



~The University of Washington Botanic Gardens Presents~

## Great Gardens & Estates of England plus the Chelsea Flower Show!

May 22 – 31, 2025

Pack your sun hat (and maybe your wellies) for a vibrant garden adventure with **Christina Owen**, director of the **University of Washington Botanic Gardens** and, co-host, **UWBG's Curator and Associate Director, Ray Larson**. Experience the magic of the Chelsea Flower Show and explore the stunning gardens of Kent, Sussex, Oxford, and the Cotswolds. Explore renowned gardens, discover great estates, and stroll through the grounds of Kew Gardens and Blenheim Palace, Winston Churchill's birthplace. You'll be enchanted by the historic gardens of Sissinghurst and Great Dixter. Your adventure culminates in four fabulous days in Oxford, where you'll explore its illustrious university and the charming villages and gardens of the region. Join friends of the University of Washington Botanic Gardens for a garden adventure to England this spring! *Space is limited.*

### TRIP AT A GLANCE

2 Nights London

3 Nights Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent

4 Nights Oxford, England's Oldest University Town







## GARDEN HIGHLIGHTS

A day at the celebrated Chelsea Flower Show ♦ Kew Gardens ♦ The charming Cotswolds ♦ Great Dixter Gardens ♦ Sissinghurst Gardens ♦ Pashley Manor, Bateman's House Gardens ♦ Blenheim Palace, birthplace and former home of Winston Churchill ♦ Oxford Botanical Gardens ♦ Hidcote Manor Garden ♦ Kiftsgate Gardens ♦ The charming English countryside ♦ A wonderful group of kindred spirits who share your passion for gardens!

## IT'S INCLUDED!

- With garden host Christina Owen, director of UW Botanic Gardens and, co-host, UWBG's Curator and Associate Director, Ray Larson.
- Fully guided by plantsman Ian Cooke
- Nine nights' four-star hotel accommodation
- All breakfasts plus ten additional meals
- Transport by private air-conditioned motor coach
- Admission into all museums and gardens as listed in your custom garden itinerary
- Guided tours (where available) of gardens
- Gratuities for your driver and guided

## TRIP AT A GLANCE

10 Days/9 Nights (*land*)

\$5,795 per person, double occupancy

\$1,795 single supplement (*waived if you are willing to share & a roommate is found*)

Tour begins in London on May 22, 2025 at 6:00 pm

Tour ends in Oxford on May 31, 2025 after breakfast

Getting to London: *It's best if you book your flight into and out of Heathrow airport*

## SAVE \$200!

- Pay your final balance by check and save \$100
- Earthbound travel alumni save \$100



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*"It is a golden maxim to cultivate the garden for the nose,  
and the eyes will take care of themselves."  
-Robert Louis Stevenson*

## **Your Garden Adventure Begins!**

B = Breakfast / L = Lunch / D= Dinner

### **DAY 0: Depart the USA for London**

Remember, you'll need to depart from North America no later than May 21.

Arrive a few days early and catch a play at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre or visit London's great museums! Or, perhaps, have a stroll through Kew Gardens. **Travel advice:** Reserve your flight into and out of Heathrow Airport. It's much closer to both London and Oxford than Gatwick.

### **DAY 1: May 22 - Your Tailor-Made Garden Journey Begins!**

Welcome to the United Kingdom! Transfer by train, taxi airport shuttle to your centrally located, four-star hotel in London. Take time to relax and freshen up before meeting your guide and hosts Christina Owen, director of UW Botanic Gardens, and Associate Director, Ray Larson for an evening orientation and welcome dinner. *Sleep in London (D)*

### **DAY 2: May 23 - A Full Day Discovering the Renowned Chelsea Flower Show!**

The Chelsea Flower Show is Europe's premier gardening event, showcasing stunning garden designs by some of the world's top horticultural artists. Located on an 11-acre site at the Royal Hospital in Chelsea, this annual event transforms the serene lawns into a vibrant wonderland filled with color and creativity. Since its inception in 1913, the show has played a crucial role in advancing horticultural trends and innovations. In 2002, the event was enhanced with the introduction of the Great Marquees, which are larger, brighter, and better ventilated, offering an improved experience for visitors and exhibitors alike. It's truly a celebration of nature's beauty. Enjoy your visit! *Sleep in London (B, D)*



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*"Gardens are not made by singing 'Oh, how beautiful,'  
and sitting in the shade."  
-Rudyard Kipling*

**DAY 3: May 24 - South to Royal Tunbridge Wells via Kew Gardens**

This morning we board a private motor coach and set out to discover the stunning Kew Gardens which include 50,000 living plants, Kew also houses the largest and most diverse botanical and mycological collections in the world and is an UNESCO World Heritage site.

