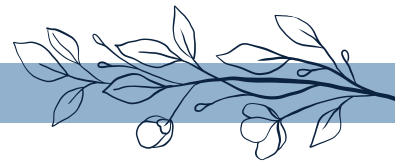


SCOTTISH GARDEN DESIGN COMPETITION 2026





INTRODUCTION

Our Garden Design Competition is returning to Scone Palace Garden Fair on the **29th and 30th of May 2026**. The competition aims to showcase Scotland's horticultural talent, while inspiring visitors with take-home ideas for creating gardens, even in the smallest of spaces.

The competition is **open to anyone** with a love of gardening; from weekend hobbyist to professional gardener, modern social media star to old-school allotmentee, charities and garden societies, garden designers showcasing their talent, or horticultural students at the start of their career.



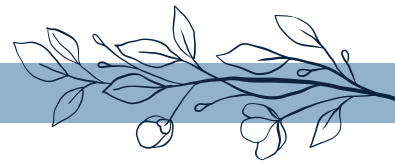
PLOT SIZE

The size of plot open for design will be **2.4m by 2.4m, or 1.2m by 4.8m**, to make it affordable and manageable to as many entrants as possible.

Small-scale garden designs of this size may be seen as more relatable and achievable to the vast majority of attendees at the Scone Palace Garden Fair 2026.

Designers should note all gardens will be able to be viewed from three sides, and should take this into account when creating their design.

On display with each design will be an **A3 sized plaque containing the story of the design** and information on the designer. This may also include business or sponsorship details.



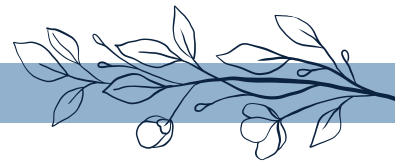
GARDEN DESIGN

The theme of this year's competition, and on which we would like your design based upon, is '**Passion**'. This is open to interpretation by each gardener, offering endless possibilities for creativity and expression. Whether expressed through bold bursts of colour, striking sculptural elements, or dynamic use of space, we invite designers to showcase how gardens can embody energy, emotion, and the powerful drive that passion inspires.

All designers will have the chance to showcase themselves to the many attendees at this year's Scone Palace Garden Fair, a chance to meet new followers and customers from all over Scotland, and be the winner of one of two awards: '**Scottish Garden Design Competition**' and '**The People's Choice**'.

A **grant of £300** will be given to help towards the cost of the build, kindly supported by some of Scotland's top nurseries and garden centres, and designers are also encouraged to source their own **sponsorship** opportunities. Advice and support will also be on hand to help guide you through the competition.





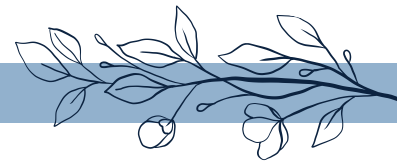
HOW TO ENTER

Potential designers will be asked to submit on one A3 page, a short, **written story** on the ideas behind the design, no more than 500 words, a **sketch** of how the applicant wishes their planting scheme to look, a list giving a preliminary **planting plan**, and a rough **cost estimate**. Sustainability is very important to Scone Palace so we would also like to know how your garden will be **reused or relocated** after the fair.

Please include your full name, location, and garden name on your entry.

The closing date for entries is **Friday 9th of January** when a panel of judges will choose the successful designs that will go on to be created for show at this year's Scone Palace Garden Fair. Successful designers will be notified the following week.





JUDGING AND AWARDS

On the morning of Friday the 29th of May, the judging panel shall assess each design. Each garden shall be awarded a “**Scone Palace Garden Fair Medal**” of either Gold, Silver-Gilt, Silver, or Bronze. At 1pm the winner of the Scottish Garden Design Competition 2025 will be announced.

On Saturday the 30th of May at 3.45pm the winner of the People’s Choice Award, voted for by the visitors of the Garden Fair, will be awarded.

Designers will not be permitted in the area when judging is taking place, but later in the day, after the awards have been announced, they will be able to receive feedback on their award and garden from the judges.

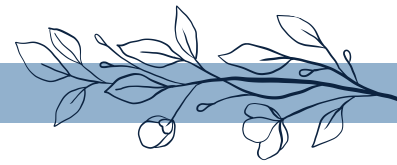
JUDGING CRITERIA

The judges will assess the gardens on the following criteria. Not all criteria will apply to each design:

CRITERION 1 - REALISATION OF THE COMPETITION THEME OF ‘PASSION’

Excellent (4 points)	The garden clearly and obviously realises the theme in multiple ways
Very Good (3 points)	The garden recognises the theme without further explanation
Good (2 points)	The theme can be understood but may need further explanation
Fair (1 point)	The theme may be part recognised but elements missed
Poor (0 points)	It’s not clear or obvious how the theme appears in the garden





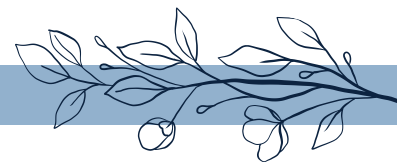
CRITERION 2 - WOW! FACTOR

Excellent (4 points)	An eye-catching garden with creativity and imagination at a high level
Very Good (3 points)	An exciting garden made with care and thought
Good (2 points)	An original garden but lacks features or finer detail
Fair (1 point)	The garden fails to demand attention lacking in creativity
Poor (0 points)	Fails to make that positive impact to the audience

