

# RHS Libraries



A guide for researchers



Royal  
Horticultural  
Society

Sharing the best in Gardening

## RHS Libraries

Lindley Library 020 7821 3050 [library.london@rhs.org.uk](mailto:library.london@rhs.org.uk)

Wisley Library 01483 212428 [library.wisley@rhs.org.uk](mailto:library.wisley@rhs.org.uk)

Harlow Carr Library 01423 724 686 [library.harlowcarr@rhs.org.uk](mailto:library.harlowcarr@rhs.org.uk)

[rhs.org.uk/libraries](https://rhs.org.uk/libraries)

RHS Registered Charity No: 222879/SC038262

# A guide for researchers

## RHS LIBRARIES

Each of our three libraries have collections to tempt the researcher, and offer a wealth of knowledge, to be discovered or re-discovered.

This guide summarises contact information for all libraries, together with services such as making research appointments, and tips for using the library catalogue which covers all libraries.

Collection strengths, services and facilities at each of our libraries are then covered in turn, to help guide the researcher.

Our friendly enquiries teams at each library are happy to discuss your research topic with you and guide you to the best resources.

Website and library blog: [www.rhs.org.uk/libraries](http://www.rhs.org.uk/libraries)

Subscribe to our quarterly newsletter at [library.news@rhs.org.uk](mailto:library.news@rhs.org.uk)

Keep up to date with our current exhibitions and events (including evening talks, courses and workshops) please see our web pages at [www.rhs.org.uk/libraryevents](http://www.rhs.org.uk/libraryevents)

	RHS Lindley Library	RHS Wisley Library	RHS Harlow Carr Library
Collection strengths	History of gardens, gardening, and garden design; history of plants and plant discovery; archives, art	Practical gardening and garden design; horticultural science and plant taxonomy and cultivation	Practical gardening and garden design
Opening hours	Lending library: 10-5 Mon – Fri Research Room: 10-5 by appointment (see calendar)	Garden Library: 11 - 4 daily Research Library: 11-4 by appointment Mon – Fri (closed 1-2)	Garden Library: 11 – 4 daily Research Room 11-4 by appointment
Contact & enquiries	T: 020 7821 3050 <a href="mailto:library.london@rhs.org.uk">library.london@rhs.org.uk</a>	T: 01483 212428 <a href="mailto:library.wisley@rhs.org.uk">library.wisley@rhs.org.uk</a>	T: 01423 724686 <a href="mailto:library.harlowcarr@rhs.org.uk">library.harlowcarr@rhs.org.uk</a>
Heritage collections	Archives (including RHS) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Botanical art</li><li>• Nursery catalogues</li><li>• Rare books</li><li>• 19th century books and journals</li></ul>	Archives <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Nursery catalogues</li><li>• Rare books</li><li>• 19th century journals</li></ul>	Archives of <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Northern Horticultural Society 19th century journals</li></ul>
Address	80 Vincent Square, London SW1P 2PE	RHS Garden Wisley, Woking, GU23 6QB	RHS Garden Harlow Carr, HG3 1QB

RHS Libraries are open to all visitors to browse and study. RHS members may borrow from the lending collections. Walk-in access to e-resources is also available – please ask staff at the enquiry desk

### RHS Libraries

Lindley Library 80 Vincent Square London SW1P 2PE. T: 020 7821 3050 E: [library.london@rhs.org.uk](mailto:library.london@rhs.org.uk)

Wisley Library RHS Garden Wisley, Woking, GU23 6QB. T: 01483 212428 E: [library.wisley@rhs.org.uk](mailto:library.wisley@rhs.org.uk)

Harlow Carr Library RHS Garden Harlow Carr, HG3 1QB. T: 01423 724686 E: [library.harlowcarr@rhs.org.uk](mailto:library.harlowcarr@rhs.org.uk)

## When do I need to make an appointment?

The materials in the RHS Libraries are held in either our lending or reference collections.