Set amongst a series of parks and estates along the River Thames' south-western reaches, this historic landscape garden includes work by internationally renowned landscape architects Bridgeman, Kent, Chambers, Capability Brown and Nesfield illustrating significant periods in garden design from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The gardens house extensive botanic collections (conserved plants, living plants and documents) that have been considerably enriched through the centuries. Since their creation in 1759, the gardens have made a significant and uninterrupted contribution to the study of plant diversity, plant systematics and economic botany.

Our journey today continues south as we depart London for Royal Tunbridge Wells. We'll arrive in the charming town in time for dinner.

*Sleep in Royal Tunbridge Wells (B, D)*



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*"I like muddling things up; and if an herb looks nice in the border, then why not grow it there?  
Why not grow anything anywhere so long as it looks right where it is?  
That is, surely, the art of gardening."  
- Vita Sackville-West*

#### **DAY 4: May 25 - Sissinghurst and Great Dixter Gardens**

Today is a day of magnificent gardens. The Lloyd family developed Great Dixter early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century from an original design by Sir Edwin Lutyens. Today it is more famous for the plantings established by Christopher Lloyd documented in his many classic gardening books. The residence comprises a mid-15<sup>th</sup>-century hall house, typical of the Weald of Kent, to the south side of which a second, early 16<sup>th</sup>-century yeoman's house was grafted. Lutyens enjoyed using local materials and retained farm buildings like oast houses, cowsheds, barns and outbuildings. Around these he designed his garden, featuring a sunken garden, topiary and yew hedges. Christopher Lloyd managed Great Dixter from the 1950s and was noted for his innovative approach and introduction of concepts like the mixed border and meadow garden, and his replacement of the rose garden with schemes using less fashionable plants like cannas and dahlias. We will investigate his full range of planting schemes.

We next drive to Sissinghurst Castle Garden, one of England's greatest garden delights. Sissinghurst was the garden of poet and writer Vita Sackville-West and her husband Harold Nicolson, journalist, MP and diplomat, and is possibly the most influential of all 20<sup>th</sup> century gardens. Built around the remnants of an Elizabethan castle, of which the tower remains a central garden feature, the garden is divided into distinct spaces where a formality established by Nicolson is clothed by a romantic planting style pursued by Sackville-West. The garden retains its original charm and romance with such delights as its parterre, white garden, cottage garden, nut walk and orchard. We shall explore Sissinghurst's many hidden corners, sumptuous planting combinations and the view from the top of the tower, always a good starting point for those who wish to understand the garden's layout.

*Sleep in Royal Tunbridge Wells (B, L, D)*



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*"Flowers are the music of the ground from earth's lips spoken without sound."*  
**—Edwin Curran**

#### **DAY 5: May 26 - Gravetye Manor Gardens, Penshurst Place and Gardens**

The gardens at Gravetye Manor are a very special place and can be considered an most influential in English gardening history. The manor became the home of tl innovative, and revolutionary gardener, William Robinson in 1884. Robinson spent his remarkable life as a professional gardener and botanist but made his fortune through writing about his experiences and ideas. His most notable works include *The English Flower Garden*, which is one of the best-selling horticultural books of all time, and the hugely influential title, *The Wild Garden*. Now under the guidance of Head Gardener Tom Coward, who worked for three years alongside Fergus Garrett at Great Dixter, the garden is undergoing a major restoration project in homage to Robinson's experimental style of garden. Enjoy a special lunch here before returning to Royal Tunbridge.



In the afternoon, we are off to Penshurst Place and Gardens! The awe-inspiring medieval Baron's Hall was completed in 1341 as a country retreat for the Lord Mayor of London. The Baron's Hall, crowned by an original 60' high chestnut beamed ceiling is an unmissable sight for visitors to the ancestral home of the Sidney family who have taken care of the estate since 1552. Explore this grand estate and the site's lovely gardens before heading back to Royal Tunbridge. *Sleep in Royal Tunbridge Wells (B, L)*



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*Hever Castle, former home of Anne Boleyn*

**DAY 6: May 27 - Hever Castle and Wisley Gardens**

After breakfast, we are off to Hever Castle. Spanning more than 600 years, the history of Hever Castle is rich and varied. The Castle was to become the childhood home of Anne Boleyn, King Henry VIII's second wife, who became Queen of England for just 1,000 days. In addition to the castle, Hever also has a lovely Italian, Rose and Tudor Garden. All worth exploring.

After our visit, our journey continues as we head north towards Oxford.

En-route, we'll visit the oldest and most horticulturally diverse RHS Garden, Wisley. The Royal Horticultural Society was given to Wisley in 1903. From the start, the garden acquired a reputation for its collections of lilies, gentians, Japanese irises, primulas, and water plants.

