

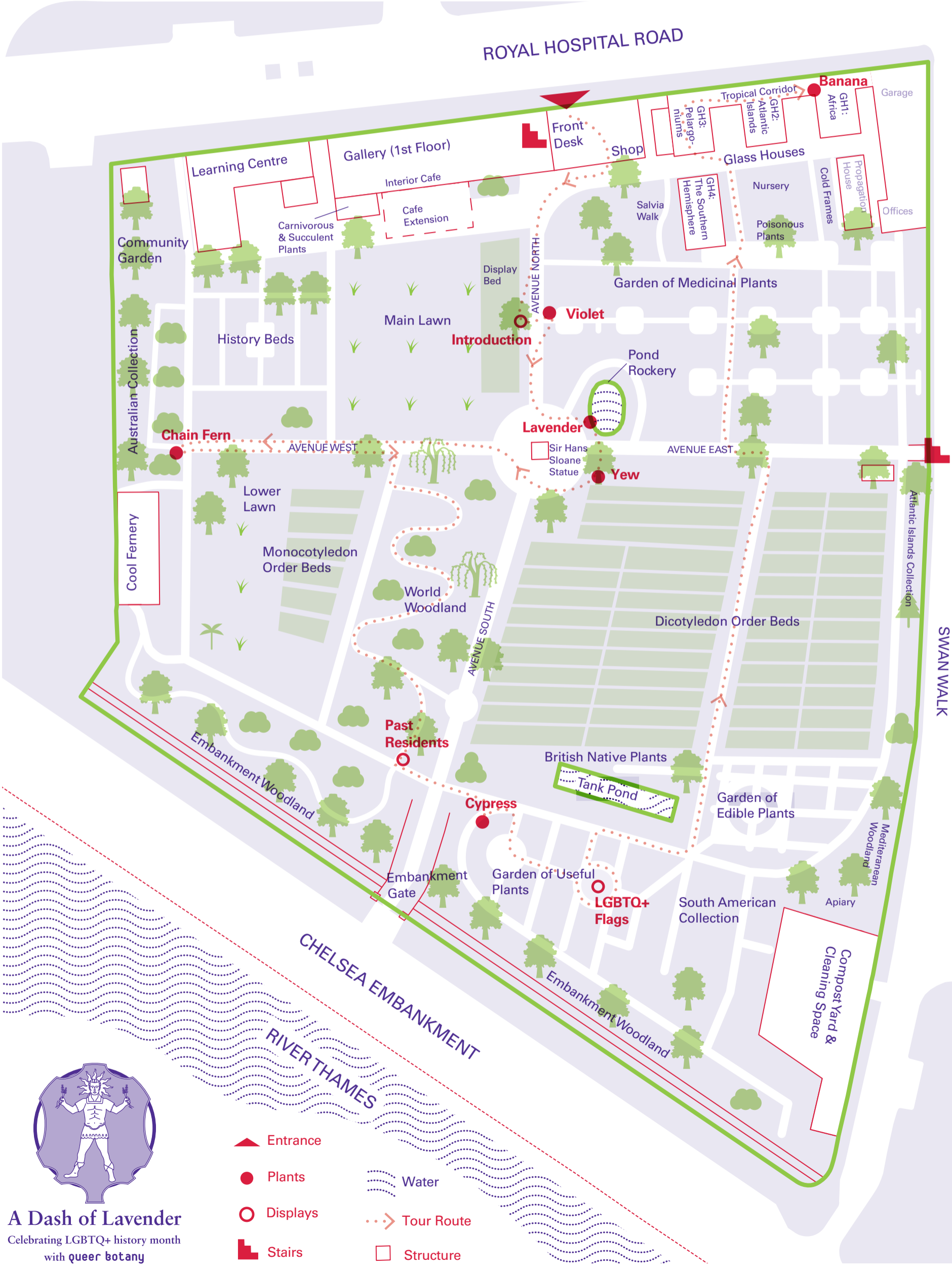


For LGBTQ+ History Month, Chelsea Physic Garden is collaborating with Queer Botany to look at plants and the Garden through a queer botanical lens. LGBTQ+ is an acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and other sexual and gender minorities. The term 'queer' originally meant 'strange' or 'peculiar' and was used to insult the LGBTQ+ community, but has been reclaimed by activists as a broad term for sexual and gender minorities. Queer Botany aims to share marginalised perspectives, support more diverse representations in the environment and outdoors, and acknowledge connections between queerness and plants.

Historically the LGBTQ+ community has been stigmatised and often referred to as being 'unnatural', however the natural world has many connections with queerness. One set of examples can

be found in the sheer variety of plants and their reproductive methods. Concepts such as science & culture, male & female, human & nature are often contrasted in stark binaries, but queerness favours multiplicity and gradients. There is a peculiar cultural link between queerness and the symbolism of flowering plants, which can be found in the terms 'pansy', or 'a streak' or 'dash' of lavender'. There are many applications of floral symbols to reference homosexuality, especially in literature. Moving forward, we want queer stories from culture and nature to be more broadly interwoven into our understanding of the world.

