



inside Kew

The quarterly newsletter for season ticket holders

winter 2009


Kew 250th
PLANTS PEOPLE POSSIBILITIES

Celebrate Christmas at Kew

Kew's Christmas festival starts on 1 December, bringing some festive sparkle and a bundle of activities to the Gardens. From winter walks to wine tasting, Father Christmas to a Christmas trail around the Gardens, the season offers a host of activities to be enjoyed by everyone.

Children can meet Father Christmas in his magical grotto or try out Kew's thrilling new tree-themed play zone, the Treehouse Towers outside Climbers and Creepers. They can also join in a series of free activities at Climbers and Creepers throughout the school holidays: just drop in to see what's happening on the day. Don't forget to see Kew's very own Christmas tree set up at Victoria Plaza.

To be fully prepared for that scrumptious Christmas lunch, book your place on Kew's festive and fun wine tasting evening to learn about wine and find out which wines to serve with your Christmas meal.

An expert from Majestic Wines will take you through a tasting of ten examples, including champagne, a selection of red and white wines, port and a dessert wine.

20% off on late-night shopping

*Thurs 10 December – Sat 12 December,
4–8pm, Victoria Plaza, entry free*

Victoria Plaza will be open for three festive evenings, with food tastings, book signings and mulled wine. Pick up some fantastic and unique Christmas gifts for your loved ones: choose from a wide range of gifts, including toiletries, plants or books. On purchases over £20, claim the special seasonal offer of 20% reduction. Your purchases will be helping to support Kew's vital work around the world.



New Kew website



Interactive maps, species profiles and your pictures of the gardens are just a few of the new features on Kew's new website, which was launched at the beginning of October this year.

A dedicated members' area is amongst the new additions to the site, allowing Kew members to get up-to-the-minute information about special offers, seasonal news and exclusive members' events in the Gardens. The new web pages also allow you to explore Kew's conservation projects around the world and see how your support through our appeals contributes to this vital work. Visit www.kew.org/membersevents

Winter Opening Hours

Kew Gardens

Daily, 9.30am – 4.15pm until 6 February,
then 9.30 – 5.30pm.
Closed 24 – 25 December.

Wakehurst Place

Daily, 10am to 4.30pm until 28 February,
then 10am to 6pm.
Closed 24 – 25 December.

Both gardens are open on
New Year's Day.

Garden Highlights – Winter

Kew Gardens

The cold winter months bring many seasonal treats to Kew, from drifting scents of winter-flowering shrubs to magnificent tropical displays inside the historic glasshouses. As the trees lose their leaves and the vibrancy of autumn colours is gradually replaced by serenity and stillness, the Xstrata Treetop Walkway offers uninterrupted stunning

views of the surroundings and is well worth a visit. Several trees such as the paper-bark maple develop a striking winter bark at this time of the year.

Take a brisk walk in the Gardens to enjoy the glorious row of sweetly-scented viburnum around the Palm House Pond or the eye-catching brightly-coloured winter berries in the Berberis Dell.



Areas to Visit at Kew

Snowdrops



The first flowers of snowdrops can appear as early as January. The leaf-tips of this much loved plant are hardened in order to break through the frozen ground and these are followed by white bell-shaped flowers with slender leaves of bluish-green. Look out for snowdrop carpets near the Temple of Aeolus, around the Ruined Arch, at Queen Charlotte's Cottage and in the Rock Garden where eleven different species are grown as well as several hybrids.

Winter Aconites



Eranthis hyemalis, commonly known as winter aconite, brings a welcome splash of colour in late winter with its vibrant yellow flowers, sometimes showing as early as early February. A member of the buttercup family (*Ranunculaceae*), winter aconite grows to a height of 10–15cm. With 250,000 bulbs planted on Holly Walk, its brightly coloured flowers create a wonderful golden carpet.

Witch Hazel



One of the earliest flowering plants at Kew is the witch hazel (*Hamamelis*), which makes its first appearance around King William's Temple and in the Winter Garden. A deciduous shrub, the witch hazel brings a delightful display of sweetly fragrant flowers on bare winter branches. Visitors can enjoy the delicate and scented blossoms of its bright spidery yellow flowers from November to February.

Holly Walk



This pathway was originally laid out in 1874, and used to be called Love Lane at a time when it was the main public right of way from Kew to Richmond. Most of the hollies planted along here are from the original plants, and there are 56 species and hybrids making this the largest collection of mature hollies in cultivation in the world.