Arrive at Oxford in the evening. Dinner included upon arrival.

*Sleep in Oxford (B, L, D)*



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*Spend four days in Oxford*

#### **DAY 7: May 28 - Discover Oxford**

This morning, we'll enjoy a student-led tour of the historic campus of The University of Oxford, or simply "Oxford." It has no known foundation date, but there is evidence of teaching here as far back as 1096, making it the oldest university in the English-speaking world and the world's second-oldest university in continuous operation. It grew rapidly from 1167 when Henry II banned English students from attending the University of Paris. After disputes between students and Oxford townsfolk in 1209, some academics fled northeast to Cambridge where they established the University of Cambridge. The two "ancient universities" are frequently jointly referred to as "Oxbridge." Lovers of literature will enjoy seeing the colleges and pubs where C.S. Lewis, JRR Tolkien and Lewis Carroll wrote their masterpieces.

Our tour also includes the **University of Oxford Botanic Garden**. Founded in 1621 with a mission to promote learning and glorify nature, many people and plants have been involved in the history of the garden. The educational and conservational missions are continued to this day. You can visit the herbaceous borders, glasshouses or simply relax in the oldest botanic garden in Britain.

You may wish to take a tour of the Oxford Bodleian Libraries, which number more than 11 million printed items. Or perhaps you wish to try your hand at punting, a favorite pastime for Oxford students and visitors. Art and history lovers won't want to miss the university's top-notch Ashmolean Museum, which houses Greek, Roman, Egyptian, Middle Eastern and Asian art. We will dine together this evening. *Sleep in Oxford (B, D)*



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#### **DAY 8: May 29 - Sir Winston Churchill: Blenheim Palace**

This morning we will visit one of the most charming villages in the Cotswolds, Burford. Stroll down the merry little lanes past thatched-roof cottages, taverns and little shops. After an independent lunch, we set out to discover Sir Winston Churchill's life at Blenheim Palace. We'll explore the newly reinvigorated, permanent Churchill exhibition, visit the Memorial Garden and walk in Churchill's Footsteps.

Blenheim is the English landscape garden at its most monumental, an appropriate setting for the magnificent palace. The grounds were originally designed in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, then later renovated by famed English landscape architect Lancelot Brown, better known as "Capability Brown," who swept away all traces of the earlier formality, replacing it with his signature landscape park. He also installed the lake and cascade.

In the afternoon, we continue on to **Rousham Gardens**. Rousham provides a complete contrast in scale and atmosphere and is disarmingly un-commercial. The garden was designed by William Kent in 1738 for Sir Robert Dormer, and since that time it has remained miraculously unaltered and in the same family. Follow an unmarked route through a sequence of magical green spaces and viewing points, dramatically enhanced with superb garden buildings, sculptures and water in many forms. Then visit the walled garden, overflowing with colorful flowers, ancient espalier apples and a pigeon house.

We return to Oxford in the late afternoon. *Sleep in Oxford (B, L)*

#### **DAY 9: May 30 - The Cotswolds and Hidcote Manor and Gardens**

Today, we'll discover two of the most beautiful gardens in the Cotswolds: **Hidcote Manor and Gardens** and the **Kiftsgate Gardens**.

Hidcote Manor and Gardens is one of the most influential and famous of all English gardens. Hidcote was created in the 1930s by an American, Lawrence Johnston. Johnston employed his skills as a designer and a horticulturalist to make a superbly dramatic garden of outdoor rooms, each with a theme or particular season of interest. The garden is packed with wonderful planting and visual surprises.

You'll have free time to explore the gardens and enjoy an independent lunch before heading to Kiftsgate. Heather Muir created the garden at Kiftsgate, which up until 1920 had consisted of a paved formal garden in front of the portico, with fields and wooded banks beyond. Muir was helped and inspired by her lifelong friend Lawrence Johnston of Hidcote



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Hidcote Manner House Gardens

Manor. She decided that the garden would develop organically, rather than planning everything on paper. This has given the garden a distinctly feminine feel, almost in direct contrast to the more masculine lines being employed by Johnston at Hidcote. Her gentle touch is being continued by her granddaughter Anne Chambers, the present owner. We'll return to Oxford for a jolly gala farewell dinner. *Sleep in Oxford (B, D)*

#### **DAY 10: May 31 - Your Custom Garden Journey Concludes**

Your garden journey concludes this morning after breakfast. Oxford is well connected by train, airport shuttle and bus to London and its airports. Heathrow airport is just a little over an hour away by direct shuttle bus. In addition, there are many wonderful things to see in Oxford, so consider booking an additional evening or two here. Return home with a lifetime of happy memories of your garden adventure!

*Itinerary Subject to Change -*

### **Questions & Reservations**

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