You need to make an appointment to see any material held in one of our reference collections. These include all archives, artworks, nursery catalogues, rare books, pamphlets and 19th century to current periodicals. Due to the age, fragility and rarity of these works we do not transfer them between our libraries.

## Using the online catalogue and other resources to find what you want

Our online catalogue is at [www.rhs.org.uk/libraries](http://www.rhs.org.uk/libraries). Select Catalogue tab.

The catalogue covers printed book collections, both early and modern, at all RHS libraries, together with original botanical drawings held in Lindley Library, and current journals held at all libraries. Use Advanced Search and select the Library drop down menu to restrict your search to one particular library.

## Finding material not included in the library catalogue

Archive Collections are in the process of being catalogued, with catalogues available online via the Archives Hub <https://archiveshub.jisc.ac.uk/>. Catalogues specify the site at which the archive is held and conditions of access.

Photographs, Nursery Catalogues and other ephemera are in the process of being catalogued, but are not yet available to search online. Please contact our library enquiry teams for guidance about whether we hold material on your topic, and which libraries to visit. Photographs are held in London.

Nursery catalogues are held both at Lindley Library and at Wisley Research Library, and a visit to both libraries is recommended, as we cannot transfer catalogues between our libraries.

The Lindley Library covers nursery and some seed catalogues from late 18th century to the present. Catalogues of garden sundries and glasshouses are held in offsite storage and can be recalled by request.

Wisley Research Library covers nursery catalogues mostly from UK nurseries, with extensive holdings from the 20th century and some from the 19th century.

Journals are not yet fully catalogued, although records for over 75 % of titles can be found on the catalogue. Contact our enquiry teams for information on where titles are held. For example, we have extensive collections of foreign language 19th century journals at London, and specialist plant society journals at Wisley.

## RHS LINDLEY LIBRARY – services and facilities for researchers

**Lindley Library, 80 Vincent Square,  
Victoria, London SW2P 2PP  
Contact & enquiries: T: 020 7821 3050;  
E: [library.london@rhs.org.uk](mailto:library.london@rhs.org.uk)**

The RHS Lindley Library is the heritage library for the RHS and holds the majority of its archives, rare books and special collections, alongside modern printed books and an historical and modern art collection. Broadly, our collection focus is the history of gardens and garden design, history of plants and plant discovery, and the history of nurseries and nursery trades. Our collections are ideal for supporting students of garden history.

Two library areas are open to visitors

### Lending Library and open access study and exhibition area

Within the Lending Library we hold a mixture of new and classic titles, dating from c.1950 to the newest publications.

Members of the public are welcome to study and browse the material in the Lending Collection and no appointment is necessary. RHS members may borrow books.

# A guide for researchers

## Research Room for reference, heritage, art and archive collections.

To view material in the Research Room, please make an appointment in advance. Details of our appointments calendar, research registration, handling and photography are on our website at [www.rhs.org.uk/libraries](http://www.rhs.org.uk/libraries). Select Library Service tab > Research tab. Please give at least 24 hours' notice so we may confirm that the material you require is available for production.

## Reference material when the Research Room is closed

When the Research Room is closed, we can bring 20<sup>th</sup> century printed books and journals housed in reference areas to the Lending Library for consultation, depending on their condition. We regret we cannot make 19<sup>th</sup> century (or earlier) books or journals, or archive, art or heritage collections available outside the Research Room.

## How far in advance do you need to request some library services?

Library Service	Notice needed
Booking a Research Room appointment	24 hours
Requesting heritage material held in our stacks	24 hours
Request for a lending item to be transferred from Wisley	1 week
Request for material held offsite	1 week
Appointment with Art curator to view original art	2 weeks

## Retrieval times for material housed in our stacks

To make the best use of your research time, please request reference material at least 24 hours before your appointment.

We will do our best to retrieve additional items requested during your visit, but please be aware that this is not always possible.

For material held in external storage, please allow at least a week for retrieval.

## Collections for browsing and reference on open access shelves in the Research Room

The Quick Reference section includes key research publications, and a selection of conservation management reports, mainly for gardens in and around London.

