Christ’s College Gardens

Visitors’ Guide, Spring-Summer
Welcome to the Gardens!

Christ’s College Gardens are open to the public free of charge. Entry to the College is through the Great Gate on St Andrew’s Street. The Gardens include botanically important trees, shrubs, and borders, as well as sculptures and artwork.

Usual Opening Times

The College: 9am - 4pm throughout the week
Fellows’ Garden: 9am - 4pm Monday to Friday

Cover images, clockwise from top left: Magnolia soulangeana; Fellows’ Garden; Second Court border; Brugmansia sp. (All photographs courtesy of Gardening Team)
First Court
This court, the oldest part of the College, was mainly built around 1505, and surrounds a circular lawn - the only one of its type in any Cambridge College. The enclosed nature of this court creates a microclimate that allows us to grow tender specimen plants. The court is bordered by a variety of shrubs. A magnificent *Wisteria sinensis* (shown right), thought to be around 200 years old, covers the south-facing wall.

Second Court
Second Court consists of formal lawns bordered by informal planting. There is a long herbaceous border on the western side of the court (pictured left), and the buildings are bordered by seasonal bedding. This summer, to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the admission of women to the College, there will be a display of marguerites and roses, emblems of Lady Margaret Beaufort, our foundress and the mother of King Henry VII.
Third Court and the Botanical Collection

The garden in Third Court was recently redesigned to host two botanical collections of Irises and Salvias. New elements added to the design include a pond and lawns, as suggested on the plan (left).

**Irises.** The Court features an extensive collection of Irises, started in 1946 when the College received a large number of Irises from Mrs Zeligman. Today, the garden contains more than 60 different Iris species (to the right, bearded irises).

**Salvias.** A new collection of salvias has been started in recent years to complement the irises in texture and colour. We currently feature 45 different species (left, *Salvia confertiflora*).
The Darwin Garden, created in 2009 to commemorate Charles Darwin’s revolutionary contribution to the Natural Sciences, opened on 20th February of that year as part of the College’s Darwin Bicentenary celebrations. The garden features a statue (see photo, right) of the naturalist by Anthony Smith (matriculated 2002).

The garden contains a selection of plants that Darwin would have encountered on his voyage aboard the HMS Beagle. Examples include *Kniphofia uvaria* ‘Nobilis’ and *Echium pininana* (pictured below).
The Fellows’ Garden

In 1825 this two-acre plot was redesigned with informal borders, shrubs, trees, and winding paths, reflecting the ideas of J.C. Loudon, whose intention was “to display the individual beauty of trees, shrubs and plants in a state of nature.”

Beside the path, on the east side of the Fellows’ Garden, stands a *Platanus x hispanica* (bottom left). This enormous tree is thought to be more than 200 years old, and is one of the largest specimens in Cambridge. The Malcolm Bowie Bathing Pool (bottom centre) is situated on the north side of the garden. The pool is said to date from the mid-18th century, which would make it one of the oldest swimming pools in the country. The photo at the bottom right shows *Camassia cusicki* flowering in the Fellows’ Garden.
The Gardeners’ Yard (right) is located in the north-eastern corner of the Fellows’ Garden. Here the gardeners propagate and store plants for the Garden. Notable features include the Victorian Greenhouse (below right) and a fine specimen of *Arbutus x andracnoides*.

West of the Gardeners’ Yard is Milton’s Mulberry Tree (*Morus nigra*; left), grown from the root of an original Mulberry Tree planted in 1608. The tree has been propped up by large wooden posts since being up-rooted during a great storm in 1795. It provides a good crop of mulberries each summer. The gardeners pick these and bring them to the College’s kitchens, where they are used to make jam.

The Fellows’ Garden is home to five bee hives. The bees pollinate the plants and produce honey. Once the honey has been collected in the summer, the Fellows are given a jar each.
Stay in Touch!

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Friends of the Garden:
Christ’s College
Horticultural & Botanical

Gardening Staff

Top row:  Martin Morris  
          Gardener   
          Andy Pullin  
          Sergio Ballarin  
          Deputy Head Gardener  
          Head Gardener  

Bottom row:  Kate McPherson  
             Tania Pauley  
             Jenny Allwood  
             Trainee Gardener  
             Gardener  
             Gardener