

# HADLOW COLLEGE

No Such Thing as a Toadstool

RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2025

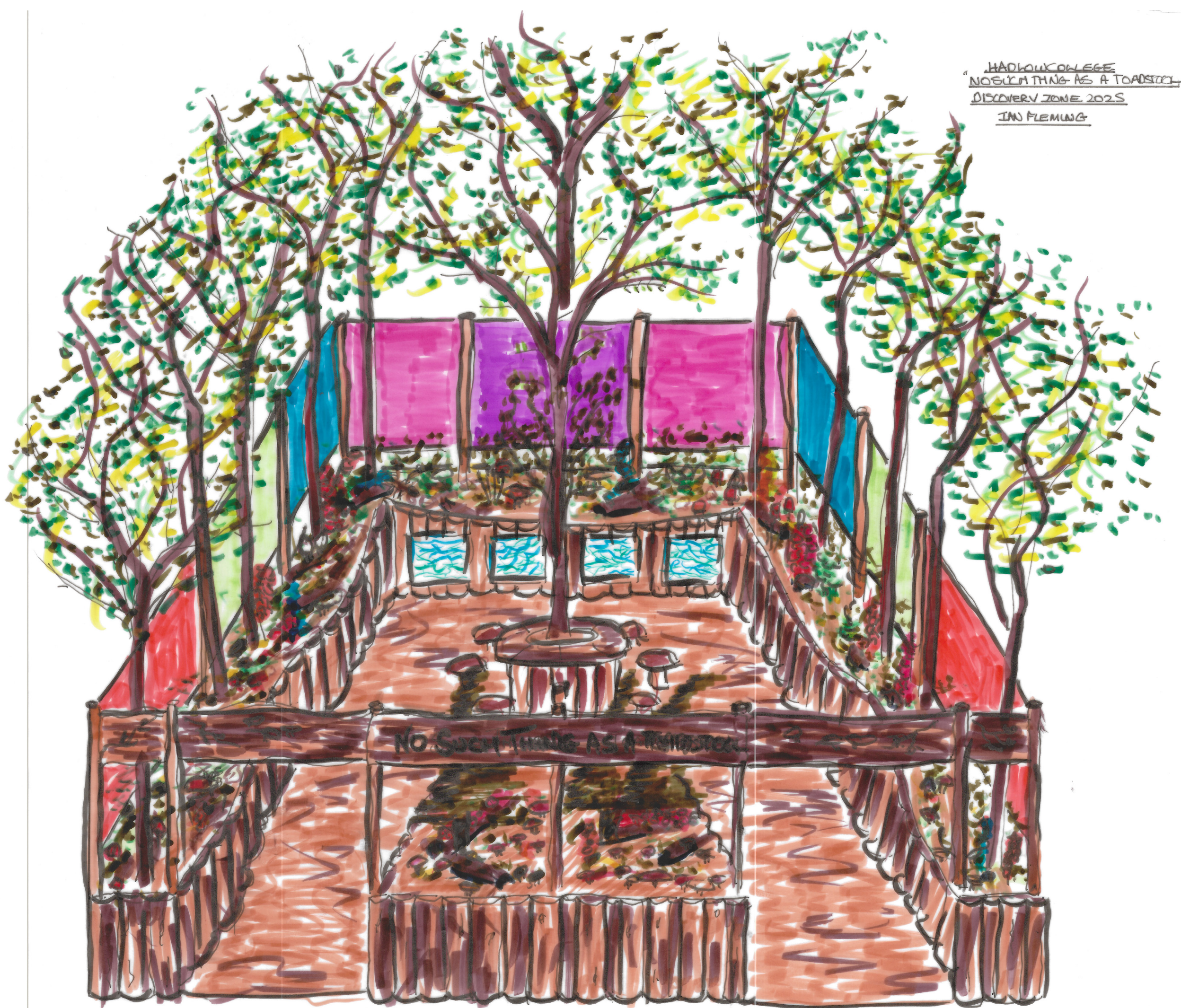


**#RHSCHELSEA**

**Welcome to Hadlow College's "No Such Thing as a Toadstool" garden. With this exhibit, we aim to provide a broad taste of the ways in which fungi affect us and our planet, including how they might feature in the future.**

The name references the traditional but artificial differentiation between edible "mushrooms" and toxic or inedible "toadstools".

