

PRESS RELEASE



Warm, wet spring leads to explosion of summer colour for Eden Project's great outdoors

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The Eden Project's Outdoor Gardens are bursting with vibrant colours, sweet scents and natural beauty, offering visitors the picture-perfect setting to enjoy the summer sun.

Met Office figures show that the UK has had its warmest spring since records began in 1884, and its wettest since 1986.^[1] These conditions have helped some of the Eden Project's plant life flourish, with summer visitors enjoying the rewards.

The Eden Project's Outdoor Gardens are home to more than 3,000 varieties of plants across 30 acres and feature areas representing the world's temperate lands, crops grown in the UK, and plants that thrive in a changing climate, plus areas for health and wellbeing and play.

One area which has benefited from our recent weather conditions is the impressive lavender display near the Eden Project's stage. The warm, wet spring has meant that the area has bloomed later than usual. The flowering would normally be finished by now but visitors to Cornwall over the summer holidays have a rare opportunity to see and smell the swathe of lush purple as it buzzes with bees and other pollinators.

Elsewhere outside, the South African veld and the North American Prairie are overflowing with early colour, which will build as the summer continues. With increasingly warmer seasons, the Eden Project's horticulture team have been trialling plants in this area that wouldn't usually be found outdoors in the UK, including varieties of protea and agave.

In addition, the wet spring has helped the Eden Project's damp-loving carnivorous bed near the Core building, one of the largest open-air collections in the country. The project's horticulture team have found there to be considerably more flowers growing on them than ever before, with the pitcher plants – which digest insects in a "pitfall trap" formed by modified leaves - being particularly colourful.

On especially hot days, another must-see location is the plane tree steps, found in the heart of the Eden Project's gardens. Here, visitors will find an ideal spot to take a moment to cool down whilst enjoying the sight of Japanese anemone, which have prospered in the cool shade the area provides.

While some plants are thriving as a result of these hotter and wetter conditions, increasing weather extremes are cause for concern.

Global daily temperatures reached record highs in July^[iii] and recent analysis by the Royal Meteorological Society^[iii] as part of the State of the UK Climate report shows that the UK is seeing more frequent periods of hot weather and an increase in rainfall overall. Their observations within the report also demonstrate the UK is experiencing more weather extremes than simply an overall increase in average temperature.

Julie Kendall, the Eden Project's Horticulture Manager for the Outdoor Gardens, said: "It is wonderful to see our Outdoor Gardens flourishing this summer but, as gardeners, concerns about the climate are never far from our minds.

"The extra wet spring has really helped our lavender and carnivorous exhibits but also brings new challenges. It has been tricky to predict sowing times, meaning yield has been lower for some crops, and an increase in slugs has been just one of the many issues facing gardeners across the UK.

"The changing climate has a significant effect on what grows in our gardens and how those plants behave. Our work at the Eden Project – in the gardens and beyond – is to demonstrate positive action for the planet, including the ways we can help stabilise the climate."

To find out more about what to see and do at the Eden Project and to book tickets see www.edenproject.com.

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