Please browse our modern reference collections comprising of post 1900 publications.

A collection of 19<sup>th</sup> century periodicals including *Gardeners' Chronicle*, *The Garden*, *Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society* and *Curtis's Botanical Magazine*. As many of these volumes are heavy, please ask staff to help if needed. See also our Checklist of nineteenth century gardening periodicals on our website. Please follow our guidelines for handling and caring for our collections. See [www.rhs.org.uk/libraries](http://www.rhs.org.uk/libraries) and select tabs Library services > Research.

## Arrangements for viewing art and images

Digital images of thousands of works in our collections can be viewed in the Research Room. Please ask staff to log you onto the RHS image database.

### RHS Libraries

Lindley Library 80 Vincent Square London SW1P 2PE. T: 020 7821 3050 E: [library.london@rhs.org.uk](mailto:library.london@rhs.org.uk)

Wisley Library RHS Garden Wisley, Woking, GU23 6QB. T: 01483 212428 E: [library.wisley@rhs.org.uk](mailto:library.wisley@rhs.org.uk)

Harlow Carr Library RHS Garden Harlow Carr, HG3 1QB. T: 01423 724686 E: [library.harlowcarr@rhs.org.uk](mailto:library.harlowcarr@rhs.org.uk)

To view original material from our art collection please contact our Art Curator at [library.london@rhs.org.uk](mailto:library.london@rhs.org.uk) giving at least two weeks' notice.

Images for any form of publication (including on a website) must be requested from [www.rhsimages.co.uk](http://www.rhsimages.co.uk).

To request digital images for private study and research please contact our Images Curator at [library.london@rhs.org.uk](mailto:library.london@rhs.org.uk)

### **Studying nursery and sundries catalogues**

Nursery catalogues are a rich resource documenting the history of plants, nurseries, and the availability of plants over time.

Collections at the Lindley Library in London cover nursery and some seed catalogues from late 18<sup>th</sup> century to the present. Catalogues of garden sundries and glasshouses are held in offsite storage.

Nursery catalogues are also held at Wisley Science Library, and a visit to both libraries is recommended, as we do not transfer catalogues between our libraries. Nursery catalogue collections are not yet available to search online but are available for study. Staff will be pleased to help advise you on which titles we hold.

### **Studying archive collections in the Lindley Library**

RHS archives give a unique insight into the social history of gardening. London holds the historical archives of the RHS alongside collections of many other notable horticulturists. Collections are in the process of being catalogued and listed on the Archives Hub <https://archiveshub.jisc.ac.uk/>. Conditions of access and location are outlined for each collection.

### **Journals – current titles and older runs**

A complete run of Horticultural Society of London and Royal Horticultural Society journals, including Orchid Review and Plantsman can be found in London.

We also hold a broad collection of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century national and international titles complementing our collection focus of garden history, garden design, art and horticulture. All our current titles are listed on our catalogue. For older titles please ask staff to check our holdings for you.

### **E-resources – walk-in access**

A selection of databases and full text e-journals are available to use in the Lending Library. Please ask library staff to log you on.

### **Can I see this at London or Wisley? Sending material between sites.**

London and Wisley are able to transfer lending library material between sites for researchers. Material should be requested at least one week in advance. Requests to transfer modern reference collection items are at the discretion of library staff, and will be considered on a case by case basis, taking demand by other researchers into account. If agreed, transfers will be made for a maximum of three weeks.

We will not transfer original art, photographs or archives, or heritage material – eg. rare or 19<sup>th</sup> century books, pamphlets, heritage journals or nursery catalogues – due to the age, fragility or rarity of these items.

If we cannot transfer an item for you to see, we may be able to supply a limited number of reference photographs, or photocopies, within copyright guidelines. We will not be able to provide a digital copy or photographs/photocopy of an entire publication. Please ask our enquiry teams for more details.

### **Requesting material held in offsite storage**

Material held in offsite storage remains an important part of our collection, but as we are increasingly short of space, it cannot be housed in one of our libraries. To see items in our catalogue at location: Offsite, please request at least one week in advance. Items marked Offsite can be requested for consultation at either London or Wisley.