Mycology is the branch of biology concerned with the study of fungi, including their forms, functions, and use to humans. Fungi are a diverse group of organisms that play crucial roles in various ecosystems and have significant applications in human life.





**Fungi are essential components of ecosystems, performing several critical functions:**

**Decomposers:** Fungi break down organic matter, recycling nutrients back into the ecosystem. This process is vital for nutrient cycling, particularly for elements like nitrogen and phosphorus

**Symbiotic Relationships:** Many fungi form mutualistic (mycorrhizal) relationships with plants, enhancing water and nutrient absorption for the plants while receiving carbohydrates in return. Plants can also communicate with each other through fungal networks – the “Wood Wide Web”

**Soil Health:** Fungi contribute to soil structure and fertility, promoting plant growth and maintaining ecosystem stability

**Fungi have been utilised by humans in various ways:**

**Food Production:** Yeasts, a type of fungi, are essential in baking, brewing, and winemaking. Edible mushrooms are also a significant food source, rich in nutrients

**Medicine:** Fungi are sources of antibiotics (e.g. penicillin) and other pharmaceuticals. They are also used in the production of immunosuppressants and cholesterol-lowering drugs.





## The potential future applications of fungi are vast and promising:

### **Bioremediation:**

Fungi can be used to clean up environmental pollutants through processes like mycoremediation, where they break down hazardous substances into less harmful compounds

### **Sustainable Growing:**

Fungi-based biopesticides can promote sustainable farming practices by reducing the need for chemical inputs

### **New materials:**

Mycelium, the below-ground part of fungi, is being investigated to provide alternative materials in areas such as construction and textiles

## However, there are some downsides to fungi:

### **Toxins:**

Fungi such as ergot and *Aspergillus flavus* can produce mycotoxins which are harmful to human and animal health