Wakehurst Place



During the winter months a dazzling array of thousands of snowdrops near the Visitor Centre provides a snowy white welcome. This much-loved plant is a real delight in January and February with its delicate flowers adding a splash of brightness on even the greyest winter day.

In the Water Gardens several thousand more snowdrops are joined by huge drifts of *Crocus tomassinianus*, with their purple goblet flowers opening for warm winter sunshine.

A carpet of 15,000 cyclamen in shades of pink and white is another eye-catching feature of the garden at this time of year. The planting of cyclamen near the Visitor Centre is believed to be the largest of its kind in the country.

Just outside the Walled Gardens, the Winter Garden brings more colour and interest between November and February. Brightly coloured dogwood and willow stems contrast with the shapes and colours of the dried leaves of ornamental grasses.

Be Inspired at Kew and Wakehurst

The Prince's Rainforests Exhibition

*Until Sunday 6 December,
Nash Conservatory*

Award-winning photographer, Daniel Beltrá offers a powerful depiction of the beauty of rainforests and the devastating effects of deforestation. The exhibition is sponsored by Sony.

The Marianne North Gallery

The newly restored Marianne North Gallery is a visual treat to those wanting to find out more about this intriguing Victorian artist and her unique art. Through innovative installations, touch-screen monitors and some previously unseen material you can investigate the paintings in detail and reveal the person behind this extraordinary legacy of art.

Supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund and generous Kew supporters, the restoration project continues on Marianne North's 833 paintings. Find out more about how to support the project and adapt a painting on www.kew.org/mng



At the Shirley Sherwood Gallery of Botanical Art, Kew Gardens:

The Art of Plant Evolution

Until Sunday 3 January 2010

Art meets science in an exhibition of botanical paintings from The Shirley Sherwood Collection, arranged in the latest evolutionary sequence, determined by recent DNA analysis.

Lectures

All lectures are at Kew's Jodrell Lecture Theatre

Booking essential – phone Adult Education on 020 8332 5626 or email adulted@kew.org

Birds, Rainforests and Coffee

Thursday 28 January, 7pm, £5

Dr Derek Thomas addresses the real cost of the 30,000 cups of coffee drunk across the world every second.

Finding Mr Wilson

Tuesday 23 February, 7pm, £5

Mark Flanagan and Kew's Tony Kirkham's lecture based on their book *Wilson's China*, about one of the 20th century's greatest plant collectors, Ernest Wilson.

The Honey Bee – gateway to biology, cultural icon and agricultural helper

Thursday 25 March, 7pm, £5

A lecture by Professor Ratnieks on the life of honey bees and conservation of these fascinating insects.

At Wakehurst Place:

International Garden Photographer of the Year Exhibition

Daily, until Sunday 14 February

Take inspiration from the award-winning photographs in the stunning setting of the gardens.

Tropical Extravaganza

Saturday 6 February – Sunday 7 March 2010, Princess of Wales Conservatory

Escape the winter blues and enjoy the magnificent displays of orchids and other striking tropical plants at Kew. Housed in the Princess of Wales Conservatory and Waterlily House, the breathtaking array of exotic plants will bring an amazing diversity of colour, shapes and sizes. The vibrant colourful displays will offer not just a visual treat but also an opportunity to learn more about the range of habitats these exotic plants live in and why it is important to protect them.

You can get up close to some of the orchids shown by joining our behind-the-

scenes tours of Kew's Tropical and Orchid Nurseries where some of the rarest and most threatened of these species are grown. Real orchid enthusiasts should not miss the Orchids for Beginners day course where they can learn how to grow orchids at home.

Free hands-on sessions in the Secluded Garden Glasshouse will also be available, led by Kew's volunteer guides who will show you a display of tropical food – some familiar, some weird and wonderful. Find out how they grow, where they come from, how they're used and what they smell like!



Tropical Illumination Evening

Join us for a fundraising event for the Plants, Horticulture and Gardens Fund and help keep Kew looking amazing.

An exclusive opening-night reception to see the spectacular Tropical Extravaganza lit up after dark. Enjoy wine and canapés as you explore the colourful exotic displays throughout the Princess of Wales Conservatory. Come and enjoy the spectacle and learn more about Kew's work around the world in the International Year of Biodiversity.

Saturday 6 February 2010, 7pm,
Princess of Wales Conservatory

£40 Kew members – £45 guests (there is no restriction on the number of guest tickets that can be purchased). Net proceeds from this event will be used to support the work of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.

Contact Events on **020 8332 3230** to book your tickets.

