

## The Art of the Garden

This simple resource is designed to stimulate conversation about gardens, flowers and outdoor spaces. All works are in the Royal Collection and more information is available at [www.rct.uk/collection](http://www.rct.uk/collection) by using the RCIN number.

### The Sacred Garden

*Pictures show:*

- Jan Brueghel the Elder, *Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden*, 1615 (RCIN 405512)
- Rembrandt van Rijn, *Christ and St Mary Magdalen at the Tomb*, 1638 (RCIN 404816)

In St John's Gospel (21:17), Mary Magdalen encounters the resurrected Christ and mistakes him for a gardener. In Rembrandt's painting a neatly trimmed box hedge, in the foreground, sets the scene in a garden.

In Brueghel's painting it is not Adam and Eve who are focus in the Garden of Eden, but instead the animals, and the harmony between them. See how the Leopard and the Ox play together, in the bottom right-hand corner.

Both paintings allude to the 'sacred' nature of the garden and the heavenly garden of Paradise.

*Conversation starters:*

- What different animals can you identify in the top work?
- How do the colours of Rembrandt's work make you feel?



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## The Botanic Garden

*Pictures show:*

Two watercolours by Alexander Marshal:

- *Narcissus and Poet's Narcissus, Crown Imperial and Auricula* c. 1650-82 (RCIN 924280)
- *Auriculas* c. 1650-82 (RCIN 924281)

A botanic garden is dedicated to the collection, cultivation, presentation and display of a wide range of plants. Botanic gardens first developed in Western Europe in the 16th and early 17th centuries.

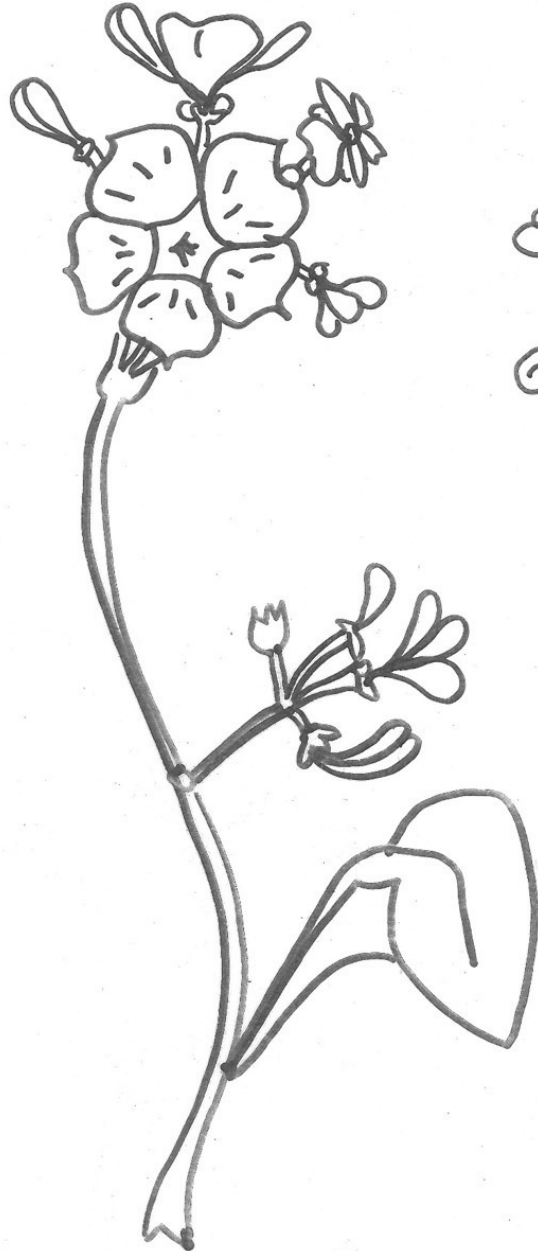
Alexander Marshal was a gentlemen gardener who lived in London and believed that the cultivation of rare plants was essential to the study of the natural world. His florilegium – flower book – was not intended for publication or sale, but to be studied and enjoyed by his friends and fellow horticulturalists.

*Conversation starters:*

Nature has always inspired artists, how does it make you feel?  
What is your favourite flower?

You can colour your own Marshal picture on the next sheet.





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## The Landscape Garden

*Pictures show:*

- *The Gardens at Kew*, Johan Jacob Schalch, 1759, RCIN 403517
- *St James's Park and the Mall*, British School, c. 1745, RCIN 405954

In the 18th century, topiary, symmetry and *parterres* fell out of fashion, and as nature came to be seen as the ideal, the garden developed into a sequence of unfolding views – the landscape garden.

The garden became a social stage on which to see and be seen. Polite society now gathered in the garden, as the public pleasure garden and the Mall developed as spaces for exercise, festivities and spectacle.

*Conversation starters:*

In the bottom picture, can you see a lady pulling up her stockings, two priests in black, and just off centre the Prince of Wales, Frederick.

Do you have a favourite public park or garden?



# The Art of the Garden

## The Horticultural Garden

*Pictures show:*

- William Leighton Leitch, *The Horticultural Gardens, South Kensington, 1861* (RCIN 920252)
- William Leighton Leitch, *The Swiss Cottage, Osborne House, 1855* (RCIN 919867)

England became a nation of gardeners during the 19th century as nurture replaced nature in the garden.

The bottom picture shows the allotment plots in front of the Cottage. Victoria and Albert's children were allocated a plot of the same size, and given responsibility for its upkeep. The boys were paid wages by Prince Albert, and worked two or three hours every day. The children could choose what to grow, usually planting potatoes, strawberries and currants.

*Conversation starters:*

Do you have a favourite fruit or vegetable to grow in a garden?



# The Art of the Garden

## The Language of Flowers

Picture shows:

- *Floral emblems, or, A Guide to the language of flowers*, by Henry Phillips. 1831, RCIN 1164011

Symbolic meanings have been assigned to flowers for centuries but it was only during the Victorian era that the practice of using flowers to send secret messages became popular in England.

In the Victorian era, when strict etiquette governed social interaction, flowers were used to express and even awaken feelings and emotions.

Here are some translations:

Foxglove – youth

China rose – beauty, always new

Honeysuckle – bond of love

Hollyhock – fertility

White rose – virtue and chastity

*Conversation starters:*

What message would you send using flowers?

