

A Day of Discovery at Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

Last week, a group of ten Practical Horticulture students enjoyed an inspiring educational visit to the beautiful Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. The trip provided a full day of exploration, learning, and hands-on observation in one of the world's most famous botanical gardens.

The visit was made possible through the developing partnership between the school, Peabody Trust, and the Octopus Community Network, who run the nearby Octopus Community Nursery where many of our students regularly garden and build their horticultural skills. This collaboration is helping to create new opportunities for students to engage with green spaces, horticulture, and environmental learning within their local community.

Throughout the day, students had the opportunity to tour several of Kew's iconic spaces. They began by stepping into the lush, tropical environment of the Palm House, where towering palms and exotic rainforest plants created a striking introduction to global plant diversity. The group also visited the magnificent Temperate House, the largest Victorian glasshouse in the world, which showcases rare and endangered plants from temperate regions. The visit concluded with an unforgettable experience on the Treetop Walkway, where students viewed the gardens from 80m above the ground and gained a new perspective on tree structure and canopy ecosystems.

Kew staff commented on how impressed they were by the students' enthusiasm, curiosity, and positive energy throughout the day. Their eagerness to ask questions and learn more about plants made the visit especially rewarding.

Students themselves were equally enthusiastic about the experience. One student said, *"I loved seeing so many different plants from around the world in one place."* Another added, *"The Treetop Walkway was amazing. Seeing the trees from above made me think differently about how they grow and how big they really are."* For one EAL student, the visit also had a personal connection. He shared, *"I really liked the tropical house because I saw plants that I know from my home in Eritrea. It made me feel proud that I recognised them and could explain them to my classmates."*

The trip proved to be both educational and inspiring. Many of the students said they would love to return to Kew in the future with their families to explore even more of the gardens and continue discovering the fascinating world of plants.

