

Your garden in summer – garden visiting

Now that the warmer weather is upon us, there is always plenty to do in the garden. However this is when our gardens are at their most beautiful, so we mustn't forget to stop for a few moments to sit back and enjoy them. Currently I'm relishing the heady scent of the jasmine and honeysuckle on my pergola.

Summer is also a perfect time to visit other gardens, which can be a source of delight and inspiration for your own garden.



Beth Chatto's garden

We are very lucky in Essex to have one of only four RHS gardens in the country. RHS Hyde Hall near Rettendon is well worth a visit, particularly now when the roses are out. Here you will see horticulture at its best. Of particular interest is their dry garden, an amazing display of what can be achieved without water.

Another of the county's gems has to be Beth Chatto's garden and nursery near Colchester. Beth was one of the pioneers of the 'right plant right place' concept of growing plants suitable for your particular conditions. Her gravel garden is stupendous, as are the woodland and water gardens.

Near Witham is the magnificent Glen Chantry, a 3 acre garden and nursery informally laid out with beautifully planted borders, ponds, stream and

woodland areas, and even its own white garden. If you want planting inspiration, this is the place for you.

For different design ideas, then try Capel Manor College near Enfield, with 30 acres of gardens of all sizes and styles.

Many private gardens are open to the public during the summer months. This is a rare chance to explore some normally hidden

gems. Many open under the National Gardens Scheme (Yellow Book) or in aid of the British Red Cross. Look out also for local village garden open days where you can walk round a number of properties all open on the same day.

What could be more delightful on a perfect summer's day than to be sat in a gorgeous garden, enveloped in heavenly scents and listening to birdsong? So why not take time out this summer to enjoy some of the best gardens in Essex?

www.rhs.org.uk

www.bethchatto.co.uk

www.glenchantry.demon.co.uk

www.capel.ac.uk/Gardens/index.html

www.ngs.org.uk

www.redcross.org.uk/opengardens