

QR CODE BP GARDEN STOPS PLAIN ENGLISH

Main Lawn

Looking out of the windows of the State Rooms, on the first floor of the west side of Buckingham Palace, there are beautiful views across the garden. Buckingham Palace's garden is most famous as the place where The Queen holds her Garden Parties every summer. But many other events happen there, from rock concerts to sporting events. It is also used sometimes as a helicopter pad.

History of the Garden



The Queen's Garden Parties take place in summer on The Main Lawn. About 8,000 guests from all walks of life attend each one. They are served around 27,000 cups of tea, 20,000 sandwiches and 20,000 slices of cake. Buckingham Palace's garden is used for many other events in the busy royal diary, but it is also The Queen's private London garden.

Originally there was a formal garden here, with straight avenues of trees, fountains and statues. It was created in the early 18th century by the Duke of Buckingham for his London home, Buckingham House. The house stood where Buckingham Palace now stands, and it gave today's palace its name. In 1761 the house and grounds were bought by George III and Queen Charlotte as a private house. Their son George IV turned this family home into a royal palace from 1825. He changed the design of the grounds in line with the new fashion for landscapes

which looked more natural. The design was inspired by the work of Capability Brown and Humphry Repton.

Since then, the garden has continually changed to reflect the tastes and needs of the kings and queens who came after him. Today new planting is being added all the time to provide new areas of interest and to improve the look of the historic landscaping.

Herbaceous Border

The Herbaceous Border shows off a rich variety of plants chosen for their colour or their scent, or because they are rare and need to be protected.



The Herbaceous Border is 156m long. It contains a huge variety of plants which makes it one of the most popular areas of the garden. These include sweet peas, which are chosen every year by the Head Gardener and The Queen's Royal Florist. When Her Majesty is in residence the gardeners make a small bouquet of 12 or more cut flowers every Monday to be placed in a vase on The Queen's writing table.



There are two large London plane trees at the beginning of the Herbaceous Border. They were planted by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert and over the years people have seen them as a reminder of this loving couple. Further along the pathway, which is called The Queen's Walk, is the circular Tea House. It dates back to 1939, but was restored for The Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012 with new wall paintings and fittings.

Lake

The artificial lake was first made in 1827. Now it provides a finely-balanced environment for plants and wildlife.



The artificial lake is lined with clay and covers about 3.5 acres. Since it was first dug it has changed a lot. For example, in Queen Victoria's reign there was a fountain in the middle. Back then it often froze over in the winter and the royal family skated on it.

The lake and its edges provide a safe place for water birds to nest. The decision not to cut the grass – known as the 'long-grass policy' – has made it possible for lots of meadow plants to grow there. It provides the perfect home for dragonflies and damselflies. Geese, ducks, swans, herons and cormorants come and go between Regent's Park, Kensington Gardens St James's Park and the Buckingham Palace garden as part of their 'London circuit'.

View of the Island

Prince Albert often visited the island to feed the birds. Today very few people set foot on it: it is important not to disturb the wildlife which lives on it.



Two bridges were built by Prince Albert so that he could cross to the island to feed the birds. Today these are used as little as possible as the island provides a safe place where many animals and birds live. In an average year more than 60 types of birds use the garden. Recent bird sightings include the woodcock (rare in central London) a buzzard, a kingfisher, a sparrow hawk, and a snipe. There are also tawny owls which live in the garden.



There are five beehives on the island. The bees produce approximately 230 jars of honey each year. They are all delivered to The Royal Kitchens for the Royal Chef to use in different dishes.