The map shows locations of plants and displays with interpretations from a queer perspective. Scan the QR codes with your phone to go to a web page with more information.



**A Dash of Lavender**  
 Celebrating LGBTQ+ history month  
 with queer botany

- Entrance
- Plants
- Displays
- Stairs
- Water
- Tour Route
- Structure



**Family:** VIOLACEAE  
**Scientific Name:** *Viola odorata*  
**Cultivar:** 'Czar'  
**Common Name:** Sweet violet  
**Origin:** Garden cultivar

Violets are associated with the ancient Greek poet Sappho. This is because of the poet's recurring references to the flower and the colour violet in her writing. She was even said to have "violet hair", meaning that her hair was dark. Sappho was said to be the first woman to love other women; the term "lesbian" is a reference to Sappho because she was from the Greek island of Lesbos.



**Family:** LAMIACEAE  
**Scientific Name:** *Lavandula dentata*  
**Common Name:** Fringed lavender  
**Origin:** Algeria, Balears, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Morocco, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Yemen

'Lavender boy', 'lavender lad', 'a streak of lavender', and 'The Lavender Scare' were all derogatory terms used historically to somehow correlate the plant, the colour, and homosexuals. Lavender is a colour made by blending pink and light blue. At the turn of the 20th Century, pink came to be associated with girls and blue with boys. Therefore, lavender suggests a blurring between the masculine and feminine binary.



**Family:** TAXACEAE  
**Scientific Name:** *Taxus baccata*  
**Common Name:** Yew tree  
**Origin:** Europe, western Asia and North Africa

Yew trees are dioecious plants, which means that there are male and female reproductive organs on separate plants. Male trees produce pollen and female trees produce seeds. The yew, along with other conifers, is known to be able to change gender. Research into why these changes might occur is still ongoing. It could be due to various environmental factors or as an attempt to bear seeds later in its life.



**Family:** BLECHNACEAE  
**Scientific Name:** *Woodwardia radicans*  
**Common Name:** Chain fern  
**Origin:** Atlantic Islands & Mediterranean

There are a variety of ways that plants have evolved to reproduce. This includes asexual reproduction, where a parent plant can generate a new plant on its own without a sexual partner. This could be through stolons, rhizomes, or through human practices of propagation such as cuttings or grafting. The chain fern can reproduce asexually by the creation of a bulbil/small fern plantlet on the end of the frond. When this gets heavy enough it touches the ground and roots there.



**Family:** CUPRESSACEAE  
**Scientific Name:** *Cupressus sempervirens*  
**Common Name:** Cypress tree  
**Origin:** East Mediterranean and Iran

The cypress tree is connected to the ancient Greek myth of a male youth named Cyparissus. He was the mortal lover of Apollo—the god of healing, the arts, and light. Apollo gifted him a beautiful tamed stag but when hunting in the woods one day, Cyparissus threw a spear that accidentally killed the stag. Cyparissus' grief was so intense that he asked Apollo to allow his tears to fall forever. Apollo transformed him into a cypress tree, a symbol of mourning, which has tears of sap that drip down the trunk.



**Family:** MUSACEAE  
**Scientific Name:** *Musa acuminata*  
**Common Name:** Banana  
**Origin:** South East Asia

In 2010, research found that lectin from banana fruit is a powerful HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) inhibitor. Lectin is a protein that binds to specific carbohydrates. As such, it can bind to structures on the human immunodeficiency virus, which could block the virus from entering a cell. This specific lectin found in bananas is referred to as Banlec. It has even been suggested that it can be applied topically and may be relatively inexpensive to produce.



## A Dash of Lavender

February 1–28, 2022

### Events

**Queer Botanical Drawing Workshop**  
 Sunday 6 February 2022, 1pm–3:45pm  
 £15

**Evening Botanist: A Talk with Queer Botany**  
 Friday 11th February 2022, 7pm–8:15pm  
 £10

**A Dash of Lavender: Guided Tour**  
 Sunday 20 February 2022, 11am–1pm  
 £9.50

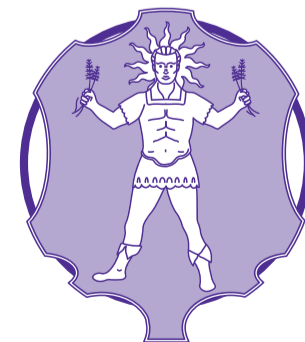
**Queer Botanical Poetry Reading**  
 Friday 25 February 2022, 7pm - 8:45pm  
 £10

66 Hospital Road  
 London  
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