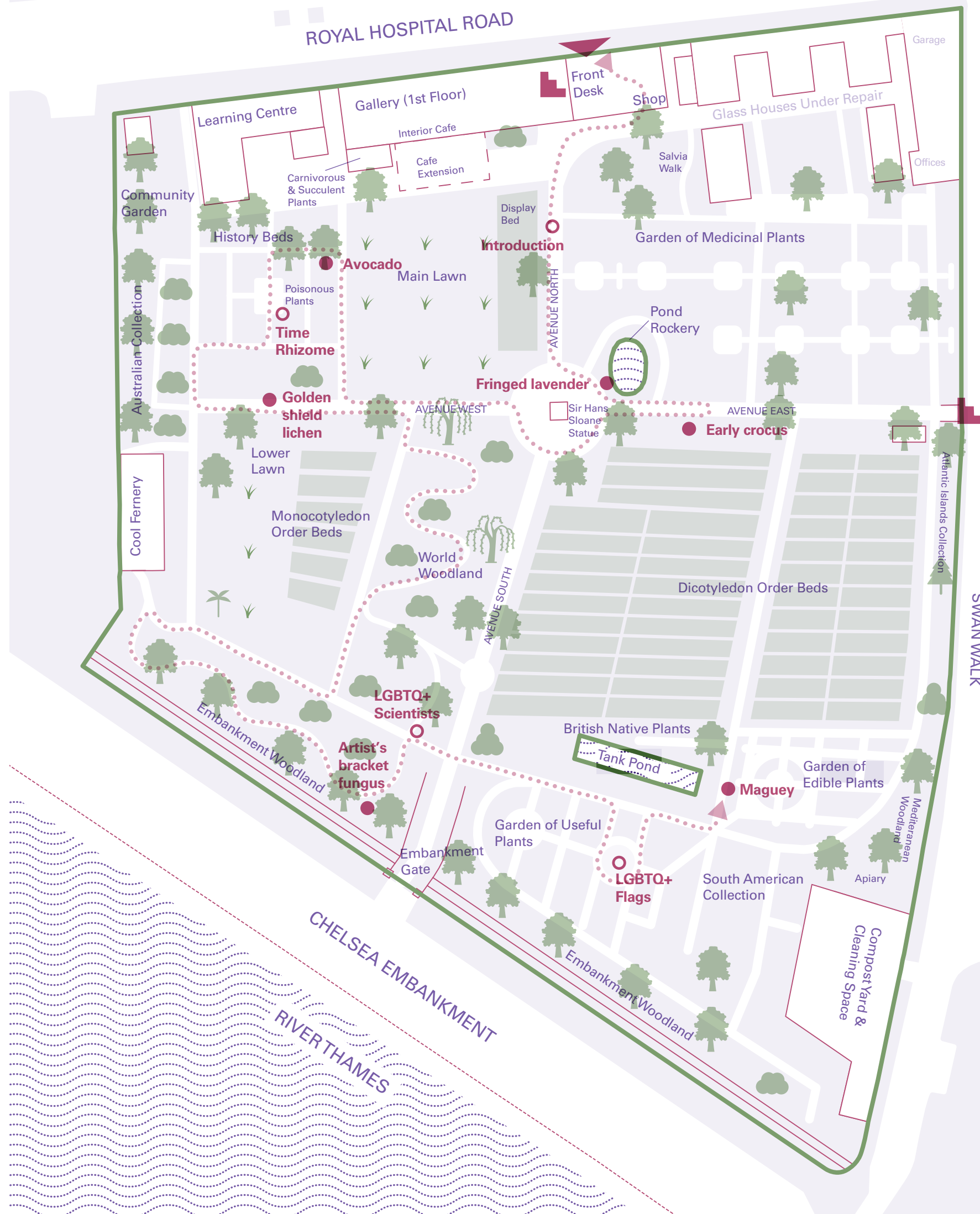


This map shows the locations of plants, fungi and displays. Scan the QR codes with your phone to go to a website with images, extended text, and audio recordings.

350
years of plant science



- Entrance
- Plants & Fungi
- Displays
- Trail
- Stairs
- Structure
- Water



For LGBTQ+ History Month, Chelsea Physic Garden is collaborating with Queer Botany to look at plants, fungi and lichen through a queer lens.

Queer Botany is a project that studies connections between queerness and plants through events, storytelling, and design. Since the 1400s and the expansion of western colonial powers, nature and plants have been examined through a predominantly heteronormative, European, and male point of view. The project aims to share marginalised perspectives and support more diverse representations in the environment and outdoors.

Chelsea Physic Garden is celebrating LGBTQ+ history month with *A Dash of Lavender*. We want queer and marginalised stories from culture and nature to inform our understanding of the world.

Historically, the LGBTQ+ community has often been referred to as 'unnatural', however, the 'natural' world has many characteristics that can be seen as queer. One example is the variety of plants and their sexual diversity. There is also a cultural link between queerness and the symbolism of flowering plants, which can be found in terms like 'pansy', or 'a streak' or 'dash' of lavender. Find out more about this by taking part in our *A Dash of Lavender* trail.

Glossary

Asexual reproduction describes reproduction where a new offspring has a single parent and has the same genes as the parent plant, this can be contrasted with sexual reproduction (described below). In plants this can be done through self-propagating or self-pollinating, depending on its circumstances.

Cultivars are varieties of a plant that have been bred or selected by humans.

Heteronormative is a term used to describe the assumption that everything is heterosexual and disregards anyone or anything that isn't.

LGBTQ+ is an acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and other sexual and gender minorities.

Perfect Flowers have both pollen-producing stamen and seed-producing pistil organs in the same flower. The stamen is often described to have 'male' reproductive structures and the pistil 'female'. Perfect flowers are also called androgynous, bisexual, hermaphrodite, or complete flowers.

Queer is defined in the dictionary as 'strange' or 'odd'. This word was also used against the LGBTQ+ community. Since the late 1980s, some members of the LGBTQ+ community have taken on this word as a positive. Some people will use the word as an umbrella word to describe everyone who is part of the LGBTQ+ community. Within *A Dash of Lavender*, it is used as an umbrella term that can refer to all the different identities.

Sexual reproduction in plants is a process where plants reproduce with two different plant parents to produce an offspring which has a mixture of the parents' genes.

Symbiosis is a long-term interaction between two organisms living closely together to survive.