# A guide for researchers

## RHS WISLEY LIBRARY – services and facilities for researchers

RHS Wisley Library, RHS Garden

Wisley, Woking GU23 6QB

Contact & enquiries: T: 01483 212428;

E: [library.wisley@rhs.org.uk](mailto:library.wisley@rhs.org.uk)

Wisley Garden Library holds an excellent collection of modern practical gardening, garden design and plant cultivation books, together with material to support students of RHS horticulture qualifications, and garden history courses. The Wisley Research Library is the Society's oldest library collection, set up to support the work of RHS staff during the 1820s. The Research collection specialises in horticultural science and taxonomy, and the cultivation of garden plants in temperate climates. Some archive and heritage material, together with extensive nursery catalogues also form part of the collections.

### Two library collections are open to garden visitors and researchers at RHS Garden Wisley

**Wisley Garden Library** focuses on practical gardening from selecting plants for beds and borders, fruit and vegetable growing, lawn and turf care to propagation and pruning. All garden visitors can borrow a book for a day, to enrich their visit to RHS Wisley, and RHS members may borrow books for four weeks.

All garden visitors are welcome to browse and study the material in the Garden Library and no appointment is necessary.

**Wisley Research Library** is a specialist reference collection designed to support the work of RHS science staff. Some specialist material is held in departments. To view material in the Research Library, please make an appointment in advance. Details of research registration, handling and photography are on our website at [www.rhs.org.uk/libraries](http://www.rhs.org.uk/libraries). Select tabs Library Services > Research. Please give at least 24 hours' notice so we may confirm that the material you require is available for production.

### Research Library material for use in the Garden Library

If you are visiting Wisley at weekends, we can bring up to five 20<sup>th</sup> century printed books and journals usually housed in the Science Library over to the Garden Library for consultation. We regret we cannot make 19<sup>th</sup> century (or earlier) books or journals, or archive or heritage collections available outside the Research Library.

### Collections for browsing and reference on open access shelves in the Research Library

Modern book collections, including floras, cultivated plant monographs, registers and checklists are on open access shelves. Current periodicals such as *Gardeners' Chronicle*, *Curtis's Botanical Magazine* and many more are also on open access shelves. Please follow our guidelines for handling and caring for our collections. See [www.rhs.org.uk/libraries](http://www.rhs.org.uk/libraries) and select tabs Library services > Research.

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## How far in advance do you need to request some library services?

Library Service	Notice needed
Making an appointment in Wisley Research Library	3 days
Requesting heritage material held in our stacks	3 days
Request for lending item to be transferred from London	1 week
Request for material held in offsite storage	1 week

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### RHS Libraries

Lindley Library 80 Vincent Square London SW1P 2PE. T: 020 7821 3050 E: [library.london@rhs.org.uk](mailto:library.london@rhs.org.uk)

Wisley Library RHS Garden Wisley, Woking, GU23 6QB. T: 01483 212428 E: [library.wisley@rhs.org.uk](mailto:library.wisley@rhs.org.uk)

Harlow Carr Library RHS Garden Harlow Carr, HG3 1QB. T: 01423 724686 E: [library.harlowcarr@rhs.org.uk](mailto:library.harlowcarr@rhs.org.uk)

## Studying nursery catalogues at Wisley Research Library

Nursery catalogues are a rich resource documenting the history of plants, nurseries, and the availability of plants over time.

Wisley's collection covers nursery catalogues mostly from UK nurseries, with extensive material from the 20<sup>th</sup> century and some from the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Nursery catalogues are also held at the Lindley Library and a visit to both libraries is recommended, as we do not transfer catalogues between our libraries. Nursery catalogue collections are not yet available to search online but are available for study. If you are interested in specific nurseries please email us to find out if we hold relevant material.

## Studying archive collections at Wisley Research Library

Although the majority of archive material is held at London, some archive material is held at Wisley for consultation in the Research Library. Archive collections are in the process of being catalogued and listed on the Archives Hub <https://archiveshub.jisc.ac.uk/>. Conditions of access and location are outlined for each collection.

