

Physic Gardens

What is a physic garden?

Physic gardens are known to have dated back to the 15th and 16th century, yet their rise in popularity and general interest in more recent times shows no signs of waning.

So what is a physic garden?

It is a type of herb garden where plants with medicinal properties are grown. Hundreds of years ago, physic gardens were created for practicing physicians to grow plants for the medicines they prepared, based on knowledge handed down for generations, which they then

prescribed for their patients. It was from these types of gardens that botanical gardens developed.

Modern botanical gardens were preceded by medieval physic gardens that originated at the time of Emperor Charlemagne. Gardens of this time included one for medicinal plants called the *herbularis* or *hortus medicus*. Pope Nicholas V set aside part of the Vatican grounds in 1447 for a garden of medicinal plants that were used to promote the teaching of botany, this being a forerunner to the University gardens at

Padua and Pisa established in the 1540s.

Closer to home, typically the founding of many of the early botanic gardens was instigated by members of the medical profession. The naturalist William Turner established physic gardens at Cologne, Wells, and Kew and it was he who also wrote to Lord Burleigh recommending that a physic garden be established at Cambridge University with himself at its head.

Situated in the heart of London, The Chelsea Physic Garden was established as the Apothecaries' Garden by the

Worshipful Society of Apothecaries in 1673. Having started in Westminster before then moving to Chelsea, it was founded for the purpose of training apprentices in identifying plants. Subsequently it has become one of the most important centres of botany and plant exchange in the world.

Chelsea Physic Garden is the second oldest botanical garden in Britain, after the University of Oxford Botanic Garden, which was founded in 1621. With a unique living collection of around 5,000 different edible, useful,

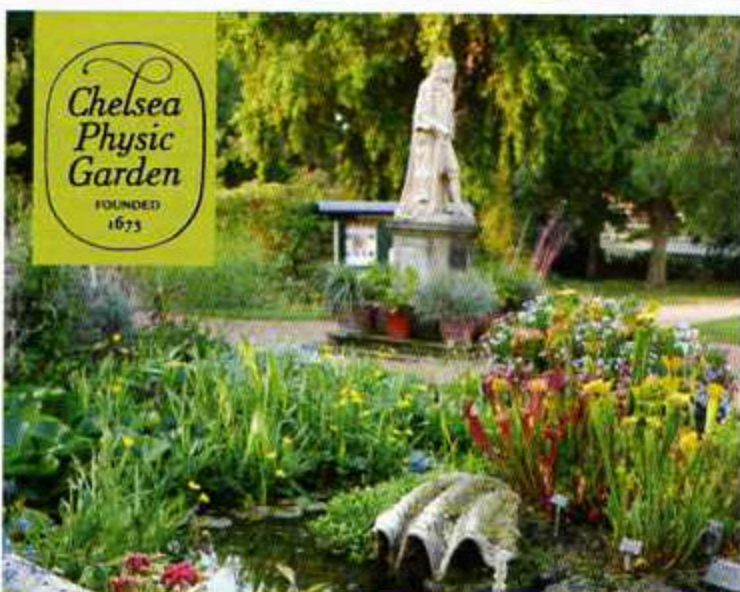
The oldest botanic garden in London

Situated in the heart of London, Chelsea Physic Garden has a unique living collection of around 5,000 different edible, useful and historical plants. This 'hidden gem' is a peaceful green oasis in which to enjoy a fascinating tour, followed by a relaxing lunch or afternoon tea at its acclaimed Tangerine Dream café.

Chelsea Physic Garden is the oldest botanic garden in London and was founded in 1673 by the Worshipful Society of Apothecaries for the purpose

of training apprentices in identifying plants. It subsequently became one of the most important centres of botany and plant exchange in the world. The Garden's warm microclimate means that many tender plants can flourish including a number of rare and endangered species.

The Garden's season opens with Snowdrop Days: A Midwinter Celebration, from Saturday 2 February to Sunday 10 February. Discover dozens of fascinating snowdrops including many



unusual cultivars on the Snowdrop Trail. Wander through the wood with drifts of 10,000 newly planted snowdrops, admire their diversity in close-up in the Snowdrop Theatre, and learn more from expert tours, talks and workshops.

From Easter 2013 'Superfood Summer' is the Garden's theme, highlighting the true food champions of nutrition and health. Some of these are relatively little known or grown, such as Quinoa, a remarkably hardy seed crop from the high Andes, as well as the Garden's venerable fruiting pomegranate and century-old olive, the biggest in the country. Distinctive displays of exotic and everyday crops will provide colour and interest throughout the season.

The year's edible theme continues in

the recently opened and fast-maturing Garden of Edible Plants, where a diverse range of crops is also featured, many of them 'superfoods' in their own right. Visitors will discover a wealth of information and inspirational ideas to try at home. In addition, the Summary and Order beds will be awash with an ever-changing succession of unusual floral displays.