### **Diseases:**

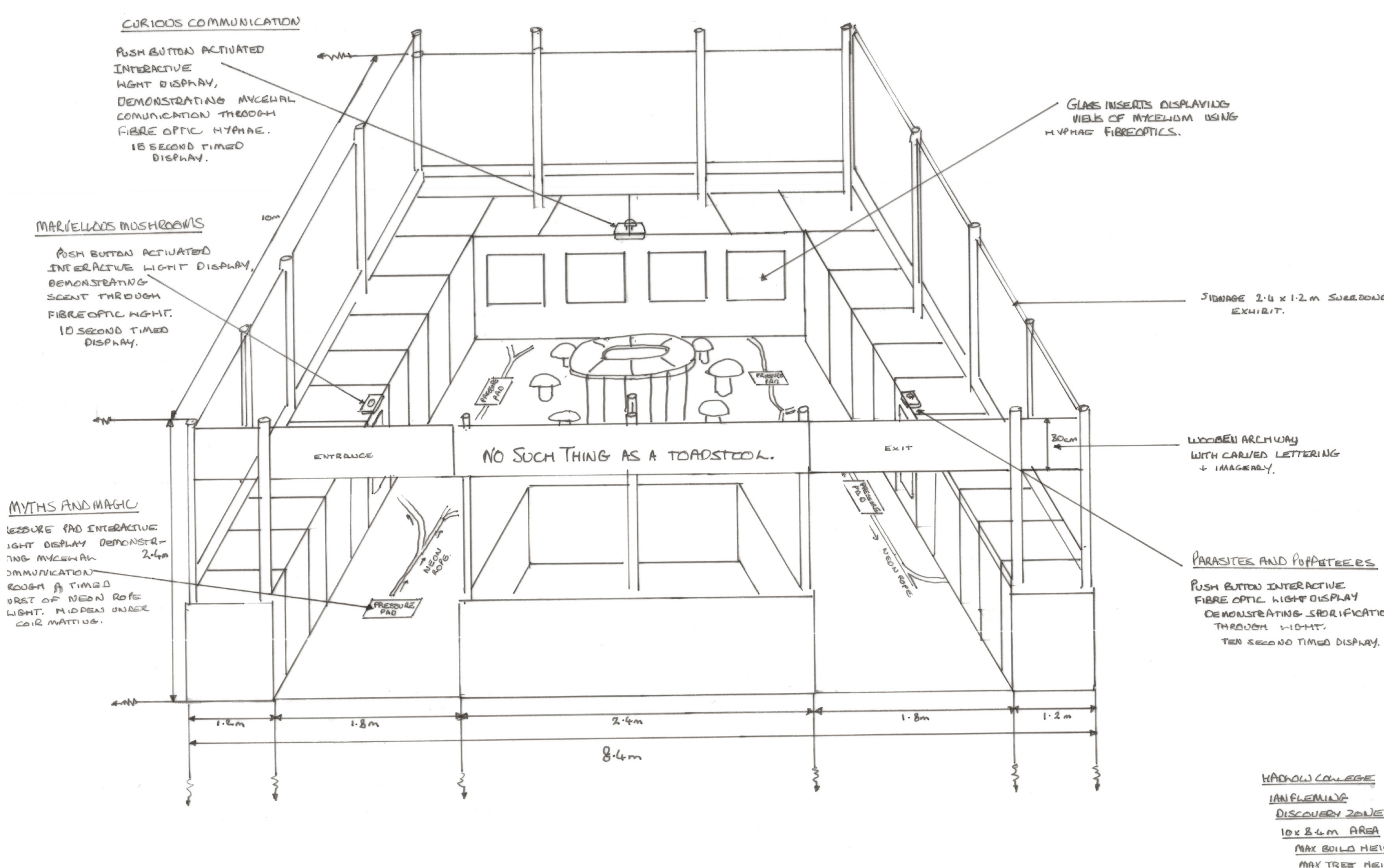
Fungal diseases affect food security, animal and human health throughout the world



**Our exhibit features a range of trees and plants that recreate a natural woodland setting, where fungi naturally thrive. It also showcases a variety of edible fungi, all cultivated by students at Hadlow College to highlight the diversity of fungal forms.**

Students have been involved at every stage – from concept and cultivation to construction and on-site representation at Chelsea. Look out for their names proudly displayed on the sides of the exhibit!

Those taking part come from across our horticulture and floristry programmes, from BTEC Level 1–3 Diplomas to FdSc and BSc degrees in Commercial Horticulture, awarded by the University of Greenwich.



**Hadlow College has over a century of heritage in the land-based sector, tracing its roots back to 1919. It moved to its current site in the 1960s and was officially opened by HRH Prince Philip in 1968.**

Since then, the College has built a national reputation for excellence in horticulture, agriculture, and floristry. It introduced the UK's first Ordinary National Diploma in Agriculture and was named Floristry College of the Year at RHS Chelsea in 2015.

Our alumni include leading garden designers and RHS medal winners, with several achieving top awards at Chelsea and in global conservation.



Today, our 265-acre campus includes commercial farms, woodlands, a river, show gardens, cutting-edge glasshouses, and equine facilities. We're committed to sustainability, with innovations like our robotic orchard and vineyard, featuring AI-driven irrigation and drone monitoring.

Students work with industry leaders such as Thanet Earth at our Centre of Excellence in glasshouse growing, gaining real-world skills in areas from floristry to vertical farming.

Building on last year's bronze medal at Chelsea, we're excited to showcase how Hadlow continues to grow the future.



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[www.hadlow.ac.uk](http://www.hadlow.ac.uk)

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