## Journals – current titles and older runs

An almost complete run of Horticultural Society of London and Royal Horticultural Society journals, including the *Plantsman* and *Orchid Review* can be found in Wisley Research Library. We also hold a broad collection of journals from specialist plant societies, and national and international titles covering horticultural taxonomy, arboriculture and professional horticulture. All our current titles are listed on our catalogue. For older titles please ask staff to check our holdings for you. See also our checklist of nineteenth century gardening periodicals on our website.

## E-resources – walk-in access

A selection of databases and full text e-journals are available to use in the Garden Library. Please ask library staff to log you on.

## Can I see this at London or Wisley? Sending material between sites.

London and Wisley are able to transfer lending library material between sites for researchers. Material should be requested at least one week in advance.

Requests to transfer modern reference collection items are at the discretion of library staff, and will be considered on a case by case basis, taking demand by other researchers into account. If agreed, transfers will be made for a maximum of three weeks.

We will not transfer original art, photographs or archives, or heritage material – eg. rare or 19<sup>th</sup> century books, pamphlets, heritage journals or nursery catalogues – due to the age, fragility or rarity of these items.

If we cannot transfer an item for you to see, we may be able to supply a limited number of reference photographs, or photocopies, within copyright guidelines. We will not be able to provide a digital copy or photographs/photocopy of an entire publication. Please ask our enquiry teams for more details.

## Requesting material held in offsite storage

Material held in offsite storage remains an important part of our collection, but as we are increasingly short of space, it cannot be housed at one of our libraries. To see items in our catalogue at location: Offsite, please request at least one week in advance. Items marked Offsite can be requested for consultation at either London or Wisley.

## A guide for researchers

### Visiting RHS libraries to do research – access, facilities, services

#### RHS HARLOW CARR LIBRARY

RHS Garden Harlow Carr, Crag Lane,  
Beckwithshaw, Harrogate, HG3 1QB

Contact & Enquiries: T: 01423 724686;

E: [library.harlowcarr@rhs.org.uk](mailto:library.harlowcarr@rhs.org.uk)

Harlow Carr Library holds a broad collection of practical gardening, garden design and plant cultivation books, together with material to support students of RHS horticulture qualifications, garden design and adult education courses.

Harlow Carr Library has a wide range of books, journals and DVDs chiefly covering all aspects of practical gardening, such as propagation, pruning, cultivated plant monographs, fruit and vegetable growing, pests and disease management. The collection is also strong on garden design, garden features and plant selection ideas. We support many of the adult education courses by providing relevant books and reading lists.

All garden visitors are welcome to browse and study the material in the Library and RHS members may borrow books for four weeks.

There is a Quick Reference section containing key reference / research publications.

#### Harlow Carr Research Room

This room is situated within the library and holds a collection of pre-1900 books and journals (periodicals). 19<sup>th</sup> century periodical titles include *Gardeners' Chronicle*, *The Garden*, *Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society* and *Curtis's Botanical Magazine*.

All items in the Research Room can be found on the library catalogue or you can find a list of Harlow Carr Research Room items on the website.

To view material in the Research Room, please make an appointment in advance.

### Archives of the Northern Horticultural Society

The gardens at Harlow Carr were originally run by the Northern Horticultural Society (NHS), until the RHS took over from 2001. The library houses the archives from the first days of the NHS, its council minutes, correspondences and other matters concerning the running of the garden, up to the merger. You will need to make an appointment in advance to view the archives.

The archives are in the process of being catalogued on the Archives Hub <https://archiveshub.jisc.ac.uk/>.

### E-resources – walk-in access

A selection of databases and full text e-journals are available to use in the Library. Please ask library staff to log you on.



#### RHS Libraries

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Harlow Carr Library RHS Garden Harlow Carr, HG3 1QB. T: 01423 724686 E: [library.harlowcarr@rhs.org.uk](mailto:library.harlowcarr@rhs.org.uk)