



## Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew's 250th anniversary diary

Come and visit Kew Gardens, a 300 acre World Heritage Site, in its 250<sup>th</sup> year. Explore Victorian glasshouses such as the Palm House and Temperate House, marvel at the towering Pagoda or enjoy contemporary architectural gems such as the Sackler Crossing, Davies Alpine House and the Rhizotron and Xstrata Treetop Walkway.

A detailed round up of events, activities and horticultural highlights in RBG Kew's 250th year follows. For further information and images on these events, and Kew's programme of scientific research and international conservation please contact the RBG Kew Press Office on 020 8332 5607 or email [pr@kew.org](mailto:pr@kew.org).

### MAY

#### **250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary ...**

- HM The Queen and HRH Prince Philip visit the Gardens to celebrate the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary (5 May)
- A special TV programme *Cruickshank on Kew: The Garden That Changed the World*, presented by Dan Cruickshank, traces the history of RBG Kew. (28 April and repeated on 6 May, BBC 2. Now available to download on BBC iPlayer).
- RBG Kew is partnering with The Royal Mint and The Royal Mail to produce limited edition commemorative souvenirs; a 50 pence coin decorated with the Pagoda (launched 11 May and circulating in the nations change autumn 2009), and a set of 4 stamps adorned with Kew icons (launched on 18 May).

#### **Science and Art...**

- Huge seed willow sculptures create a new Seed Walk at Main Gate, with an exhibition about Kew's Millennium Seed Bank partnership in the Nash Conservatory (until September).

#### **Art...**

- *International Garden Photographer of the Year* exhibition opens with a category for Kew's anniversary, World Botanic Gardens (23 May to September).
- *The Power of Plants* (The Shirley Sherwood Gallery of Botanical Art) celebrates plants used for health, food and textiles. Some plants will also feature in the in the Palm House Parterre (until 26 July).
- *In Search of Gingers* (The Shirley Sherwood Gallery of Botanical Art) is a stimulating exhibition of ginger art works by Sandy Ross Sykes (until 26 July).
- *Down Under* (The Shirley Sherwood Gallery of Botanical Art). Discover exceptional Australian and New Zealand botanical artists from The Shirley Sherwood Collection (until 8 August).

#### **Horticulture highlights...**

- *India Landscape* at the British Museum celebrates India's rich plant life (2 May to 28 September).
- The rose garden behind the Palm House is replanted to its original design dating back to 1848 (fully developed in summer 2010). It features 'Rosa' Kew Gardens, a celebratory rose for Kew's 250th anniversary launched at the Chelsea Flower Show (19 May).
- Bluebells bloom in the wild woodlands of the Conservation Area, near Queen Charlotte's cottage.

### JUNE

#### **Behind the scenes 250<sup>th</sup> tours...**

- A special tour of the Jodrell Laboratory takes in the order beds, mycology collection and plant DNA bank (until July).

#### **Horticulture highlights...**

- A global map, surrounded by flower beds filled with colourful plants, celebrates RBG Kew's international conservation work (until 2010).
- See beautiful UK native flowers at the Main Gate, including British orchids and other wildflowers. New bee hives will help visitors learn more about the vital role of bees (until 2010).

## JULY

### Horticulture highlights...

- Enjoy the Gardens in full summer bloom; highlights are the Waterlily House and the rock garden

### Events...

- *Summer Swing* has an all-singing and all-dancing line up for Kew's 250th anniversary year, enhanced by a live big-screen relay and sizzling firework finale each night (7 – 11 July).

### Talks...

- Join a debate investigating the tensions between the exploitation and preservation of landscapes. The panel includes economist Sir Nicholas Stern, international journalist Tahmima Anam and Head of Kew's Millennium Seed Bank partnership, Paul Smith (6 July, British Museum). Hosted by BBC environment correspondent Sarah Mukherjee.
- Angela McFarlane, Kew's Director of Content and Learning, explains how Kew – a 250 year old botanic garden – embraces the digital age (10 July, Lichfield Festival).

## AUGUST

### Art...

- *The Art of Plant Evolution* (The Shirley Sherwood Gallery of Botanical Art) features 136 paintings covering 133 species and provides a sweeping overview of the evolution of plants on earth (until December).

### Behind the scenes 250<sup>th</sup> tours...

- Explore the Herbarium, Library, Art and Archives, which houses approximately 7 million herbarium specimens, 300,000 books, 200,000 art works and 7 million archival items (until September).

## SEPTEMBER

### Talks...

- Benjamin Franklin and Joseph Banks, Kew's great patron, were close friends. Dr Paul Smith, Head of Kew's Millennium Seed Bank partnership, talks about their mutual botanical passion (9 September, British Library).
- Legendary designer Celia Birtwell discusses the inspiring nature of plants with author Anna Pavord, naturalist Richard Mabey and RBG Kew's Keeper of the Herbarium, Library, Art and Archives David Mabberley (11 September, V&A).

## OCTOBER

### Art...

- The newly restored Marianne North Gallery reopens. The gallery is filled with botanical and landscape paintings by this intrepid, globetrotting Victorian artist (12 October).
- The Prince of Wales Trust presents *Experience the Rainforest*, is a professional photographic and interactive exhibition bringing the rainforest to life at Kew using the latest technology from Sony (until December, Nash Conservatory).

### Science...

- Kew's Millennium Seed Bank partnership celebrates smashing its target of collecting and banking seeds from 10 per cent of the world's endangered, economic and endemic wild plants species by 2010. Contact the RBG Kew press office for further information.

### Horticulture highlights...

- Enjoy autumnal views across the Gardens from the top of the Xstrata Treetop Walkway.

### Behind the scenes 250<sup>th</sup> tours...

- Explore the Economic Botany Collection filled with 90,000 raw plant materials and plant artefacts (until November).

## DECEMBER

### Events...

- Experience Christmas at Kew. Families can enjoy a fun day out in stunning surroundings, take a stroll down Holly walk, and warm up in the steamy glasshouses.

### Talks...

- As we address the challenges of climate change and global conservation, Kew's Director, Professor Stephen Hopper, considers how plant taxonomy and systematics are changing to meet the needs of 21st century science (1 December, Royal Society).