Expert guides are provided to accompany groups. Guided tours take around one hour. The guides can offer a variety of topics for special interest groups including garden history, medicinal plants, plant introductions, perfumery or a more general tour. Free audio guides are available for visitors wishing to tour the Garden independently.

London's Oldest Botanic Garden

Guided Tours • Licensed Café • Gift & Book Shop

Founded in 1673, Chelsea Physic Garden is an oasis in the heart of the capital with over 5,000 different plant species. New for 2013: *Superfood Summer* highlighting the true plant champions of nutrition and health.

Special group rates: £8 adult/£5 students including free guided tour. Delicious set price lunches and teas.

Swan Walk, London SW3 4JJ Tel. 020 7349 6471
www.chelseaphysicgarden.co.uk/visiting

Pre-booked Group visits 2013
 Group visits (8 or more), with free guided tours, are available:
 2 - 10 February 2013
 29 March - 31 October 2013
 Other dates by arrangement.
 Tuesdays to Fridays & Sundays/Bank Holidays: 11am - 6pm

Admission (including free guided tour for pre-booked groups of 8 or more)
 £8: adults (including seniors)
 £5: students (with student cards);
 children 5-15 years (with full supervision)

To arrange a group visit to Chelsea Physic Garden call 020 7352 5646 ext 221 or email groups@chelseaphysicgarden.co.uk.
 For more information see
www.chelseaphysicgarden.co.uk/visiting/groupvisits

Physic Gardens



Cowbridge Physic Garden

What is a Physic Garden?

medicinal and historical plants, this 'hidden gem' is also seen by many as a peaceful green oasis in which to savour a relaxing stroll, plus enjoy the award-winning Café and a Book and Gift Shop.

The Garden's warm microclimate means that many tender plants can flourish including a number of rare and endangered species. It has the largest outdoor fruiting olive tree in Britain and the world's most northerly outdoor grapefruit tree. There are over 100 different types of tree in the Garden, many of which are rare in Britain, whilst in the glasshouses there is a collection of tropical and sub-tropical species and a Victorian Cool Fernery.

From London to Northumberland, and a garden which is an inspirational venture unique to the North of England and one that brings herbs to life like no other.

Dilston Physic Garden near Corbridge is the place to discover the power of plants and explore a superb Physic Garden with over 800 medicinal plants. Occupying a tranquil site above the Devil's Water at Dilston in the Tyne Valley, this contemporary physic garden is the inspired creation of Professor Elaine Perry, a neuroscientist at Newcastle University who directs research into plant medicines. Herbs and trees with properties for health and healing grow in abundant quantities, clearly labelled with regularly updated information on their traditional uses and scientific, clinical evidence.

Visitors can learn about traditional herbal medicine as all the plants are displayed with detailed labels about their uses, can get to see, touch and smell

each of the plants through the seasons, and also join courses in medical herbalism and other aspects relating to the wonderful healing properties of individual plant species. The garden is closely linked to the Medicinal Plant Research Group (MPRG) in the Universities of Newcastle, Northumbria and Durham and is now a registered charity set up for education and enjoyment.

In Wales, and the ancient market town of Cowbridge, the Cowbridge Physic Garden is known as the hidden treasure of the Vale, and it is easy to see why.

Situated just 12 miles to the west of Cardiff, Cowbridge Physic Garden has been described as a small oasis of calm and tranquility. Walk down Church Street in the town, and in and behind a high stone wall lies the garden and a different world, all just a few steps away from the noise and pressures of modern day life.

It was originally part of the Old Hall Gardens, laid out by the Edmondson family in the 18th century. Having been badly neglected in the 20th century it was brought back to life by enthusiastic volunteers and today is a glorious array of medicinal plants and herbs, typical of physic gardens from centuries past.

The site is relatively small at just 1/2 acre (0.2ha) in size but is laid out in a formal pattern and contains a fascinating variety of species that would traditionally have been used for healing, cooking and dyeing fabrics. All paths in and around the garden are flat and well maintained, so pedestrian and wheelchair access is easy. It is free for all to enjoy, and open every day except Christmas Day, 10.00am-4.00pm in winter and 10.00am-6.00pm in summer.



With rich historical roots, a glorious physic garden is flourishing in South Wales.

Discreetly hidden just off the High Street in the market town of Cowbridge, Vale of Glamorgan, the Cowbridge Physic Garden is a haven of peace and tranquility. But more than that, the planting is a faithful recreation of physic gardens of times gone by (all plant varieties are pre-Victorian). The garden is laid out within high stone walls and is just under half an acre.

All paths are flat and pedestrian access is easy.

It is open daily (except Christmas Day) and entry is free.

For groups wishing to have guided tours these can be arranged in advance for a nominal fee. Please contact Rebecca Exley on 01446 773264 (email rebeccaexley@aol.com)



**COWBRIDGE
PHYSIC GARDEN**
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BONT-FAEN

Cowbridge Physic Garden, Church Street, Cowbridge, Vale of Glamorgan CF71 7BB