

PRESS RELEASE

‘Orchids in The Wild - The Beauty of Nature’ featured at The Chelsea Flower Show 2024

- **Orchid Conservation Chelsea will showcase the rare and native orchids of Great Britain, India, Canada, and the United States.**
- **The ‘Golden Paph’ orchid to be displayed at Chelsea Flower Show for the first time.**
- **Unique opportunity to see orchids native to Great Britain, India, North America.**

London, U.K. - Orchid Conservation Chelsea will showcase the rare and native orchids of Great Britain, India, Canada, and the United States. Orchids, the largest family of vascular plants on Earth, are not only very beautiful, but also play a vital role as indicators of the wider health of ecosystems. The conservation and protection of natural orchid habitat has become a central focus of conservation efforts on an international scale.

Inspired by the success of ‘Finding the Rare Florida Ghost Orchid’ at the 2023 Chelsea Flower Show, J. P. Wright & Company has again partnered with Grow Tropicals U.K., to present an Orchid Conservation Educational exhibit at the 2024 Chelsea Flower Show, May 20-25, in London.

One important goal of Orchid Conservation Chelsea is to feature - each year - the species native to Commonwealth countries like India and Canada, bringing together specialists, horticulturists, and the public. The intent is to raise global awareness for conservation projects aimed at supporting habitat protection and scientific research.

In association with the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew and at the invitation of the Royal Horticultural Society, Chelsea, a world - renowned Orchid Conservation Team has been assembled, led by Dr. Lawrence W. Zettler. The team includes experts and orchids from the United Kingdom’s RBG Kew, Glasgow Botanic Gardens, Birmingham Botanical Gardens, Essex Wildlife Trust, and Elite Orchids. There are approximately 52 native species growing across Great Britain, and people will be able to “Discover the rare orchids of Essex” at this year’s Chelsea Flower Show.

India, which has over 1,300 native species, will highlight the ‘Golden Paph’ orchid (*Paphiopedilum druryi* ‘Elite 1st’), supplied locally by the UK company, Elite Orchids. This species will be on display for the first time at the Chelsea Flower Show representing conservation efforts taking place in that country. Experts familiar with the native orchids of India will be present from Panjab University and RBG Kew.

Canada will feature native orchids and will have, for the first time, representatives from the Canadian Orchid Congress, Southern Ontario Orchid Society, and the Ottawa Orchid Society.

This year, several institutions and botanical gardens in the United States have teamed up to showcase several orchids native to that country. These include the rare and lovely ‘Kentucky Lady’s Slipper’ (*Cypripedium kentuckiense*) from Longwood Gardens. This species is listed as globally vulnerable with only about 4,500 individual plants thought to remain in the wild and

will be donated to Kew's living collection at the conclusion of the show. The U.S. team will also feature orchids from south Florida in their display including those that grow in trees.

In addition to Longwood Gardens, the U.S. team will be joined by the North American Orchid Conservation Center (NAOCC) / Smithsonian Environmental Research Center, The American Orchid Society, Chicago Botanic Garden, Naples Botanical Garden, Humboldt Botanical Garden, University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, Stetson University, Illinois College, and the University of Florida.

Orchid Conservation Chelsea will be represented by specialists from each organization to provide information in person about these remarkable plants and their conservation, highlighting their dependence on insect pollinators. This important message will be strengthened by Bees For Development, which will also be at Chelsea. Collectively, Orchid Conservation Chelsea aspires to build international partnerships to save orchids worldwide inspired by the success of our display last year featuring Florida's Ghost Orchid (*Dendrophylax lindenii*) now in the permanent collection at the Princess of Wales Conservancy at RBG Kew. Our display will give attendees a unique and special opportunity to see some of the native orchids found in these three regions in a realistic setting.

"The Conservation & Protection of the world's native habitat of naturally growing orchids, plants and trees is vital to our civilization and well-being. As the orchid family is the largest family of vascular plants on earth, the RHS Chelsea Flower Show gives reason to celebrate and commit to conservation and "carry the message "by scientific research and individual action" said John Parke Wright IV, Chairman, Orchid Conservation Chelsea.

ORCHIDS IN THE WILD - THE BEAUTY OF NATURE, Great Britain, India, North America, will be a highlight of the Chelsea Flower Show 2024 encouraging visitors to join efforts to protect these precious plants and their habitats. To explore nature in search of beauty and understanding.

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Chairman's Report 2023:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Kq8bCwL0Me5nrONEIpd1EauvXl8Buv7i/view>