Book Offer for Members – Heather Angel's Wild Kew



We have five copies of the book *Heather Angel's Wild Kew* to give away to Season Ticket holders. For your chance to win a copy, send us your name and membership number by email (send to insidekew@kew.org) or post by Friday 11 December 2009. Please make sure you write 'Wild Kew Competition' on your envelope or in your email. All entries will be entered into a draw and the winners will be notified by Friday 18 December 2009.

Event Highlights at Kew and Wakehurst

At Kew Gardens

Free daily guided walks

Register from 15 minutes before the tour at Victoria Plaza Guides' Desk

Choose from:

Introduction to the Gardens

11am and 2pm

Gain an insight into Kew's history, plants, science and seasonal highlights.

Winter Evergreens

Tuesday 1 December – Sunday 31 January, 12 noon, max 15 per tour

A one-hour walk to examine the beauty of conifers and broad-leaved evergreens in Kew's Arboretum.

Winter Trails

Pick up a free leaflet at any gate for these self-guided trails:

Kew in Winter

Saturday 5 December – Sunday 3 January

Discover areas of the Gardens recommended by Kew staff at this time of year.

Children's Christmas Trail

Saturday 5 December – Sunday 3 January

Christmas-themed family Thinking Walk for ages four and above.

Father Christmas in his Grotto

Saturday 12 December – Wednesday 23 December, Princess of Wales Conservatory, free

Visit Father Christmas in his sparkling grotto. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Group sessions.

Children's Fun: Face Painting

Every weekend in December and daily Monday 21 December – Sunday 3 January 2010 (excluding 24, 25, 26 December and 1 January), 10.30am – 3.30pm, Climbers and Creepers, £4 per face, £7 for two

Choose from animal and Christmas-inspired designs.

Tropical Extravaganza

Saturday 6 February – Sunday 7 March, Princess of Wales Conservatory

Hands-on Sessions: Tropical Fruit

Wednesdays and Sundays 7 February – 7 March, 2 – 4pm, Secluded Garden Glasshouse, free

Behind-the-Scenes Tours of Orchid Nursery

Tuesdays and Thursdays 11 February – 4 March, max 10 per tour; 1pm, 1.30pm and 2pm, followed by Q&A session, £5; tour at 2.30pm, followed by orchid-potting demonstration, £15

Booking essential – phone 020 8332 5604 or email tours@kew.org

Learn about the skills of Kew's orchid growers.

Behind-the-Scenes Tours of Tropical Nursery

Saturdays 13 February – 6 March, 1pm, 1.30pm, 2pm, 2.30pm, followed by Q&A session, max 10 per tour, £5

Booking essential – phone 020 8332 5604 or email tours@kew.org

Discover Kew's Tropical Nursery and its carnivorous, bromeliad and orchid zones.



At Wakehurst Place

Seasonal Garden Tour

Daily (subject to the availability of a guide), 11.30am and 2pm, free

Join this guided introduction to the ornamental gardens.

Winter Warmer Family Trail

Until end February, pick up a free leaflet at the Visitor Centre or in the Mansion

Enjoy a brisk Thinking Walk on this self-guided trail to uncover the secrets of wood as a fuel in times gone by.

Big Tree Switch-On

Friday 27 November, 6.15pm

See the switch-on of 1,800 low energy bulbs on the tallest living Christmas tree in the UK. Enjoy festive food and drinks and a children's choir. The shop will also be open.

Christmas Sundays

Sundays 6, 13 and 20 December

Festive activities, including Christmas tree dressing, a Winter Garden trail, wandering carol-singers, traditional Christmas food and drinks, and special events in the Visitors' Centre. Don't miss the Festive Family Workshops in the Mansion from 2 – 4pm to make

natural festive decorations using greenery supplied from the Wakehurst Estate (charge applies).

Christmas Carols Concert

Friday 18 December, 7pm, free entry from 4.30pm

Enjoy an evening of carol concert, children's workshops (until 6.30pm), Christmas shopping or a festive meal in The Stables restaurant (until 8.30pm).

Winter Warmer Walk

Thursday 21 January, 11am – 12.30pm, £12

Booking essential – call Adult Education on 020 8332 5626

Enjoy a brisk walk with horticulturist Paul Reader around some of the formal areas of the garden and learn about gardening in winter.

Half-Term Activities

Monday 15 February – Friday 19 February, 10.30am – 3.30pm, free

Children's activities to complement the Winter Warmer Thinking Walk in the Mansion and outdoors.

If you would rather receive your newsletter by email, register at insidekew@kew.org