The Magic of Gardening

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What are the goals of the course?

The Magic of Gardening is an eight-week course that is designed to inform and inspire you to achieve your gardening goals.

The course is unique in that it is designed with practicality in mind, as it is important to me that everything you learn is useful and can be easily applied. Over the course of eight weeks, you will therefore acquire a wealth of both theoretical and practical knowledge that will give you the confidence to enjoy and explore your own garden in a way that works for you.

The course will begin with the fundamentals of gardening and progress on to specifically-selected content from the Royal Horticultural Society's (RHS) Level 2 Certificate in Horticulture. Whether you have prior experience in gardening or not, this will give you the tools to understand what is happening in your garden and enable you to work effectively with the space you have. If you have practical experience but have never learnt the theory behind what you are doing, you are likely to have many 'aha!' moments and smile as you come to understand why you were, or were not, successful in your previous explorations.

Alongside the theory, the course will demonstrate how this information can be used in a real-life setting. In each session, there will be a table of various plants for identification and to give physical examples of the concepts introduced. In addition, we will consider best horticultural practice, and I will share stories of my own successes and failures so that you can better understand how everything you learn within the classroom comes to life within the garden.

Who am I?

My full-time gardening career started over 20 years ago when I moved to a new house with a large, landscaped garden. I quickly realised how little I knew about this amazing and finely-tuned environment, leading me to pursue both the RHS General Certificate and the RHS Advanced Horticulture Certificate. Through this, I found a passion for garden design as I saw how much it could transform the relationship a person had with their outdoor space, bringing them joy and excitement. I began working as a garden designer, as well as completing multiple landscape and garden design qualifications at various colleges, including a Graduate Diploma in Landscape Architecture at Birmingham City University.

I have since created two gardens for Hampton Court Palace Flower Show: a rainbow show garden called the Benecol's Prism Corner Garden in 2008, and a feature garden called The Night Garden in 2011 (see pictures below or click here to watch the BBC TV coverage). I also won a national design competition sponsored by Jackson Fencing in 2012.

I run a successful garden design business, Blue Bridge Garden Design (www.bluebridge-gardendesign.co.uk), where I strive to maximise the potential of each garden. I work together with clients to create spaces which are personal, inspirational, practical and sustainable. I like to be involved in all stages from first inspiration to completed garden. I also rejuvenate older gardens, often working alongside clients to teach them how to maintain their space, and hold talks for gardening groups on a variety of topics.

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Practical details

The 8-week course will run on Tuesday evenings, 7-9pm, starting on 29th April 2025. There will be a 15-minute break in the middle of each two-hour session.

The course will be held in Enstone Parish Hall, The Paddocks, Enstone, OX7 4AZ.

The cost of the course is £180.

Printed copies of the course material for each session will be provided.

What do you get from the course?

- Eight weeks of training providing you with the tools to unlock the secrets of horticulture.
- Practical advice that helps you to discover the potential of your green spaces.
- Ability to explore your garden with confidence while avoiding many common mistakes.
- Access to me during and after the sessions to ask questions (if time is short, you can also email me).
- Folders provided with course materials for you to keep.
- A new display table each week with items relating to that session. Presented items will include, but are not limited to, recommended books, gardening tools, specific plants and soil media (I am also happy to discuss requested items).
- A plant identification table (if you have a specific plant you would like to discuss, please let me know).
- Soil pH testing kit, with support from me to decipher what this means for your garden.
- An opportunity to meet like-minded gardeners from the local area.
- An optional visit to a garden or allotment to see in practice some of what you have learnt.

I hope this course will bring you inspiration and allow you to enjoy gardening for years to come!

Kari Beardsell

Proposed Course Content

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First session:
- Introduction
- Getting to know your plants
- What's in a name?
- Germination, sexual reproduction
- The seed and growth

Second session:
- Plant structure
- Function of roots, leaves, stem and flower
- Plant adaptations
- Pollination and inflorescences

Third session:
- What's needed for growth?
- Internal factors, hormones
- Nutrients, deficiencies and pH
- N-P-K

Fourth session:
- Soil science
- Components of soil
- How to manage your soil
- Making garden compost
- Mulching

Fifth session:
- Plant problems
- Weeds
- Pest
- Disease
- Disorder

Sixth session:
- Propagation
- Pruning

Seventh session:
- Lawns
- Shrubs & roses
- Climbers

Eighth session
- Ponds
- Wildflower meadows
- Protected growing, greenhouses
- Simple vegetable gardening
- Watering
- Containers.