CRITERION 3 - LAYOUT: THE 2D ELEMENT OF YOUR DESIGN

Excellent (4 points)	Demonstrates advanced skills from the designer in scale, proportion, comfort and design
Very Good (3 points)	Visually shows a balanced garden and good level of designer skills and knowledge
Good (2 points)	Some aspects may compete with each other making the garden difficult to understand
Fair (1 point)	Elements make the garden seem confusing or lack unity
Poor (0 points)	A poor understanding of garden design has been demonstrated





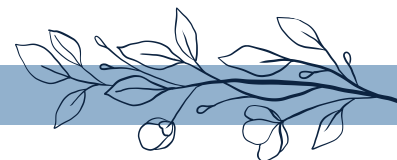
CRITERION 4 - STRUCTURE: THE 3D ELEMENT OF YOUR DESIGN

Excellent (4 points)	Demonstrates advanced skills from the designer in scale, proportion, comfort and design
Very Good (3 points)	Visually shows a balanced garden and good level of designer skills and knowledge
Good (2 points)	Some aspects may compete with each other making the garden difficult to understand
Fair (1 point)	Elements make the garden seem confusing or lack unity
Poor (0 points)	A poor understanding of garden design has been demonstrated

CRITERION 5 - QUALITY OF ARTEFACTS AND HARD LANDSCAPING

Excellent (4 points)	High levels of craftsmanship demonstrated with no faults that would take away from the final finish of the garden
Very Good (3 points)	Very good construction skills shown but with two minor faults noted that reflect in the final finish of the garden
Good (2 points)	A good quality of build with three or more minor faults that reflect the final finish of the garden
Fair (1 point)	Inconsistent build quality featuring minor and notable faults that affect the final appearance of the garden
Poor (0 points)	Substandard build quality that would affect the function of the garden





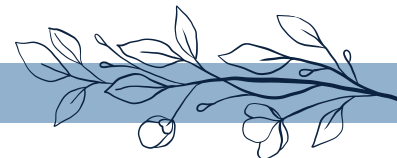
CRITERION 6 - PLANTING DESIGN

Excellent (4 points)	An inspiring use of plants and design with a good use of plant textures and colours
Very Good (3 points)	A largely excellent planting design with a few minor areas where improvements could be made
Good (2 points)	A good planting design with three or more minor issues that take away from the final enjoyment of the garden
Fair (1 point)	A satisfactory use of plants but with noticeable issues that affect the final enjoyment of the garden
Poor (0 points)	Overall a weak use of plants with noticeable errors in the design

CRITERION 7 - PLANTING ASSOCIATIONS

Excellent (4 points)	An excellent example of plants that would live and survive with each other
Very Good (3 points)	Very good planting associations but with two minor inaccuracies in plant selections
Good (2 points)	Good selection of plants but with three or more inaccuracies
Fair (1 point)	Weak planting associations that horticulturally would not work together with each other
Poor (0 points)	A poor planting scheme using plants that would not live or survive with each other



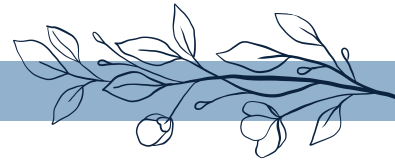


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CRITERION 8 - PLANT QUALITY, HEALTH, AND DENSITY

Excellent (4 points)	Excellent plant quality of good health, planted at the appropriate spacing
Very Good (3 points)	Although featuring two noticeable errors this is largely a very good quality of plants and health, planted at the appropriate spacing
Good (2 points)	Good plant quality but undersized or with some imperfections. Planting density slightly inappropriate (four issues)
Fair (1 point)	Undersized and/ or unhealthy plants. Planting density inappropriate.
Poor (0 points)	Poor plants showing obvious damage, diseases, or evidence of neglect. Planting density inappropriate

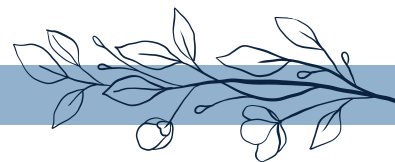




POINTS TO NOTE

1. Successful designers will be given access to the event site on **Wednesday 27th May** to start the design build, two days prior to the show opening.
2. Any deliveries made directly to the site must be signed for by the exhibitor. Scone Palace will not accept any items on behalf of a designer or exhibitor.
3. Scone Palace ask all exhibitors and designers to ensure that all plant materials have been grown and sourced responsibly and arrive with a clean bill of health for biosecurity. If required, plants may be removed at the discretion of Scone Estates.
4. The 2.4m x 2.4m, or 1.2m x 4.8m, wooden frame will be in place on arrival at 200mm in depth. Height can be increased in the design proposal.
5. A layer of hessian will be laid to protect the grass. **Ground excavation will not be possible.**
6. No plants may be sold from the garden during the show, but plants may be sold from 4pm on Saturday 1st June.
7. The build must be fully cleared from the site by **6pm, Sunday 31st May.**
8. Scone Palace will provide access to water, however we are unable to provide access to electricity for your final garden or during it's build.
9. If you are needing **accommodation** during the event let us know and we can make local recommendations.





SUBMISSION

Designs should be submitted by **12 noon on Friday 9th of January 2026** by email to sconepalacegardenfair@scone-palace.co.uk

Successful designers will be notified during week beginning Monday 19th of January.



Good luck! We look forward to welcoming you and your creativity at the Scone Palace Garden Fair 2026.

