



Botanists come together for British Science Festival

The British Science Festival is **one of Europe's largest celebrations of science, engineering and technology**, with a week of interactive science events taking place in a different city each year.

This month the Festival comes to Birmingham and so Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI), the Botanical Society of Britain & Ireland (BSBI) and the Society of Biology have come together to offer a day of botanical delights on Monday 8th September.

A guided tour of Winterbourne House and Botanic Garden, Birmingham, with glimpses behind-the-scenes, will be followed by talks from botanical experts from [BSBI](#) and [BGCI](#) on local, national and global botanical topics.

BSBI President Ian Denholm said **"This is the first time that BSBI has participated formally in the British Science Festival. The combination of tours and talks assembled in collaboration with our illustrious partners will provide an exciting insight into the complementary roles of field-based recording and botanic gardens in supporting the conservation of Britain's flora. Find out more about BSBI at the British Science Festival [here](#)."**

The botanical experts are:

- ❖ Dr Sara Oldfield (BGCI and BSBI), **who talks about the "behind the scenes" work of botanic gardens in science and plant conservation, contributing to internationally agreed plant conservation targets.**
- ❖ Professor Ian Trueman (BSBI, University of Wolverhampton), who introduces the **BSBI's** work across Britain and Ireland and explains how botanical survey work carried out by BSBI botanists in the Black Country revealed a plant-defined ecological network. This included fragments of ancient woodland, elements of the post-industrial landscape and a huge medieval deer park just six miles from the centre of Birmingham, all connected by the ubiquitous canal system of the conurbation. Ian explains how the recent award of national Nature Improvement Area (NIA) status has helped conservation charities apply the findings of the botanical survey, in order to strengthen and reinforce this ecological network whilst supporting the needs of communities across a great industrial and population centre.
- ❖ Dr Asimina Vergou (BGCI), **who talks about "Communities in Nature" a BGCI initiative to connect botanic gardens with their local communities. BGCI has undertaken**

research and supported botanic gardens in the UK to run innovative projects and help tackle problems of social exclusion.

Event Organiser Dr Penny Fletcher, Society of Biology, said "We are thrilled to be working with such esteemed botanical organisations and experts to deliver this event. It is a valuable biology-themed addition to this year's festival programme and a great opportunity to highlight the importance of botanical gardens like Winterbourne to both festival attendees and Birmingham locals."

The British Science Festival is co-ordinated by the [British Science Association](#), in partnership this year with the [University of Birmingham](#) and in association with [Birmingham City Council](#) and [Birmingham City University](#) and headline sponsor [Siemens](#).

NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. The event runs from 10am to 4pm on Monday 8th September. Tickets cost £6 and include refreshments and transport between Birmingham University main campus and the venue.

More details [here](#); tickets can be booked online [here](#).

2. The Event Organiser Dr Penny Fletcher, Society of Biology, can be contacted at;

Email: pennyfletcher@societyofbiology.org Phone: 020 7685 2554

3. For more information about BSBI, contact Louise Marsh, BSBI Publicity & Outreach Officer.

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4. For more information about BGCI, contact Sara Oldfield, BGCI Secretary General

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