



Mushrooms, mulberries, and the world's longest daisy chain as 2019 Chelsea Fringe takes shape

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Images available here: <https://bit.ly/2Vy77o1>

The eighth annual **Chelsea Fringe** is preparing to burst into life for nine days of colourful events across London, the UK and wider world from **Saturday 18th to Sunday 26th May 2019.**

Wholly independent, the Fringe was launched in 2012 as an inclusive and open festival of community gardening. It now flourishes as an established highlight of the horticultural calendar and a celebration of the rich variety of ways in which people of all backgrounds engage with gardening and plants.

The 2019 programme brims with entertaining events for all ages, including hands-on gardening sessions, art installations, walks, workshops, talks, food tastings, open days, exhibitions and performances. Its open-access principle means that just about anything goes – as long as it's interesting, legal, and on-topic – and more than one hundred events are confirmed so far.

As ever, art is strongly represented at the Fringe: at **Walthamstow Wetlands**, Borrowed Light Floral Studio is installing a trio of sculptures inspired by the water cycle and local flora across the spaces and facade of the Engine Rooms. Meanwhile children from Horniman Primary School are creating a recycled bottle garden installation inspired by Matisse at **Horniman Museum and Gardens**. Highgate's **OmVed Gardens** are collaborating with contemporary ceramics gallery **Thrown** for an exhibition in which artists and makers respond to the natural landscape. And **Chelsea Physic Garden** hosts an exhibition of its botanical art collection, in partnership with the Royal Brompton Hospital, focusing on plants used to treat heart and lung conditions.

Practical highlights of this year's Fringe include a demonstration on city beekeeping from **Bee Urban (Town House Spitalfields)**, a workshop at **The Jetty (Greenwich)** on how to boost your herb collection by taking softwood cuttings, a flower-staking workshop at **Doddington Place Gardens (Sittingbourne)** and a seed sowing session at **Pop Brixton**.

Community and volunteer-run gardens play a central role in every Fringe, this year including open days and events at **Stream Walk Community Garden (Whitstable)**, **Bohemia Walled Garden (Hastings)**, **the Calthorpe Project (King's Cross)**, **Olden Community Garden (Highbury)**, **King Henry's Walk Garden (Islington)**, **Elkstone Road Garden Oasis (North Kensington)**, **Eden Community Garden (Clapham)** and **Walworth Garden (Southwark)**.

As ever, many Fringe events defy categorisation:

The King's Road (Chelsea) will attempt – in celebration of Mary Quant – to break the world record for the longest daisy chain (currently 2.12km and held since 1985 by the villagers of Good Easter, Chelmsford).

Blackstock Triangle Gardeners (Finsbury Park) will hold the Fringe's first dog show, including categories such as best horticultural head dress and dog with the waggiest tail.

Rainbow Grow (Dalston) is hosting how-to sessions for budding mushroom growers, whilst **OmVed Gardens (Highgate)** devotes a full day to an exploration of the hidden kingdom of fungi, including how their cultivation can be integrated into gardens and allotments.

As part of the **Urban Tree Festival**, historian Dr Peter Coles will lead two mulberry-themed walks: one in St James's around the perimeter of what, in the 17th century, was James I's garden of 10,000 mulberry trees, and the second to stalk the history of the mulberry in the Inns of Temple in the City of London. Meanwhile, **Town House Spitalfields** will be highlighting the campaign to save the Bethnal Green Mulberry (believed to be the oldest tree in the East End) with a feature window display.

Finally, visitors to **Inner Temple Garden** are invited for a day of Tree Climbing and Magical Fairytales – with a performance of Hansel and Gretel by Hobgoblin Theatre Company for those not braving the boughs.

Founder and director of the Fringe **Tim Richardson** said:

"It's year eight of the Chelsea Fringe and we are still doing what we have always done: providing a platform for all kinds of horticulturally-themed events which may not fit in to the mainstream shows."

"We remain a true "fringe" festival in that we do not commission or curate but accept everything that comes our way — within reason! (But not that much reason...)"

The full programme for the 2019 Chelsea Fringe can be browsed online at www.chelseafringe.com.

Individuals and organisations, first-timers and Fringe veterans, can still take part this year. Formal registration continues until the end of the Fringe, but potential event organisers are encouraged to make contact as soon as possible via email: info@chelseafringe.com.

The Fringe is again printing and distributing free guides to the Fringe, this year with the wonderful addition of packets of seed kindly donated by Franchi seeds.

-Ends-

For more information, please contact Benjamin Ward on press@chelseafringe.com, +44 (0) 7837 134 193 (not for publication)

A selection of press images is available here: <https://bit.ly/2Vy77o1>

Notes to Editors:

- The Chelsea Fringe is a community interest company (CIC) founded by Festival Director Tim Richardson in 2011. All progress to date has been achieved by a team of dedicated volunteers donating their time. The Chelsea Fringe is entirely independent of the RHS Chelsea Flower Show, though acts with its support.

chelseafringe.com