Location of Enstone Parish Hall

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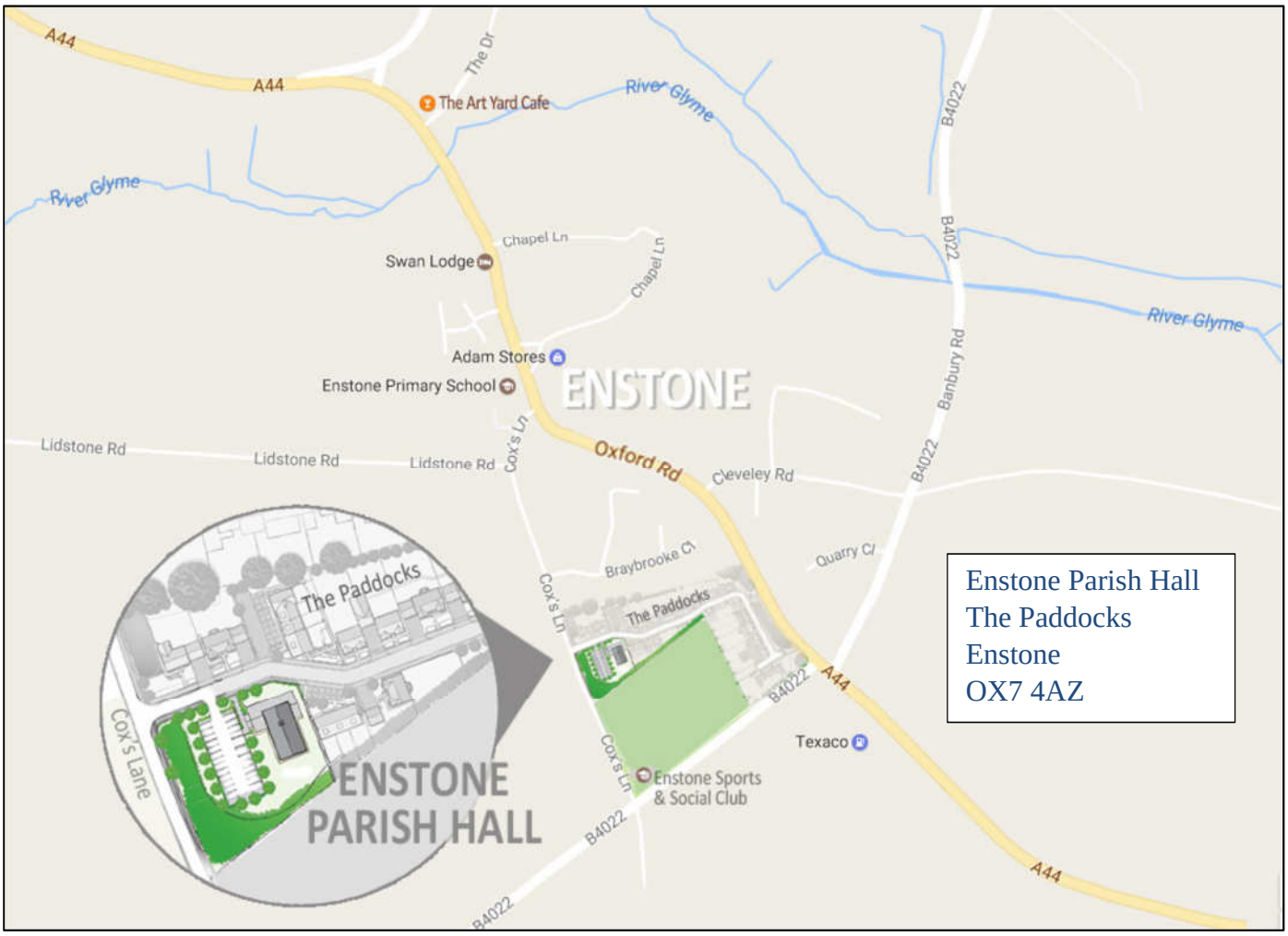

Enstone Parish Hall
The Paddocks
Enstone
OX7 4AZ